

# PARKS and RECREATION COUNCIL



DELAWARE  
STATE PARKS

November 2024 Report



# Contents

<b>Director's Office.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Parks Personnel Update.....	3
<b>Operations, Maintenance and Programming.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Statewide.....	4
Northern Region.....	4
<i>Alapocas Run State Park.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Auburn Valley State Park.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Bellevue State Park and Fox Point State Park.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Brandywine Creek State Park.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Brandywine Zoo.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>White Clay Creek State Park.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Wilmington State Parks.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Inland Ponds.....	7
<i>First State Heritage Park.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Fort Delaware State Park.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Killens Pond State Park.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Lums Pond State Park.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Trap Pond State Park.....</i>	<i>9</i>
Coastal Region.....	10
<i>Cape Henlopen State Park.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Delaware Seashore State Park.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Indian River Marina.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Interpretation and Programming.....	12
<i>Statewide Programming.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Interpretive Planning, Exhibits and Publications.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Programming Attendance Data.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Environmental Stewardship Program.....</i>	<i>16</i>
Volunteer Groups and Projects.....	17
<i>Key Highlights for Volunteer Unit.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Friends Group Highlights.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Workforce Programs.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>School/Youth Group Volunteers.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Corporate and Group Volunteers.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Scout Volunteers.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Volunteer Supported Events.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Grant Program.....</i>	<i>21</i>
Enforcement and Lifeguard.....	21
<i>Natural Resources Police.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Delaware State Park Beach Patrol.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<b>Planning, Preservation, and Development.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Open Space Program.....	23
Cultural Resources Unit (CRU).....	24
<i>Collections and Conservation.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Resident Curatorship Program.....</i>	<i>25</i>
Office of Nature Preserves (ONP).....	26
<i>Nature Preserve Updates and Management.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Park Planning.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Grants.....</i>	<i>27</i>
Office of Design and Development (ODD).....	28

<i>Alapocas Run and Wilmington State Parks</i> .....	28
<i>Bellevue State Park</i> .....	29
<i>Brandywine Creek State Park</i> .....	31
<i>Cape Henlopen State Park</i> .....	31
<i>Delaware Seashore, Holts Landing and Fenwick Island State Parks</i> .....	32
<i>Fort Delaware State Park</i> .....	33
<i>First State Heritage Park</i> .....	33
<i>Garrisons Lake Golf Course</i> .....	33
<i>Lums Pond State Park</i> .....	33
<i>Killens Pond State Park</i> .....	34
<i>Trap Pond State Park</i> .....	34
<i>White Clay Creek State Park</i> .....	35
<b>Administrative Services</b> .....	<b>36</b>
Marketing/Social Media.....	36
<i>Official Outdoor Recreation Sponsor of University of Delaware Athletics</i> .....	36
<i>2024 Hershey RV Show</i> .....	36
<i>Best of Delaware Show</i> .....	37
<i>Digital Marketing</i> .....	37
<i>Website Update</i> .....	38
Office of Business Services.....	39
<i>Surf Permit and Annual Pass Sales</i> .....	39
<i>Summer Camping</i> .....	40
<i>Fall Camping</i> .....	41
<i>Contract Updates</i> .....	42
Creative Services/Publications.....	42

# Director's Office

Megan Ramsey

---

## Parks Personnel Update

**Nathan Attard** was hired Aug. 26 to the planner IV position in the Planning, Preservation and Development section. Prior to coming to the division, Nathan worked for the Delaware Department of Transportation as a strategic planner. He has a bachelor's degree in Art History, Historic Preservation and Community Planning from the College of Charleston and a master's degree in Urban Planning from University at Buffalo.

**Tobias Bulk** was hired Aug. 11 to the conservation technician III position at Brandywine Creek State Park. He had worked for the division previously as a seasonal building, grounds, custodial and maintenance worker from 2019-2021 before returning in 2024. Prior to returning to Brandywine Creek State Park, he worked for First State National Historical Park as a motor vehicle operation. Tobias has a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Conservation and Ecology from University of Delaware.

**Alana Delaney** promoted Oct. 20 from the park superintendent III at Bellevue State Park to the park administrator I position in the Administrative Services Section. Alana joined the Division in 2009 as an EPO park ranger and went on to serve as a naturalist and assistant camp director, volunteer coordinator, assistant park superintendent at Bellevue/Fox Point, park manager at Alapocas Run and park superintendent III at Wilmington/Alapocas Run. She is a certified playground safety inspector, interpretive guide, canoe and kayak instructor, archery instructor and emergency medical responder.

