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The Cape Cod National Seashore Treasure

By Cliff Calderwood

Take a captivating trip through Massachusetts' Cape Cod National Seashore Park. With miles of splendid white sand beaches, inspiring walks and trails, and stunning fragile dunes, the park is a remarkable geological wonder thousands of years in the making. Just keep reading and you can visit it right here...

The Cape Cod National Seashore is a 4,308-acre park 60 miles south of Boston, Massachusetts. It was set aside by an act of congress in 1961 to preserve and protect a unique geological area and wild life habitat of New England. Cape Cod was formed when the last of the great glaciers melted about 12,000-years ago leaving a large lake, which eventually drained exposing the sediment and deposits left by the glaciers from earlier times.

Nature has reshaped the whole of Cape Cod especially the Atlantic-facing National Seashore area, and it continues to this very day. But this is the place to come to escape. This is the place to come to experience nature, especially off-season. So let's take a brief Cape Cod vacations trip together. Are you ready?

NAUSET BEACH

The first stop on your trip is Nauset Beach in the town of Orleans. This is a striking beach to walk and see the relentless work of nature. The Atlantic storms batter the dunes each winter and beach erosion is a major problem here. Protection is the name of the game at Nauset not just for the dunes, but the birds nesting in the spring. Always pay close attention to erosion and bird nesting protection signs anywhere during your trip to Cape Cod.

The entrance to Nauset beach is located in East Orleans at the end of Beach Road, where there's a large parking lot. The lot is about 2 miles from Routes 6/6A, and during the summer months you'll pay to use it.

NATIONAL SEASHORE EASTHAM VISITORS CENTER

The Cape Cod National Seashore Treasure

The National Seashore has two visitor centers. The Salt Pond Visitor Center in Eastham will orientate you to the park, and provides short films, a museum, and free maps for hiking and biking trails. The salt pond itself is a glacial kettle pond that was once freshwater but the ocean has seeped through. Take time to discover the easy-walking trails near the pond, and learn about the varied birds and plants the area supports.

THE LIGHTHOUSE BEACHES

These next two beaches are very popular and during the summer the parking lots fill up quickly. Many people use their bicycles to get to these locations – plenty of parking for bikes and the price is right – free!

Coast Guard Beach in Eastham can be reached by bike from the bike trail from the Salt Pond Visitor Center, or by car from Nauset Road off Route 6 directly after the Visitor Center. This beach is a favorite

walk of mine at low tide, and was the area where Henry Beston wrote "The Outermost House." Sadly the blizzard of 1978 washed the cottage where he lived while writing the book – out to sea.

Nauset Light Beach can be reached from Brackett Road also off Route 6. Overlooking the beach is the red and white picturesque Nauset Lighthouse. Originally built in Chatham in the late 19th century, it was moved here shortly after, and moved again in 1996 when erosion of the cliff threatened to collapse the lighthouse. This beach is popular for the imposing and towering cliffs.

GREAT ISLAND HIKE IN WELLFLEET

The Great Island hike in Wellfleet is a 6-mile hike, so allow yourself at least half-a-day to explore this wonderful area. Located on the Cape Cod Bay side of the Cape in Wellfleet, drive to the trailhead off Chequesset Neck Road, and prepare yourself –and camera – for an exhilarating hike.

This is a real nature hike. There's no sandwich bar or coke machine waiting for you at the end, so take your own snacks and drinks. Of all the trails in the Cape Cod National Seashore Park, this is perhaps the most remote – and I like that!

NATIONAL SEASHORE PROVINCE LANDS VISITOR CENTER

The second of the visitor centers in the National Seashore Park is in Province Lands off Route 6 and on Race Point Road. This is the northern extremity of the park, and is the final stop on our brief Cape Cod National Seashore tour.

The Visitor Center has an observation deck where you can view the ocean, Province Lands forest, and the towering dunes. Province Lands is jam-packed with swimming beaches, a bike trail, a walking trail, and a beautiful lighthouse at Race Point. Take time to tour this area and enjoy this unique area of the Cape.

