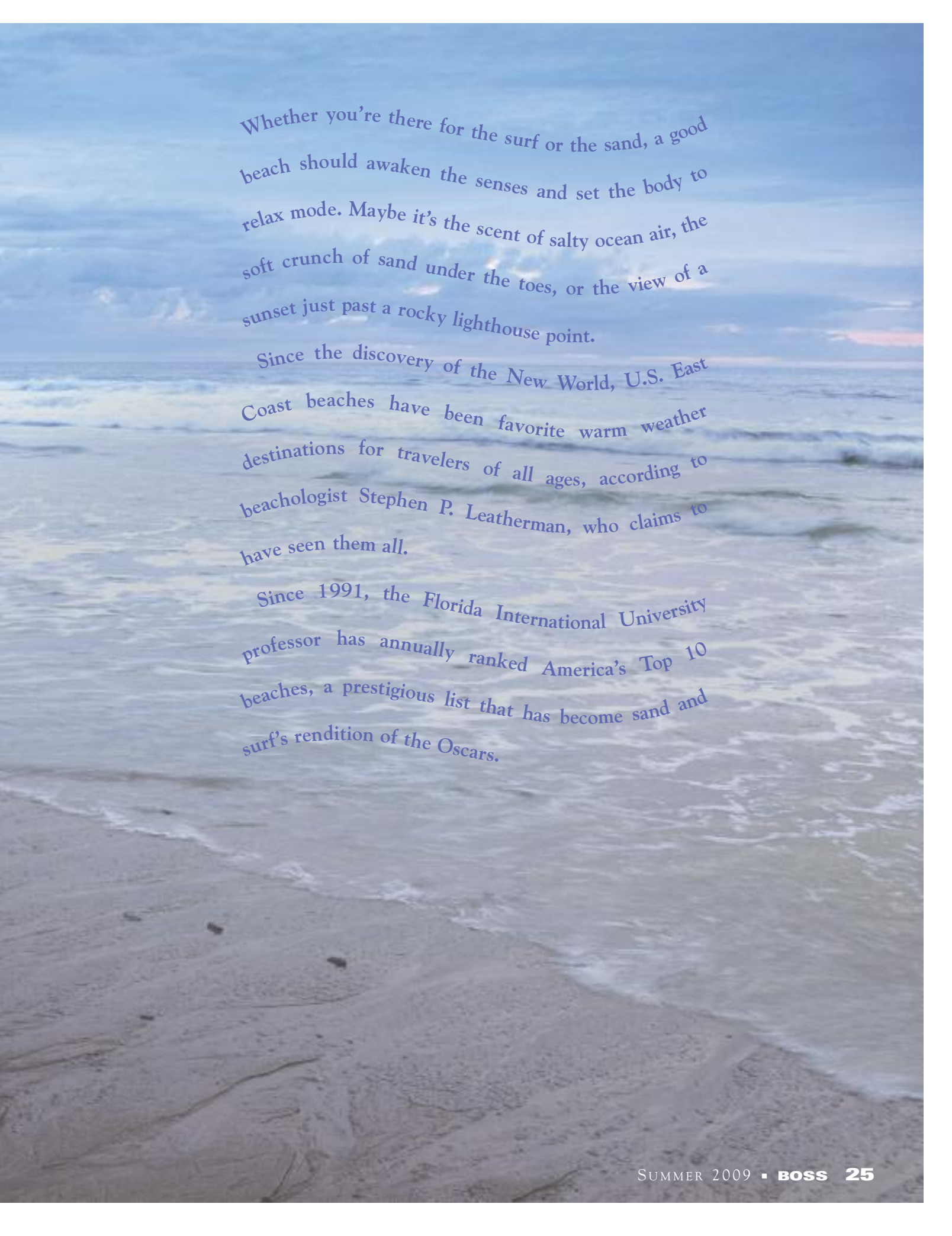


A photograph of a beach with a large rock in the ocean under a cloudy sky. The text "At the Shore" is overlaid in a large, white, serif font.