**Craig Florkiewicz** was hired Aug. 26 to the physical plant maintenance trades mechanic III position at Delaware Seashore State Park. Prior to coming to the division, Craig worked in the private sector as a sheet metal worker for Local 22. He brings 20 years of experience and knowledge in building trades with him to his new position.

**Fernando Garcia** was hired Aug. 11 to the conservation technician V position at Alapocas Run State Park. Fernando joined the division in April 2024 as a seasonal building, grounds, custodial and maintenance worker and labor foreman at Wilmington State Parks prior to this promotion. He brings over a decade of experience in underground utility work, construction, machinery and carpentry with him to his new position.

**Vidonio Gretz** was hired Oct. 6 to the physical plant maintenance trades technician position at Bellevue State Park. Prior to coming to the division, Vidonio worked in the private sector as an electrical apprentice and electrician for Premier Power and Independent Electrical Services. He has an electrical trades certification from NCCVT Adult Education Division.

**Michael Hitch** promoted on Oct. 6 from the park superintendent III at Killens Pond State Park to the park administrator I position in the Operations, Maintenance and Programming section. Michael has been with the division since 2013 and has worked as a seasonal park ranger, labor foreman, assistant park superintendent and park superintendent at Trap Pond, Lums Pond, Fort Delaware and Killens Pond state parks. He has a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Natural Science from Wilmington University.

**Michael Hurff** was hired Aug. 11 to the conservation technician III position at Cape Henlopen State Park. Michael joined the division in 2023 as a seasonal building, grounds, custodial and maintenance worker prior to this promotion.

**Rebecca "Becky" Lovin** promoted on Aug. 11 from the park administrator I position in the Administrative Services section to the parks program manager in the Administrative Services section. Becky has worked for the division since 2014 as a paralegal III and park administrator I prior to this promotion. She has a bachelor's degree in Legal Studies from Wilmington University and a master's degree in Legal Studies from Texas A&M School of Law.

**Rachel Perash** contract ended with New Castle County Conservation District. The Division is in the process of hiring a replacement senior archaeologist.

# Operations, Maintenance and Programming

Grant Melville

---

## Statewide

High winds on the evening of July 16 caused significant damage throughout the northern Delaware State Parks, resulting in numerous downed trees. White Clay Creek was the hardest hit, leading to the closure of Thompson Station Road, Possum Hill and Nine Foot Road parking areas while staff worked to clear the fallen trees. Deerfield Golf Club, the Park Office and the Nature Center at White Clay also lost power. Bellevue State Park experienced power outages due to downed trees, and the lack of electricity beyond the band shell impacted day camp operations as a result of high heat and limited indoor recreation space.

Severe rain and windstorms impacted the state from Thursday, Aug. 8, into Friday, Aug. 9, causing localized damage in the northern parks. At White Clay Creek State Park, a retaining wall on the Lamborne property collapsed. Bellevue State Park saw a tree fall on part of the Miami Track, while a roof leak at the Marshall Mansion in Auburn Valley State Park caused ceiling damage. Additionally, downed trees were reported along trails statewide, and beach erosion occurred along the coast. In response, Delaware State Parks implemented a liberal cancellation policy for all reservations and guests on Friday, Aug. 9.

## Northern Region

### Alapocas Run State Park

---

Exhibitions at the Blue Ball Barn included:

- **June:** Sa-Kreea Mo'nay The Beauty of Essence Art Show, a collection of paintings and fashion displays showcasing some of the black fashion designers and supermodels that have inspired the artist, with 79 walk-in visitors.
- **July:** Delaware Art Teachers' Art Show, with 29 walk-in visitors.
- **August:** City Painting Group Art Show, featuring works from Jimmy Thompson of City Painting Group in his Vintage Wilmington show, with 99 walk-in visitors.
- **September:** Mark Kaufman Art Show, featuring Kaufman's works blending color and imagery to explore themes of mythology, literature, philosophy, gender and emotion using the medium of watercolor, with 47 walk-in visitors as of mid-September.



Excerpt from City Painting Group Art Show.

### Auburn Valley State Park

---

On June 13, installation of a septic tank was completed at the Auburn Valley maintenance shop, and the National Vulcanized Fiber Building #30 project was completed. The building openings were secured and boarded up to prevent entry and keep the building as safe as possible.

