



Description

Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum offers climbing tours of the landmark 1860 lighthouse. The waterfront Museum in the restored WWII building exhibits *Five Thousand Years on the Loxahatchee* and outdoor exhibits include the Oil House, Keepers Workshop, Tindall Pioneer Homestead, Pennock Bell, Seminole Chickee, and Early Native American kiosks. Also available are the museum gift shop, educational programs for children and adults, sunset & moonrise tours, weddings, and special events. The Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is part of the 120-acre federally designated, Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area (JILONA.) Check for hours and programs at www.jupiterlighthouse.org. Operated by the Loxahatchee River Historical Society a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and legislated managing partner in the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area, National Conservation Lands.

History

An impressive point of land sits at the junction of the Indian River and Jupiter Inlet and for thousands of years had been a meeting place for ancient Indian tribes. This strategic site did not go unnoticed by government surveyors. President Franklin Pierce signed the executive order to set aside a 61.5-acre site for a lighthouse in 1854. The lighthouse's location and original design were chosen by Lieutenant George Gordon Meade. Lt. William Reynolds, who succeeded Meade as Engineer of the 4th and 7th Lighthouse Districts, improved the tower's strength with a double wall design. Captain Edward A. Yorke supervised construction of the lighthouse. Work during the first six months of 1859 proceeded very slowly, mostly due to the climate and fickle inlet. Yorke returned with a crew on January 8, 1860 to complete construction of the lighthouse, oil house, and keepers' dwelling in May 1860. The lighthouse was officially lighted July 10, 1860. The tower has survived the Civil War, hurricanes, and even an earthquake.

A Weather Bureau and Signal Station was established at the lighthouse site in 1888. Passing ships were signaled during the day by semaphore (flags) and at night by flares. In 1905 a Navy wireless telegraph station was established on the Reservation. But it wasn't until 1925 that a new survey discovered serious errors in the original survey and determined that the Lighthouse Reservation actually covered 122 acres.

In 1929, the Navy acquired 8.4 acres of the Reservation from the US Government and by 1936 the Navy was operating a radio compass station at Jupiter as an aid to navigation. The naval radio station broadcast weather information and monitored distress signals as well as naval ship-to-shore and aircraft frequencies.

It was on July 1, 1939, that all US lighthouses became the responsibility of the U.S. Coast Guard. At this time, Jupiter Inlet Light Station included the lighthouse, oil house, two keeper dwellings, radio beacon and generator building, dock, and several auxiliary structures. In the same year, the Navy expanded their radio station into a high frequency direction finding and radio intercept station. This expansion led to the construction of a "Married Men's Quarters" for six radiomen and their families; the building now serves as the lighthouse museum. Designated "Station J," the revamped radio station came online in July 1940. This secret installation was designed to intercept German U-boat radio messages, helping to locate the transmissions and transcribing the encoded messages for decryption by naval intelligence. This information helped warn Allied shipping and direct US military forces to locate and attack U-boats. During May-June 1943, the Allies sank 67 U-boats with the help Station J and other sites in the radio direction

finding network. Station J also monitored maritime radio traffic from occupied and neutral nations to prevent collaboration with the Germans and helped track friendly merchant shipping.

January 27, 1972, the Loxahatchee River Historical Society (LRHS) incorporated to preserve the area's history and opened the Oil House Museum in June of 1973. Public tours were conducted periodically by permission of the U.S. Coast Guard. On November 15, of the same year, the Lighthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1988 the Society opened the Florida History Center & Museum in nearby Burt Reynolds Park.

In 1994, the LRHS entered into a 30-year lease agreement with the U.S. Coast Guard to maintain and insure the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse and to conduct regular public tours to the top of the lighthouse for the first time. The LRHS operated a small visitor center in the east end of the last remaining building of Station J, once used as living quarters for the military.

The LRHS, with a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation and in cooperation with the Town of Jupiter and the U.S. Coast Guard, started a major restoration and repainting project in 1999. It was completed in April 2000.

In 2006, in an agreement between the LRHS, Palm Beach County, and Town of Jupiter, the old WWII building in Lighthouse Park was renovated to become the new home of the Loxahatchee River Historical Society. On December 7, 2006, the history museum and society headquarters moved from Burt Reynolds Park to Lighthouse Park to become the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse and Museum. The LRHS also entered into an agreement with the U.S. Coast Guard to preserve and operate a larger portion of the land between the tower and the western fence line of the U.S. Coast Guard property in order to set up outdoor history exhibits. Operations for the lighthouse and history museum are now in one location.

The Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area (JILONA) Act was introduced into by Senator Bill Nelson and co-sponsored by Senator Mel Martinez. It was introduced into the House of Representatives by Congressman Tim Mahoney and co-sponsored by Congressmen Ron Klein and Alcee Hastings. This legislation designates the lighthouse and 120 surrounding acres of sensitive habitat as an *Outstanding Natural Area* (ONA) in the Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) National Landscape Conservation System. This site is the first Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) in the country not on the Pacific Coast. Only two other ONAs exist: Yaquina Head, Oregon and Piedras Blancas, California. President George W. Bush signed the Congressional bill on May 8, 2008, protecting this site for all Americans in perpetuity, giving it a status similar to a National Monument.

The Outstanding Natural Area is cooperatively managed by the Bureau of Land Management with the following local partners: Loxahatchee River Historical Society, U.S. Coast Guard, Palm Beach County, Town of Jupiter, Village of Tequesta, Town of Jupiter Inlet Colony, and Jupiter High School's Environmental Research & Field Studies Academy. Over the last two decades, the Jupiter Inlet Working Group a uniquely successful partnership that has accomplished a wealth of projects including restoration of the lighthouse and other historic structures, wetland reconstruction, river shoreline stabilization, fuel hazard reduction, and habitat improvement for endangered species. For its dedication to safeguarding Jupiter Inlet's ecological integrity and cultural heritage, the Jupiter Inlet Working Group was given the prestigious Cooperative Conservation Award from the Department of the Interior in April 2008.

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