At the Shore

Summer is for relaxing at the beach—
try one of these five noteworthy choices
from the East Coast of the United States

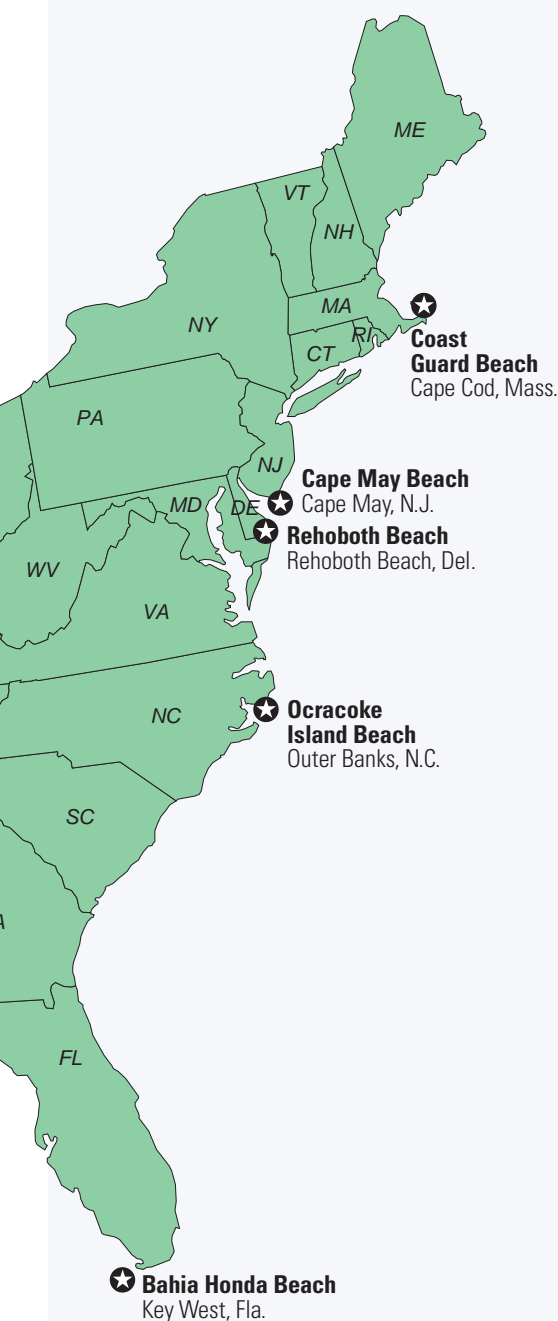
By Greg Rienzi



Whether you're there for the surf or the sand, a good beach should awaken the senses and set the body to relax mode. Maybe it's the scent of salty ocean air, the soft crunch of sand under the toes, or the view of a sunset just past a rocky lighthouse point.

Since the discovery of the New World, U.S. East Coast beaches have been favorite warm weather destinations for travelers of all ages, according to beachologist Stephen P. Leatherman, who claims to have seen them all.

Since 1991, the Florida International University professor has annually ranked America's Top 10 beaches, a prestigious list that has become sand and surf's rendition of the Oscars.



Leatherman, known to many as “Dr. Beach,” says that several of his all-time favorites reside on the Atlantic Ocean side of things. Unlike their West Coast counterparts, East Coast beaches tend to be more swimmer-friendly, with warmer waters and gentler surf, and are more picturesque, featuring flat stretches of soft pale-colored sand leading up to grass-covered dunes.

So pack your suntan lotion and sandals as you get ready to embark on a summer road trip to some of Dr. Beach’s top-rated East Coast shore destinations.

Coast Guard Beach

Cape Cod, Mass.

On Nov. 9, 1620, Pilgrims aboard the *Mayflower* first sighted the southern tip of Massachusetts’ Outer Cape, a beautiful stretch of shoreline today known as Coast Guard Beach. Although en route to New York, a storm forced the travelers to Cape Cod’s picturesque cliffs and dunes—the same ones that now beckon thousands each year.

