

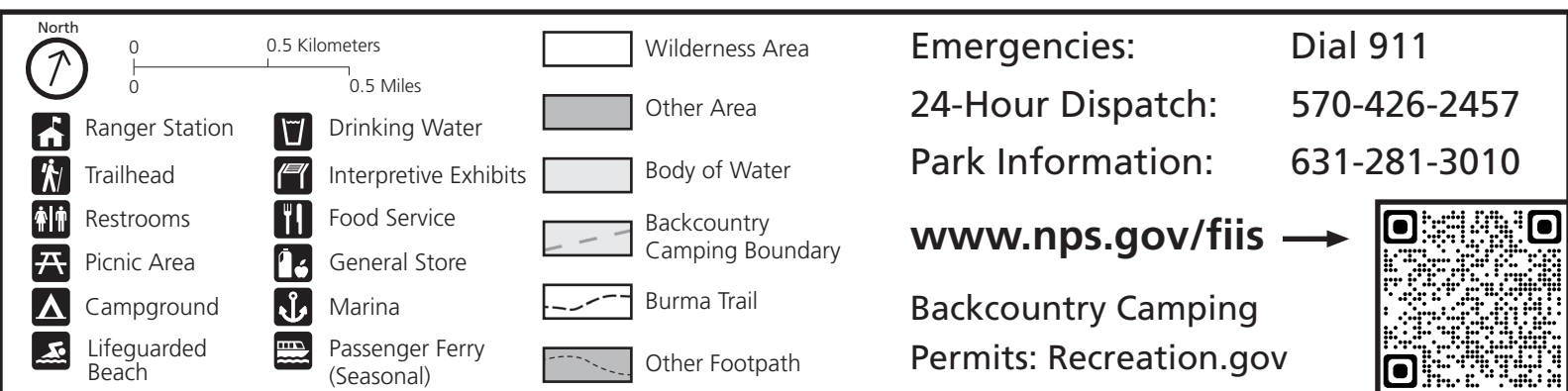
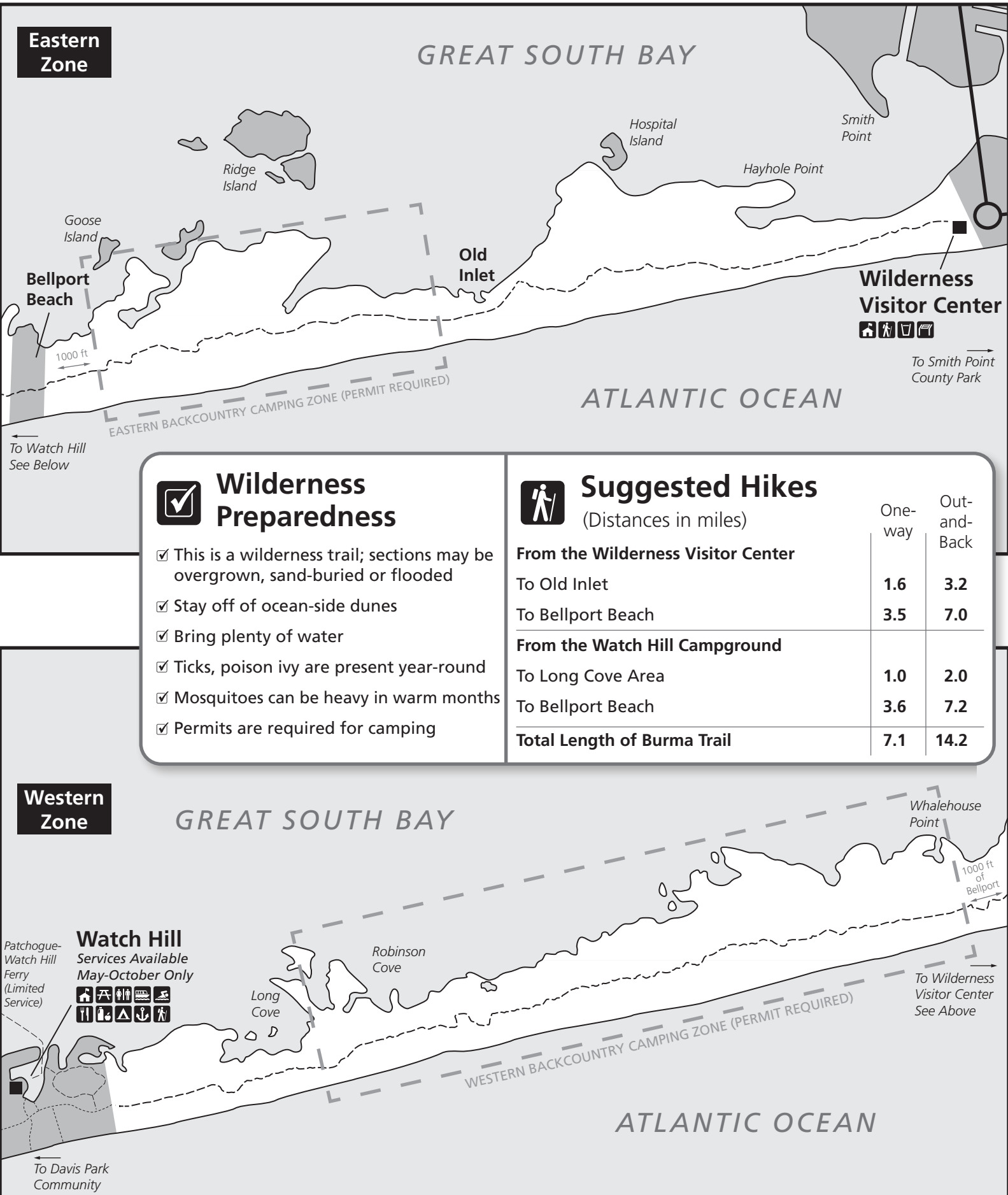
Fire Island