Cape Cod National Seashore is one of the most popular summer vacation destinations in New

England. But in my book it's a great place to visit anytime of the year. If you're prepared to explore and walk a bit you can discover your own secluded and pristine piece of Cape Cod.

For more details on these and other attractions on Cape Cod vacations and to pick up your free vacation reports go to Cliff Calderwood's New England Vacations site at:

<http://www.new-england-vacations-guide.com/>

Optimizing a Press Release for Search Engines

By Marcia Yudkin

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Search engines increasingly charge for inclusion, and press release distribution networks charge hundreds of dollars to distribute your news. But I've come up with a way to legitimately let other people shoulder the time or effort for your news to show up in search engines.

The lightbulb went off for me when I was searching for very specialized software and came upon a press release for such a product posted at another site, not that of the company producing the software. Of course that release led me to the company's Web site, which was itself nowhere in the search engine listings.

I therefore went looking for sites that welcome free posting of press releases and found more than 100 of them. I posted my own press release at more than 20 of them and now, two months later, a Google search on the phrase "free syndicated business content," which was the theme in the headline and the body of my release, turns up three of these in the first 20 listings, including in position #1. If I type in "attract repeat business visitors," which is an exact quote from the headline, eight of eight items that come up are instances of the press release.

If you have timely news, for instance about an upcoming conference you're sponsoring, this technique won't benefit you as much as if you have offerings that will continue to be of interest for months or years in the future. I like this strategy because, like Tom Sawyer's legendary painting project, it enables you to let other people do the hard work, here of getting good search engine rankings. The site hosting your press release for free then benefits from the traffic your release draws and so do you.

Search Engine Optimization and Free Press Release Distribution

Here's how to profit from this strategy, in six steps.

1. Decide on a keyword phrase that ties in to the product or service you are promoting and that people actually search for. You can research this conveniently at Wordtracker.com.
2. Place this phrase into your press release headline and repeat it around three times within the body of your press release. Make sure you also include two properly formed links to your own Web site (i.e.,

write "http://www.mydomain.com" rather than "mydomain.com") within the text of the release.

3. Unless the proper name of your product or service is already well-known, emphasize its generic description rather than its name. For instance, write "proposal writing software" rather than "PropWritePro."

4. Likewise, substitute keyword phrases for pronouns like "it" or "its" to increase their overall frequency in the release.

5. Post your completed press release at sites that allow free posting, such as prweb.com,

pressbox.co.uk and dozens of others that turn up in searches on phrases like "free press release submission" or "free press release distribution." Through diligent and repeated searching, I found more than 20 general sites like that and more than 100 sites welcoming releases on a particular topic.

6. Wait a few weeks and check your standing in search engines for the phrases in your release. Positionagent.com works well for this. Then repeat the whole process for another message, another keyword phrase or another product or service.

Additional Notes on Press Release Optimization

Although these steps may appear simple, they are not intuitive or natural for anyone with experience in writing traditional press releases. Let's suppose you were launching a rental boat service in Truro, Massachusetts, which is on Cape Cod. Tourists would be much more likely to use "Cape Cod" as a search term than "Truro," so the former is what should be repeated. And particularly if you happen to know Cape Cod, if you were not consciously writing for search engines, you would probably use "Cape Cod" only once and then revert to "the Cape," which wouldn't help enough when people are typing in "Cape Cod boat rental."

A bonus benefit of this strategy is that by placing your releases around the Web, you may also boost the rankings of your own site at search engines that count inbound links as a sign of popularity.

Assuming you've chosen your keyword phrases wisely, enjoy the increased visibility and traffic that the free press release posting sites have worked hard to obtain for you!

Boston-based publicity and marketing consultant Marcia Yudkin is the author of a new special report, PR For the Internet Age, as well as of Six Steps to Free Publicity (Plume/Penguin), Internet Marketing for Less than \$500/Year (Maximum Press) and eight other books;

<http://www.yudkin.com/printernet.htm>.



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