Coast Guard Beach, part of the Cape Cod National Seashore, marks the beginning of a 20-mile unbroken stretch of sandy coast from Eastham to Provincetown, Mass.

From mid-June to Labor Day, Coast Guard’s turquoise waters attract swarms of swimmers and water sport enthusiasts. In a waterfront Mecca, what separates Coast Guard from its neighbors is the ample elbowroom.

“Coast Guard is a wide beach, unlike many of the Cape’s other beaches,” said Bill DeSousa, vice president of a PR firm that represents the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce. “The sand is soft and the water is pristine, plus [the beach] goes on for miles. You can be with the crowd if you want, or walk a

bit to find a quiet and secluded spot.”

Be warned, the water is “invigorating.” The warmest it gets is 62 degrees Fahrenheit (17 degrees Celsius), and even hardy surfers don wet suits.

One of the beach’s most prominent features is Nauset Marsh, located behind the former U.S. Coast Guard Station, an iconic white-sided and orange-roofed building that overlooks a shoreline formed by eroding glacial cliffs. Visitors can bike or hike the trail to the marsh and then rent a kayak, the perfect way to observe the pristine salt marsh habitat where shorebirds, including terns and endangered plovers, work the tidal flats.

Surfers worship Coast Guard’s summer swells—8- to 10-foot waves are not uncommon after a storm—and the sandbars that form off the shoreline.

For lodging, check out Eastham, the gateway to the Outer Cape. Originally called Nauset, Eastham is a quiet coastal resort town originally settled in 1644 by Pilgrims who were dissatisfied with the poor quality of the lands granted to them in Plymouth. Descendants of the original settlers still live in the area and three of the original passengers on the *Mayflower* are buried

Cape May, N.J., is known for its well-preserved Victorian-style homes, left.

in the town's Old Cove Cemetery.

DeSousa, who has lived on Cape Cod for 16 years, said the key to enjoying Coast Guard Beach is arriving early and having a backup plan. "If the crowds that day are too much for you, head down to Marconi Beach. It's the same water, same sand and the cliffs are even more pronounced."

Cape May Beach

Cape May, N.J.

New Jersey inevitably conjures up images of Atlantic City, Bruce Springsteen and miles upon miles of sandy shores. In effect, the Garden State gave birth to the American beach resort town. The one that started it all was Cape May.

For generations of locals and tourists, Cape May has been a favorite summer getaway. This year, the jewel of the Jersey shore celebrates its 400th birthday.

In 1609, the famed English sea captain Henry Hudson first documented the peninsula, situated in the southern portion of the state between the Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay. Dutch Capt. Cornelius Jacobsen Mey came upon the same peninsula 11 years later while exploring the Delaware River. He not so modestly named the area Cape Mey, but the spelling was later changed.

In 1761, Cape May officially became the first seashore resort in America and today a typical summer weekend attracts nearly 80,000 visitors.

The town is the only one in the United States wholly designated as a Historic Landmark City and is known for its well-preserved Victorian houses, gas lamp and tree-lined streets, as well as its beautiful expanse of beach with fine, powdery sand.

The downtown and waterfront areas have everything you'd want from a coastal town: ice cream shops, bed and breakfasts, top-flight seafood restaurants and even horse-drawn carriage rides. For amusement park-style excitement, the animated boardwalk of North Wildwood is just a short drive to the north.

The beach, of course, is a main draw. With a summertime water temperature

that hovers around 74 degrees Fahrenheit (23 degrees Celsius), visitors go there to swim in the friendly waves or walk the beach. Many just relax and soak up the sun, but a popular pastime in Cape May is bike riding. Locals recommend that you cycle down to Sunset Beach or the Cape May Lighthouse, built in 1859. The 157-foot lighthouse at Cape May is still operated by the Coast Guard but is leased to the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts, which offers tours up the tower and manages a gift shop.

