



PRESERVATION OUTLEASING SUCCESS STORY

‘All Clear’ for Leasing at Floyd Bennett Field and Gateway National Recreation Area New York and New Jersey

THE PROJECT

Floyd Bennett Field, located in the New York metropolitan area, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981 due to its association with mid-20th century commercial aviation architecture. The field opened in 1931 and served as a point of departure for the record-breaking flights of famous aviators such as Amelia Earhart and Howard Hughes. The site was converted to a Naval Air Station in 1941, and it was the most active airport in the United States during World War II. It is just one of the historic resources that make up Gateway National Recreation Area (GNRA), a 27,000-acre National Park Service (NPS) urban park that spans the New York Harbor. Unfortunately, however, the harsh climate, disuse, and deferred maintenance had taken their toll.

THE PROCESS

In 2013, as the park faced particularly challenging funding shortfalls and park-wide damages from Hurricane Sandy (2012), staff began considering opportunities to outlease portions of the facilities to nonfederal partners. At Floyd Bennett Field, the Williams Companies, a natural gas processing and transportation company, proposed installing a natural gas meter and regulating station in two historic air hangars as part of a larger pipeline project. A historic structures report was completed to guide the rehabilitation effort. In accordance with relevant requirements, Williams rehabilitated the hangars, which were in serious disrepair and in danger of collapse. Williams' lease—also known as an outlease—is for 10 years, and requires that the lessee provide the ongoing maintenance of the hangars.

THE SUCCESS

Building on the success of the Williams lease, in 2014 NPS also leased a historic riding stable and grounds to the Jamaica Bay Riding Academy along the northern shoreline of the Bay. The Floyd Bennett Field rehabilitation project was the recipient of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Chairman's Award in 2017. In 2018 and 2019, two marinas were also outleased in the Jamaica Bay and Staten Island Units of GNRA. NPS continues leasing efforts at Sandy Hook's Fort Hancock National Historic Landmark, which fronts the Atlantic Ocean and sustained extensive damage from Hurricane Sandy. The Secretary of the Interior's GNRA Fort Hancock 21st Century Advisory Committee provides advice on the NPS' "rolling" request for proposals for residential, lodging, or related business uses there, which has yielded six long-term leases with rehabilitation projects underway.

“Here at Gateway, we see leasing as an important tool for bringing much-needed investment to the rehabilitation and maintenance of our historic structures, while creating for the public a greatly enhanced experience of these landscapes that are so fundamental to our American story. It’s a win all around.”

— Jennifer Nersesian,
Superintendent, Gateway National
Recreation Area

Partners:

National Park Service

Federal Energy Regulatory
Commission

New York State Historic
Preservation Office

The Williams Companies

Floyd Bennett Field and historic air
hangar in New York, part of Gateway
National Recreation Area (NPS)

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

401 F Street NW, Suite 308, Washington, DC 20001 | Phone: 202-517-0200 • Fax: 202-517-6381 • achp@achp.gov • www.achp.gov