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



**National Seashore
New York**

Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness Burma Trail Map



A Wilderness Near Metropolis

Established in 1980, the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness is one of the smallest wilderness areas managed by the National Park Service at 1,381 acres. Unusual because of this small size and closeness to New York City and Long Island—one of the most developed areas in the United States—it is the only federally-designated wilderness in New York State. The wilderness extends seven miles from Smith Point County Park in the east to Watch Hill in the west and includes the area from the toe of the ocean-facing dune to the Great South Bay.

Though small, the Otis Pike Wilderness is a varied landscape of high sand dunes, interdunal swale, wooded thickets, freshwater bogs, and extensive salt marsh, all near the great expanse of the Atlantic Ocean and its wave-lashed sandy beaches. Bald eagles, red fox, and white-tailed deer roam the wilderness year-round, while osprey or piping plover spend only their breeding season. Pitch pine, eastern redcedar, American holly, and beach plum trees dot the swale, while grasses



Hikers in the Otis Pike Wilderness walk a sandy trail in the interdunal swale. The Burma Trail provides access to variety of barrier island habitats including the ocean beach, salt marsh, and swale areas.

populate the areas closest to ocean or bay.

The Burma Trail follows part of the trace of the old Burma Road, an off-road vehicle route used before the wilderness designation. Most of the road has disappeared under dunes or vegetation, but in some places the old path remains clear. Hikers may also find other traces of human development, such as concrete pads used by the US Life Saving Service and Coast Guard, bricks used for summer bungalows, or the remnants of shipwrecks along the shore. While these reminders of the past may seem to run counter to the idea of wilderness, you might think of the area as reclaimed by nature, rather than “untouched” or “pristine.”

The Burma Trail allows access to wilderness for hikers, photographers, birders, campers, anglers, hunters, and others. Whether your visit is for a short stroll, a full-day outing, or an overnight trip, read on to learn how to keep this area wild and minimize your impact on this special place.



A juvenile Bald Eagle perches on a pine tree in the Otis Pike Wilderness. Birding is a popular activity among hikers. Over 330 species of birds live on or migrate through Fire Island.

Know Before You Go

Hike the trail in cooler months. Mosquitoes are prevalent north of the primary dune from late spring until late fall. The trail is best enjoyed during cooler seasons when adult mosquitoes are not present. Hiking on the ocean beach can be a more comfortable option in warmer months.

Stay on paths. Protect vegetation and dunes by staying on trail or on deer paths. Walking on paths also helps avoid ticks and poison ivy.

Trail conditions. Storms can cause flooding and overwashing of sand on the trail. Be prepared to wade flooded areas and navigate through altered sections of trail. Parts of the trail may become overgrown with brush. If the trail is impassible, walk to the ocean side through a low point in the dunes and walk the beach.

Backcountry camping in the east or west zones requires a permit purchased on Recreation.gov. Campers can select a campsite in established zones north of the primary dune year-round or on the beach between March 15 and Labor Day.

Check weather and tides before your hike. Storms and seasonal tides can present dangerous conditions with ocean water pushing to the dune line and causing overwashes in low lying areas. This creates river-like washes that can sweep away tents and cause hazardous conditions if wading across. Avoid setting up camp where sandy washes are observed—these areas are especially prone to flooding.

Bring plenty of water. No drinking water is available between the Wilderness Visitor Center and Watch Hill.

Protect yourself from the sun. Wear a hat, cover legs and arms, and wear sunscreen. There is little shade on the trail.

Avoid pests. Mosquitoes are present in warm months. Ticks are common—inspect yourself after a hike. Avoid poison ivy.

Duck hunters may be encountered in season. Duck hunting is permitted in the wilderness area and Great South Bay during the fall and winter north of Burma Trail.

Rules & Regulations

Stay off ocean-facing dunes. The primary dune and its vegetation protects the island from erosion.

Fires are prohibited. Use a portable stove for cooking.

Bicycles and wheeled-vehicles are prohibited in the wilderness (from the toe of the primary dune to the bay).

Pets are restricted within the wilderness and ocean beaches from March 15 to Labor Day. Pets must be leashed at all times.

Plants, animals, and artifacts are protected by law. Collecting and metal detecting is prohibited. Leave what you find.

Obey all closures. Sections of trail may be temporarily closed for nesting shorebirds or hazardous conditions. Check with a park ranger before your hike.

Do not feed wildlife. Feeding animals can threaten their wild instincts and your safety.

Swim at your own risk. No lifeguards are present in the wilderness area.