



7.0.01 JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE, 2000

## 7.0 CONCLUSION



7.0.02 CANARSIE PIER LOOKING ACROSS JAMAICA BAY TOWARDS JOHN F. KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2006

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

Gateway was designated the first urban National Recreation Area on the Oct. 27, 1972, exactly one century after Yellowstone became the first national park in the United States and the world. Thirty-four years later, Gateway continues to struggle to meet the aspirations of its founders, negotiate its relationship with the communities that surround it, and balance the goals of historical preservation, environmental conservation, and promoting recreation.

Gateway has incredible potential to become a world-renowned national park and a model for a new interface between urban communities and ecological systems. It presents a significant regional resource with incredible infrastructural, ecological and cultural value in the New York and New Jersey metropolitan region, hosting endangered birds, fish and shellfish breeding grounds, marinas, playfields, and cultural relics. It is also the site of combined sewer outfalls, treated wastewater effluent, and former landfills.

Efforts to address the threat to Jamaica Bay's ecosystem, in particular, could generate a collaborative vision that bridges science, design, and politics. Those efforts could establish new sustainable design principles and practices for the adjacent watershed/sewershed and the region beyond. It is perhaps a timely moment to study a range of

different strategies and approaches to ensure Gateway's future vitality relative to the realities of the joint-built natural environment. The issues of the park as a whole can be seen as being part of a microcosm at Floyd Bennett Field, which will be the subject of an international design competition. Remaking Floyd Bennett Field as a new park for a new generation of NPS visitors could be the catalyst needed to radically transform the NPS's role relative to an urbanized national landscape.

This report has identified the conflicting issues facing Gateway. The teeming numbers of people and wildlife visiting the parklands attest to its great necessity and potential success. But because it lies in two different states and three different city boroughs it presents a physical, managerial, and funding challenge and comes with a diverse set of stakeholders. This has resulted in a park that has a multitude of competing priorities, rendering Gateway's identity as part of the National Park System invisible to many of its visitors. Envisioning Gateway at this juncture could generate substantive dialogue on what it means to be a national park today, and how to create a sustainable urban-ecological future.

## ENDNOTES

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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