

CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES EXPANDED HOURS, ADDITIONAL BEACH ACCESS AND BOARDWALK RECONSTRUCTION AT ISLAND BEACH STATE PARK
GOAL OF HAVING PARK FULLY OPERATIONAL POST SANDY FOR PEAK SUMMER SEASON
REMAINS ON TRACK

(13/P42) TRENTON - With the summer tourism season on the horizon, more areas of Island Beach State Park have reopened in the past few days and hours are expanding this week thanks to continued Superstorm Sandy cleanup and restoration efforts, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin announced today.

The DEP also this week awarded a contract to a New Brunswick firm, Tekton Development Corp., to reconstruct four beach access boardwalks that were severely damaged by Sandy. Two of the boardwalks are expected to be completed by Memorial Day and the other two by the Fourth of July. Tekton Development won the bid contract at a price of \$268,000.

"We are keeping pace with the Christie Administration's goal of having all of our state parks, including Island Beach State Park, fully operational for the peak summer season," Commissioner Martin said. "Having this popular destination getting closer to normal operations is emblematic of the state's drive to have the Shore open for business this summer."

Operating hours at Island Beach State Park are now extended from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. for all guests, which is consistent with the park's normal seasonal hours. Fishing access also has been extended from 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

For beach buggy users, beach access will extend south to access trail A-23, which is 8.2 miles south into the nearly 10-mile park. All three beach buggy access points, at Gillikin's Road and trails A-7 and A-23 are now open. Visitors now need 2013 mobile sport fishing permits to get on the beach with their vehicles. Those permits can currently be purchased at the main park office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

The park's two bayside trails at A-15 and A-21 are also open for visitors on foot or those wishing to launch a permitted watercraft such as a kayak. A portable restroom facility is also available.

Daily fees will be accepted at the gatehouse as of Wednesday, May 1.

Earlier this month, expanded areas of Island Beach State Park reopened, including access trails and parking lots at A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5 and A-6. Additional trail openings will be announced in the future as restoration efforts progress. Closed trails are marked.

Island Beach State Park manager Ray Bukowski advises visitors to exercise caution when driving on Shore Road, the main artery of the park, due to increased truck traffic that is hauling debris, and from the Ocean Bathing Area 2 parking lot due to on-going road sweeping efforts.

Bukowski lauded park staff, the New Jersey State Park Service, Friends of Island Beach State Park and the New Jersey Beach Buggy Association for their efforts in cleanup and restoration work at the second busiest state park.

For more on Island Beach State Park, visit

<http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/island.html>

For more on New Jersey's State Parks, Forests and Historic Sites, please visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/index.html>