



DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

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ISLAND BEACH STATE PARK TO HOST BEACH PLUM FESTIVAL ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

(18/P74) TRENTON – A delectable delight will highlight the 21st annual Beach Plum Festival on Sunday, Sept. 9 at Island Beach State Park in Ocean County.

The festival is the main fundraiser for the park's nonprofit partner Friends of Island Beach State Park, which will use festival revenue to plant American beach grass to further enhance and stabilize dunes, as well as other park needs.



The rain-or-shine event will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Swimming Area 1. An \$8 donation is suggested.

Visitors may take a free shuttle from an overflow parking lot to the festival area starting at 10 a.m. The shuttle will continue until the festival ends.

“The annual Beach Plum Festival highlights a number of important elements at the Jersey shore,” Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources Ray Bukowski said.

“It marks the end of a great summer, the beginning of the fall festival season, and brings attention in an enjoyable way to a native seasonal fruit found only in coastal areas.”

“This event is a great opportunity for families to enjoy a day at the shore while tasting beach plums and learning about the critical environment in which they grow,” Parks and Forestry Director Olivia Glenn said. “We invite the public to come to Island Beach State Park and experience what nature has to offer.”

Festival visitors can sample or purchase beach plum jelly and ice cream, enjoy children's activities such as a magic act and cartoonist, explore exhibits providing information about the environment and various non-profit organizations, among many other activities.

The beach plum is a shrubby tree that thrives in sandy soil and offers dune stabilization for sensitive coastal ecosystems such as those found at Island Beach State Park. The tree is typically found in coastal environments stretching from Maine to North Carolina.

Beach plum plants produce beautiful blossoms every spring and fruit in late summer and early fall. The fruit usually measures less than two centimeters in circumference, and its taste is a mix between a plum, a strawberry and an apricot. Beach plums may be eaten raw, but are often used as a jam, jelly, marinade or dessert sauce.

“The Beach Plum Festival is a tradition that celebrates the bounty of Island Beach,” said Kathy Perry, president of the Friends of Island Beach State Park. “With the participation and support of visitors who attend the festival, we can continue our mission of improving and adding programs and events at this park.”



Friends of Island Beach State Park formed in 1996 to encourage protection of the barrier island ecosystem and to enhance both educational and recreational programs at the park.

In addition to the Beach Plum Festival the group organizes beach grass plantings in the spring and fall, the Conservation Talks lecture series, May Day Pet Expo, the Barrier Island Surf Contest and the month-long wellness celebration on Thursdays in August. The group also prints the park's annual visitor guide.

Proceeds from the group's activities support park conservation efforts and interpretive programs. Recent donations include a van to shuttle guests at events, a television for educational displays, improvements to interpretive signage, and maintenance for the park's Wi-Fi system and osprey/beach cameras.

For more information on Island Beach State Park, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/island.html.

For more information on the Friends of Island Beach State Park, visit: www.thefriendsofislandbeach.org.

For festival details, visit www.friendsofisp.org/events/beach-plum-festival-2/.

To learn more about the Division of Parks and Forestry, visit www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/.

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