On July 7, the first fully costumed Steamin' Day was held, with all docents and interns in period dress. The event was part of a special Founder's Day weekend with the Wilmington and Western Railroad, celebrating the legacy of Tom Marshall, who would have turned 100 this year, and founded both organizations.



The Auburn Heights Invitational Classic Car Show and Garden Party was held Saturday, June 21, benefitting the Joseph Boxler Education Fund. The weather couldn't have been more beautiful, and there were some exceptional antique autos on display to boot. The Friends of Auburn Heights raised a significant amount towards their educational programs, and appreciate all who attended, donated, volunteered and spread the word.



## Bellevue State Park and Fox Point State Park

On July 27, Bellevue hosted the Take a Kid Fishing program with the DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife. This is a statewide program teaching fundamental fishing skills and conservation, geared towards children aged six through 15. Thirty-two people attended.

In late July, updates to the Percheron Barn were officially completed. The vents were painted and the building looks pristine.



As of September, Bellevue's track project is all but complete, with the exception of the removal of the silt sock that is still staked down throughout the track area. These silt socks will be removed when 70% grass regrowth is achieved in the impacted areas.



## Brandywine Creek State Park

---



On Sept. 13, Brandywine Creek State Park hosted the Upstream Alliance at Thompsons Bridge. The group of kayakers stopped at Thompsons Bridge to finish off the second day of their three-day trip down the Brandywine Creek; starting at the head waters at ChesLen Preserve and finishing at the confluence where the Brandywine meets the Christina River. The Upstream Alliance held an educational get-together where they announced potential funding through National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to perform exploratory research in the Delaware Bay region. The University of Delaware, the Brandywine Conservancy, Stroud Preserve, Lenape tribal members and Delaware State Parks were also in attendance!

The Brandywine Maintenance shop underwent some repairs; old windows were framed in, new siding was installed as well as a new gutter system.

On Sept. 23, a structural assessment was completed on the Animal Barn to help prioritize future repair work. A number of structural repairs to improve load bearing potential on floors throughout the area were listed; these structural repairs include both wooden bracing and repairs to the roofing supports as well as stone work. The building also needs a new roof and gutters. After multiple meetings to secure quotes covering the scope of work, Superintendent Mat Smith estimates the cost to complete the work at around \$500,000.

The Thompsons Bridge bathrooms had their new railings installed on Oct. 2, once they have county approval, they will open to the public.

## Brandywine Zoo

---

The Zoo had its annual surprise USDA inspection on Aug. 1. The previous inspector was transferred and Dr. Markmann, who served as the Zoo's inspector five years ago, has returned. This was his first time seeing recent facility updates, including the Madagascar exhibit, Animal Care Center and condor viewing window. It was also the first inspection since the USDA began regulating birds, so he had not seen the condor holding area or new pathways.

Dr. Markmann was impressed by the staff's efforts and improvements, particularly in Madagascar and the Animal Care Center. He praised the Zoo's records, veterinary areas and drug storage. No non-compliance issues were found, marking at least seven inspections with this result, highlighting the staff's dedication to maintaining high standards.

This year has been another successful year for bog turtle incubation at the Brandywine Zoo. This is the third year Delaware State Parks and Fish and Wildlife have partnered together to save bog turtle nests, incubate eggs and release the hatchlings back into nature. This year, 42 total eggs were collected. Of those 42, 34 hatched, and 33 hatchlings survived.

For a comparison, only 21 bog turtle eggs were hatched last year. It is expected that the zoo will continue to care for the bog turtles through the off season, and they will be released next spring.



## White Clay Creek State Park

The event to celebrate the June arrival of the Action Track Chair, a grant award from the Ford Bronco Wild fund, took place on July 12 at Deerfield Golf Club, and was a rousing success.

Jared Towery, disabled from an accident three years ago, tested the chair around the grounds of the Deerfield clubhouse (and inside too) and declared "This thing is SICK!". His comments during the event were a reminder of how important accessibility should be to all.



## Wilmington State Parks

The Mill Trail repair work was completed, and the trail reopened for visitor use.

The Brandywine Festival of the Arts was once again held in Brandywine Park the weekend of Sept. 7 and 8. The festival, a Delaware tradition spanning over half a century, is the largest arts festival in the state.