Other area activities include whale- and dolphin-watching boat trips, salt-marsh safaris, kayaking in the saltwater marshlands, deep-sea fishing, a nautical museum and a historic World War II coastal defense gun emplacement.

While the town ramps up in the summer, Cape May also offers a variety of cooler weather activities, such as candlelight house tours and trolley rides. Whenever you go, get ready to step back in time to the days of bathing dresses and parasols.

Rehoboth Beach

Rehoboth Beach, Del.

In the off-season, Rehoboth lays mostly dormant. The Delaware town has a year-round population of only 1,500 and outside the summer months, finding a parking space on Rehoboth Avenue, the wide four-lane main street, is effortless (and free).

All that changes come Memorial

Day. Parking meters go into effect and thousands invade the one-square-mile town long billed as "the nation's summer capital." This summer tradition dates to the 1870s when Rehoboth Beach, the hub of the Delaware shore, became a Methodist campground.

Rehoboth is about 125 miles from major airports in Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia. It has a wide sandy beach with tall dunes, warm summer water temperatures (75-79 degrees Fahrenheit/ 24-26 Celsius) and a concession for umbrellas and beach chairs. The area features a mile-long boardwalk for bike riding, strolling or jogging. There's plenty to do on the boardwalk, including miniature golf, arcades and a small amusement park. Summer concerts and events are held at the Bandstand Pavilion on Rehoboth Avenue.

At sunrise, many head down to the beach to check out the schooling dolphins and shorebirds.

The real action is on Rehoboth Avenue, with its nearly 75 tightly packed restaurants and bars. A favorite haunt is Dogfish Head Brewings & Eats, a microbrewery that regularly wins gold medals for its "oft-centered ales for oft-centered people."

For accommodations, Rehoboth has a collection of low-rise boardwalk hotels and Colonial and Cape Cod homes for rent, tucked deep into pine groves.

Entrance to Rehoboth Beach is free; just get there early.

A view of the Atlantic Ocean from the mile-long boardwalk in Rehoboth Beach, Del.





The second oldest operating lighthouse in North Carolina, the Ocracoke Lighthouse is open to the public for tours.

Ocracoke Island Beach

Outer Banks, N.C.

In terms of unspoiled beauty and historic charm, Ocracoke Island Beach in North Carolina has few peers. Ocracoke Island, the one-time plundering ground of the famed pirate Blackbeard, features 15 miles of fine golden sand beaches that consistently rank among the nation's best.

The beach is part of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, managed by the National Park Service. The distinction, thankfully (even business owners will tell you), prohibits development on the wide beach, which is lined with tall dunes and sea turtle nesting grounds.

Ocracoke Island, with Pamlico Sound on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other, is one of the barrier islands of North Carolina's Outer Banks. One can access the island by air or by water. Area experts recommend that visitors fly into Norfolk, Va., rent a car, and then drive down to Cape Hatteras to catch the free 40-minute ferry ride.

The beach itself offers first-class swimming, surf fishing, sea kayaking and surfing. The Gulf Stream keeps the waters warm most of the year, so pack your bathing suit. Pack a camera, too, as you might need one to capture the nesting

sea turtles in the summer or the packs of dolphins that play just past the shallows.

The high season lasts from Memorial Day (late May) to Labor Day (September), but the island's limited accommodations and access constraints keep the crowds down. Locals will tell you March and April might be the best time to go, as air temperature hovers between 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit (15-20 degrees Celsius) and you can call the place your own. However, you may need to be a member of the polar bear club to swim at this time of year—water temperature averages only around 50 degrees F (10 degrees C) compared to the 82 degrees F (28 degrees C) in the summer.

The quaint village of Ocracoke, located on the island's southern side and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, features the Ocracoke Lighthouse, several historic commercial buildings and homes, and dozens of unique shops. What visitors won't find are chain restaurants or hotels, so be prepared to be won over by the local food and lodgings.

