

News Release

Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Block Island NWR □ John H. Chafee NWR at Pettaquamscutt Cove □ Ninigret NWR □ Sachuest Point NWR □ Trustum Pond NWR
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For Immediate Release

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For Further Information Contact:

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Fish and Wildlife Service Seeks Comment on Proposed Fee schedule for Sandy Point Island

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking public comments on a proposed beach access fee structure for those wishing to visit Sandy Point Island in Little Narragansett Bay. The Service is finalizing a lease for the island, and is working in collaboration with the Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., who owns the Island, and the Stonington Community Center who has issued beach access permits for the island in the past.

Compared to previous years, the proposed fees charged for a permit will be less than what has been charged in the past to visit the island, although daily passes will remain the same. Permits will be required from Memorial Day through Labor Day; the island may be visited free of charge outside these dates. All persons over the age of 18 would be required to have a permit. The proposed fee structure is:

Type	Proposed Fee	Summer, 2014 Fee
Season Pass, Individual	\$55.00	\$70.00
Season Pass, Family*	\$75.00	\$90.00
Season Pass, Senior Citizen	\$25.00	n/a
Federal Duck Stamp holder	free	n/a
Daily Pass	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00

*/ Two adults and their immediate children.

We hope to have permits available at the Stonington Community Center as in the past, and also from the National Wildlife Refuge website beginning in late April of 2015. The Community Center and their staff have been working to see how we can maintain a local, community based effort not only in providing access to permits, but also to provide information about the island.

“While we prefer not to charge a fee, we looked into the costs associated with managing the Island, and found that a fee was going to be needed” said Charlie Vandemoer, Refuge Manager for the Service. “We looked hard at trimming the budget, and compared our proposed fees with those charged in other, local areas” he added.

The fees collected will go back into management of the island, in addition to paying for administration of the fee program. Management programs include law enforcement, biological surveys and assessments, and visitor service, such as environmental education and interpretation. The goal is to manage the island as a Nature Preserve (National Wildlife Refuge) as it was intended at donation to the Avalonia Conservancy Inc., while at the same time maintaining its availability to the public for passive recreation and appreciation of the wildlife we aim to protect.

Public comments regarding the proposed fee structure will be accepted through March 10, 2015 and can be submitted to:

US Fish and Wildlife Service
ATTN: Sandy Point Island
50 Bend Road
Charlestown, RI 02813