On Sept. 18, the Rockford bathrooms reopened after a complete renovation. An additional bathroom was added, two of the three bathrooms are ADA accessible, the sidewalk was widened and all the bathrooms were made family style.

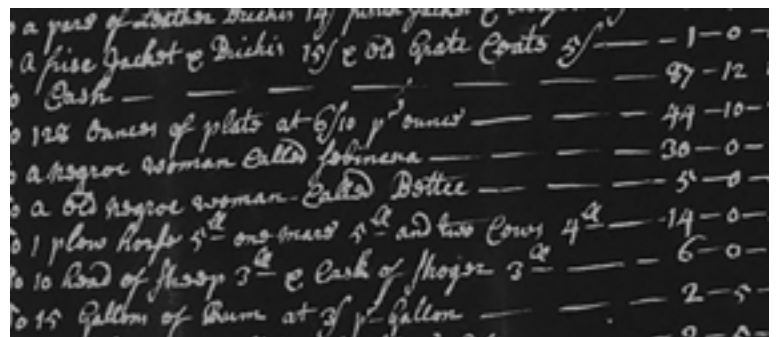
The Rodney Tennis Courts (eight courts) were resurfaced. A shade structure and bottle filling station were also added to the area and composite table and chair sets will be added.



## Inland Ponds

### First State Heritage Park

A University of Delaware Lynman Stewart Intern worked together with a National Park Service HBCUI Intern throughout the summer combing through Delaware Archives probate records, wills and newspapers to track down the names, ages and any other information related to over 300 enslaved persons who lived, worked or were owned by property owners on The Green in Dover. This information was compiled into an internal database and offers us the opportunity to speak these names and uncover their histories through further research and incorporate their lives into our walking tours. This information and continuing research are part of the effort of First State Heritage Park to diversify our programming, walking tours and interpretation in order to tell the whole story of The Green, including those that have previously been hidden and forgotten from the historical record.





## Fort Delaware State Park

---



As of September, the Fort has seen 15,378 visitors.

Fort Delaware ran its third Escape the Fort program of the year on Saturday, Aug. 17. Fifty-four tickets sold, with 50 attendees. There were a few hiccups with some folks misunderstanding some of the instructions, but all 10 groups were able to complete the Escape Room and seemed to have a lot of fun.

Throughout August, the Fort's POW Barracks, a replica built from the original blueprints, received a refresh. Deteriorating siding was nailed down or replaced, new steps and a new deck were placed and the building was painted.

On Sept. 21, the Fort held its Night of Fire program, which looked at how weapons changed during the 19th century, featured tactical hands-on demonstrations and finished with firing the 8" Columbiad at dusk. Regular areas were open for touring to the 33 in attendance.



## Killens Pond State Park

---

The Water Park season came to an end, having seen a smooth year with minor issues and minimal closures for weather. Fifty percent of seasonal staff were new and did a good job overall.

Over 65,000 tickets were sold, up 2,000 from last year. At the end of July, ticket sales were up by 6,000, but the last few weeks of August were very slow for unknown reasons. This season there were only five weather-related closures, and one closure for a well pump issue, an improvement over the 20 closures seen in 2023. Capacity was reached for 18 sessions over the season.

The July 22 Water Park Theme Night was a huge success with 123 tickets sold, a 272% increase from 2023 and a 41% increase from 2022. The Carnival Theme was a hit this year, featuring carnival style games and prizes.

Puppies in the Pool on Sept. 2 was also a great success, with 252 tickets sold and 114 dogs in attendance. Nothing is cooler than seeing 100+ dogs run around and get along enjoying their turn in the pool!



A waitlist program (Tables Ready) was a lifesaver for the Water Park this season. The park saw a marked decrease in the number of ranger issues, angry visitors and headaches. Just like restaurants, the park used a waitlist system to manage guests once they reached capacity. Visitors were not allowed to stand in line after they were put on the list. Once they received a text, they had 10 minutes to come back to check-in. Some analytics from this year:

The average wait time for entry was 51 minutes, with the longest wait time (83 minutes) on July 3, and the shortest (five minutes) on Aug. 3. The Tables Ready waitlist program served 207 groups, with an average group size of 4.9 guests. 1,011 individuals visited using the system.

## Lums Pond State Park

---

The annual Warbirds Over Delaware R/C event took place July 11 through 13. The event attracts modelers from all over the country and from as far away as England. Over the course of the two-day event, approximately 300 pilots and spectators attended.