If the beach doesn't amaze you, the island's history might. There's no shortage of naval battles stories, including Civil War tales and that of Edward Teach (aka Blackbeard), who was killed

during a bloody battle with a British navy force just off the island's shore. Want to hear more? Ask Philip Howard, the island's unofficial story collector, who traces his ancestry back eight generations to William Howard, Blackbeard's quartermaster and Colonial owner of Ocracoke Island.

Howard serves as a guide on the island's Ghost and Historic Walking Tour. Don't miss it.

Bahia Honda Beach

Key West, Fla.

Coral reefs surround much of the Florida Keys, which make it an ideal spot for snorkeling and diving. The reefs also limit the number and size of sandy beaches, but they do exist. In fact, Bahia Honda Key, a small island in the Lower Keys, is home to a 2.5-mile pristine sweep of sand that just might be the Sunshine State's best.

The sugary white sand beach is part of the 524-acre Bahia Honda State Park, which occupies most of the virtually uninhabited tropical island located 12 miles south of Marathon, Fla. Untouched by development, Bahia Honda (pronounced both BAY-ah HON-da and Ba-hee-ah Own-dah) has become a prime eco-tourism destination that can be visited year-round. There are three separate beach areas in the park, and water temperatures are balmy, ranging from the mid-70s Fahrenheit (24 degrees Celsius) in the winter to the mid-80s F (29 degrees C) during the summer.

The park, open from sunrise to sunset, offers camping facilities, picnic areas, a water sports shop, marina, rental cabins, a convenience store, a nature center and plenty of opportunities for sunning. The rental cabins fill up fast in the winter months, so book ahead. The beach also features the Silver Palm Nature Trail, a short but diverse hike that passes dunes, hardwood hammocks and mangroves.

Marine life abounds in the clear ocean waters and many visitors rent kayaks or snorkeling gear to get up close and personal. The park, part of the Great Florida Birding Trail, is also a popular spot to observe white-crowned pigeons, great white herons, pelicans, willets, plovers and other wading birds and shorebirds.

Carol Shaughnessy, a writer and Florida Keys expert, calls Bahia Honda "a pure and natural wonderland." The view from the beach is "absolutely gorgeous," she said, but for an even better vantage point you must walk to the top of the old rail bridge, once part of the Florida Overseas Railroad that connected Bahia Honda with Spanish Harbor Key. (For more on the Florida Overseas Railroad, see the biography of Railroad founder Henry Flagler in the summer 2006 issue of BOSS at www.dixonvalve.com.)

The state of Florida purchased the bridge after the 1935 Labor Day hurricane and converted it to automobile use. After a replacement Bahia Honda Bridge was opened in 1972, two sections of the Rail Bridge were removed to allow ships to pass through and to remind drivers it's no longer in use.

The old bridge offers breathtaking and expansive views of the beach and ocean. "You can really see forever up there, and it's magnificent during sunsets," Shaughnessy said. "It's one of my favorite spots in the world." ➤



Bahia Honda State Park in the Florida Keys is open from sunrise to beautiful sunset.

Getting Pumped Up Is Easier Than Ever ...



Go to bradfordfittings.com to download our pump and repair kit brochure.

Dixon Sanitary

N25 W23040 Paul Road, Pewaukee, WI 53072
800-789-1718 • Fax: 800-789-4046
pumps@bradfordfittings.com

Dixon Sanitary now offers the Bradford™ BC-Series Sanitary Centrifugal Pumps.

- Pump and all spare parts are completely interchangeable with all Sanitary C-Series pumps
- Pump model and component part numbers are familiar and easy to use - BC114, BC216, etc.
- Competitively priced
- All components are stocked as kits (and individually)
- Most complete pumps ship within 24 hours

For all of your sanitary centrifugal pump needs, what new things do you need to learn to put our power to work for you?

Our phone number: 800.789.1718, that's it.
Give us a call today.

bradfordfittings.com