

*The Great American Outdoors Act is providing crucial funding – up to \$6.65 billion over five years – to fix our national parks’ crumbling roads, decaying buildings, outdated water systems and many more repair needs. This bill, along with other funding sources, is ensuring our parks can continue to welcome millions of visitors each year and protect the natural and cultural resources that tell our nation’s history.*

# Gateway NATIONAL RECREATION AREA



**A large urban park spanning two states and 27,000 acres, Gateway National Recreation Area is the fourth most visited unit in the National Park Service and arguably one of the most diverse and colorful.**

Established in 1972, Gateway is made up of three units in New York and New Jersey: Jamaica Bay, Sandy Hook and Staten Island. Each year, more than 8 million visitors arrive by car, ferry, bus or train and enjoy the park’s beaches, wildlife, green spaces, recreation, historic structures and cultural landscapes.

In Gateway’s three units, visitors participate in a variety of indoor and outdoor activities. There are multiple sports areas in the New York units of Gateway, including basketball courts, baseball and softball fields and cricket pitches. Visitors swim at three lifeguarded beaches in the summer and cross-country ski and sled in the winter. They camp at Sandy Hook, run up hills at Fort Wadsworth, picnic at historic Jacob Riis Park and

Canarsie Pier and bike, kayak, garden, ice skate, play hockey or practice archery at historic Floyd Bennett Field, New York City’s first municipal airport. Within the park, visitors explore the 12,600-acre Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, a transformed city garbage dump created in the 1950s by New York City Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner Robert Moses. The refuge, home to more than 300 species of birds, is the only of its kind in the National Park Service. Gateway is also home to the oldest continuously operating lighthouse in the U.S. and hosts sections of the New York City Marathon and the Jersey Shore and Staten Island half marathons.

## BY THE NUMBERS:



**\$28.3 million**  
estimated investment from the GAOA to repair projects



**\$322 million**  
in annual economic output



**8 million+**  
annual visitors



**300 species**  
of birds



**27,000 acres**  
of park land



**THE CHALLENGE: a large urban park with important historical and cultural resources vulnerable to storm surge and tidal water damage**

By many measures, Gateway has been shaped by New York Harbor, America’s largest port. Yet protecting Gateway National Recreation Area’s important historic and cultural resources, upholding a high level of visitor experience and ultimately continuing to operate the three park units, means maintaining the critical structures that protect these resources from storms. Failure of any of the seawalls would subject all infrastructure in the vicinity to storm surge and tidal water damage. The bulkheads at Sandy Hook protect key assets including a theater and multi-use path, officer housing, roadways and the entrance to the U.S. Coast Guard Station at the north end of Sandy Hook. The Riis Park Seawall at Jamaica Bay is a primary park asset and protects critical infrastructure including a major city thoroughfare and a 9,000-car parking lot and bathhouse adjacent to a heavily used park beach site.

**THE PROJECT**

Through an estimated \$28.3 million investment, the Great American Outdoors Act will replace and/or rehabilitate three shoreline stabilization structures at Sandy

**“...protecting Gateway National Recreation Area’s important historic and cultural resources, upholding a high level of visitor experience and ultimately continuing to operate the three park units, means maintaining the critical structures that protect these resources from storms.”**

Hook and Jacob Riis that protect multiple historic buildings, two major roads, two multi-purpose paths, two parking lots, a ferry dock and a lift station. In New Jersey’s Sandy Hook unit, the project will replace the Chapel Bulkhead, including deteriorated storm inlets and sidewalks. The seawalls at Sandy Hook are primary park assets and protect critical Sandy Hook infrastructure and historic structures within a National Landmark District. In New York’s Jamaica Bay unit, the project will repair the Beach Channel Drive Seawall, drainage and adjacent trail. The replacement of the tongue and groove sheathing on the backside of the seawall and replacement of foundation will prevent washouts. These projects will begin summer or fall 2024.

**THE IMPACT**

The project will enhance resiliency to storms and sea level rise and will protect critical assets. Specifically, the project addresses safety issues for millions of visitors and employees, restores and protects high visitation areas of Gateway National Recreation Area and addresses deferred maintenance on major infrastructure



that protects resources from storm and high tidal damage. The infrastructure does not typically require regular maintenance, so the repair of these structures will not increase or decrease maintenance operations cost. Replacement of Sandy Hook seawalls will provide protection for 40 years, and rehabilitation of the Riis Park seawall will extend its life by a minimum of 25 years.

The Great American Outdoors Act is successfully repairing infrastructure at hundreds of parks across the country. However, with a nearly \$22 billion backlog, much more is needed. We urge Congress to extend the Legacy Restoration Fund for an additional five years.

Preserving Our Past.



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Protecting Our Future.