



Fort Monroe Natural Resources Working Group

Report and recommendations to
FMFADA

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Group Members, Staff, and Agencies

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Recommendations in Three Areas

- Part One: Land Use, Construction, Recreation, and Access
- Part Two: Environmental and Archaeological Issues
- Part Three: Education and Interpretation

Part One: Land Use, Construction, Recreation, and Access

- **Use, infrastructure and modifications of Parks and Recreation (PR) areas 1 and 2**
- **Recreational use and associated infrastructure and modifications, other areas**
- **Ecotourism and wildlife-based recreation**
- **Trails and Roads**

Use, infrastructure and modifications of Parks and Recreation (PR) areas 1 and 2

- Graded Recreational use following present use patterns.
 - Low-impact use at north end (Hiking, Biking, Beach use, Surf Casting)
 - Medium use in central area (Camping, Picnic Areas, Informal Sports, Beach use)
 - High use at south end (Organized Sports, Festivals and other Outdoor Events).

Use and Infrastructure

- North end – a natural experience at the beach

- Dune cross walks

- Nature trails

- Small observation platform

- Dedicated surf casting beach

- Bike/hike trails to connect with Buckroe Beach to the north and the main Fort Monroe trail system to the south

- Dependent on development option

- Parking, restroom facilities, additional cross walks

Use and Infrastructure

- Central area – An outdoor experience for the whole family

Expanded (48 unit) campground

Picnic areas (some sheltered) and playgrounds

Yurts and other “glamping” options

Restrooms and showers

Beach access ramps with handicapped parking

Kayak and canoe launching

Racing scull launch and storage

Large observation platform

Nature/education center, renovated or purpose-built

Some (minimal) additional parking

Use and Infrastructure

- Southern area: a fun day at the shore

 - Organized sports fields (e.g. soccer)

 - Seasonal food stands and other park amenities

 - Restrooms

 - Primary site for additional parking

 - Airstrip is a parking/multiuse facility

 - Old Officer's Club – restaurant and pool

- There is, at present, little beach area in the southern part of the Parks and Rec area

Beaches South of the Parks and Rec Areas

- These are the largest and widest beaches on the property, and, in many ways, the most accessible and desirable for public use
- Plans for access to these beaches and for support (e.g. restroom) facilities are needed.
- One possibility is to locate most parking and facilities in southern Parks and Rec area and shuttle visitors in
- Another possibility is to locate these facilities and access points in the Wherry Quarter.
- At a minimum, ramps crossing the Promenade to the beach with handicapped parking will be needed.

Outdoor recreation and infrastructure, other Fort areas

- Marina
- Boat launches
- Bay and marsh recreation

Marina

- Will need study
 - possible expansion
 - parking a potential problem
- Incorporate day berths with easy access to bicycle rental
- Pump-out station
 - Supports “No-discharge” designation for Hampton Roads

Stillwell Road Boat Launches

- Extant hand launch facility (kayaks etc.)
- Possible launch for powered small craft
 - There is a demonstrated need for a facility of this type, but:
 - preferred location in conflict with “gateway”
 - other options require rerouting of Stillwell Road
 - Bridge clearance issues

Bay and Marsh Recreation

- Fishing
 - Extant Fishing Pier Access (e.g. parking)
 - New Fishing Pier
- Boating
 - Boat race in Mill Creek
 - Hand-powered craft in Mill Creek
- Duck Hunting
 - Extant blinds outside of Fort property

Ecotourism

- Will be a popular activity at Fort Monroe
- Low impact, low capital cost, high return
- All seasons

Ecotourism

Birdwatching

- Seasonal bird list (NWR model)
- Virginia birding trail
- Specialty shops
- Photography
 - educational programs
- Hiking/biking/boating tours
 - Tie into regional trail systems
- Geocaching/orienteering

The background of the slide is a solid dark brown color with a pattern of lighter brown, stylized autumn leaves scattered across it. The leaves have prominent veins and are oriented in various directions, creating a textured, seasonal feel.

Trail and Road Access

Roads

- Recommend that traffic to the Parks and Rec area be routed to Stillwell Road
- This divides traffic flow and will help minimize traffic problems in the Fort proper and Historic Village

Roads

- We recommend against construction of the northern connector road
- Incompatible with proposed recreational and educational use and conservation of property
 - Environmental issues (marsh and dune impacts)
 - Safety issues (road will traverse camping and picnic areas and separate these areas from the beach)
 - Safety issues (school groups in natural and other areas)
 - Aesthetic issues (road will have major negative impact on outdoor experiences in the northern natural area and in the central camping/picnicking areas)

Trails

- Trails connect to outside world
 - Hike/Bike trail connection to Buckroe Beach
 - Integrate with regional trail systems

Trails

- Fort-wide system of trails with consistent signage and maps.
 - Biking and walking friendly environment
 - Connect natural and historic areas
 - Seamless

Part Two: Environmental and Archaeological Concerns

- Property is highly impacted, conserve and protect what remains
- Habitat and environmental restoration
- Green attitude

Conserve and Protect

- Protect dunes at north end
- Protect marshes
- Consider environmental impacts of construction
- Special concern – live oaks

Restore

- Remove invasive plant species
- Restore natural “soft” shoreline along Mill Creek
- Riparian Buffer along creek
- Restore part of open space to maritime forest and/or unmowed meadow

Green Attitude

- Green, low impact construction and renovation
- Landscape with native plants
- Runoff control ('raingardens' etc.)
- Foot and bike friendly

Part Three: Education and Interpretation

- Opportunities
- Programming
- Infrastructure

Opportunities: Convenient outdoor learning for a large urban population

- Introduce city kids (and adults) to nature
 - “No child left inside”
 - Combine science and physical activity
- Restoration projects as educational tools
 - Involve people in restoration projects
 - Improve environmental awareness and science literacy in children and adults

Programming

- Summer schools and camps
- Teacher development institutes
- Community nature initiatives
- Family nature festivals
- Master naturalists
- And, of course, programs for school (and other) groups

Programming Themes

- Programs for school (and other) groups
 - Chesapeake Bay and Old Point Comfort ecology and wildlife
 - East Coast flyway
 - Chesapeake Bay geology
 - Climate change and coastal environments
 - Native Americans at Old Point Comfort
 - And many, many more

Infrastructure

- Nature and education center
 - Renovate or purpose-built
 - Located in central PR area
 - Classroom and gathering space
 - Informational exhibits
 - Staff workspace

Issues for FMEFADA

- North End development (options given)
- Northern connector road (we recommend against)
- Access to beaches and piers in and south of Wherry District (parking and other issues)
- Stillwell Road boat launch (siting issues)
- Nature center (funding and construction)
- Duck hunting
- Boating in Mill Creek (historic use and conservation/safety issues)



Questions?