On July 23 the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism held their practice traffic stop program in Area 1 for about 25 participants. This program allows autistic drivers and passengers to work with the police in a safe, friendly space to practice a live traffic stop. Delaware Natural Resources Police and other law enforcement agencies participated.

The Kinetic Multisports Triathlon was held Aug. 4, with approximately 700 participants.

## Trap Pond State Park

---

The Trap Pond State Park spillway repairs were completed the week of Aug. 5. With the spillway complete, the bridge is reopened for traffic, and water levels in the pond are being brought up to regular levels.

On Aug. 17 the Delmarva Teen Challenge Crab Feast was a big success, bringing in over 700 people. Crabs, ice cream, fried chicken and watermelon were offered at the event.

The Sept. 6 CHEER Inc. Trap Pond Fall Festival Cheer was a success, with over 200 seniors participating. Activities during the day included a White Elephant table, prize Bingo games, horseshoes and cornhole.

The weekend of Sept. 13 through 15, Trap Pond hosted a Vintage Camping Weekend, a nostalgic journey into the great outdoors complete with retro tents, classic campfire tunes and themed activities. Vintage campers, tents and equipment were featured, and campers competed for Best Vintage Campsite.



## Coastal Region

This summer, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, Delaware State Parks saw consistent closures within the Coastal Region, with a total of 103 closures due to capacity. Cape Henlopen State Park had to manage closures 34 different times, 16 of them were at the main day use entrance, nine at Gordons Pond and nine at Deauville Beach. There were 69 capacity closures managed at Delaware Seashore State Park; 29 of which were for Fenwick Island State Park.

Overall, the numbers at Cape Henlopen are up from 2003, which saw 12 closures at the main entrance, and only four closures at Gordons Pond. Fenwick Island stayed fairly consistent, having experienced 31 closures last year and Delaware Seashore in total saw more with 38 in 2023 and 40 in 2024. While those numbers are roughly the same, there were 10 less closures at the North Inlet due to the parking lot closures and we saw four closures at Towers Beach.

### Cape Henlopen State Park

---

In general, the management transfer from City of Rehoboth to Delaware State parks at Deauville Beach went well this season. There was a transition period as patrons adjusted to the park's Carry-In Carry-Out (CICO) program and beach cleaning schedule. There were complaints along the way and some hold outs who still want trash cans, but by the end of the season most patrons understood how and why we operate the way we do. The beach concessionaire was hesitant about the CICO, but by the end of the season was impressed at how beachgoers adopted the program, and the overall success.

The biggest operational challenge on the management side was technical issues with the credit card pay system, but the lot was set-up with two units and at least one remained functional for most of the season.

Cape Henlopen park staff (lifeguards, fee booth collectors, maintenance) had a seamless transition to Deauville, drawing on their extensive experience in managing beach operations. The Division now has a maintenance contract in place to keep fee machines operational.

The Seashore Striders held their 42nd annual 5-mile run/walk at Gordons Pond on July 14.

Cape Henlopen State Park experienced water outages on Tuesday Aug. 20 and Wednesday Aug. 21 resulting from infrastructure issues outside of the park under the management of the Lewes Board of Public Works (BPW.) On Tuesday, due to mechanical failure, pressure was lost across the park and the entire town of Lewes was issued a boil water notice until Wednesday Aug. 21. After the mechanical failure was corrected, a water main break was discovered in the canal, and all lines that fed the beach area, including Cape Henlopen State Park, lost pressure. Restrooms were closed, campers were notified of water outages via robocall. Portable toilets were delivered around the park, and campers were offered refunds or discounted stays.

### Delaware Seashore State Park

---

In July, a replacement fence was installed to ensure pedestrian safety along the approach to the Indian River Inlet bridge. The old fence beside the steep dune face had eroded away.

New racks were installed under the Tower Road bathhouse for lifeguard surf craft.

On Aug. 5, a female juvenile pilot whale intermittently beached herself along the north side of Indian River Inlet. While awaiting volunteers from Marine Education Rescue and Rehabilitation Institute (MERR) to arrive and take command, Delaware Natural Resources Police, Park Manager Dana Schaefer and several visitors helped alert beachgoers, swimmers and surfers to make way for the floundering whale as it moved in and out of the tidal zone. Sadly, the whale was in such distress that the MERR Institute staff sedated and euthanized her. The team then took the deceased whale to



their research lab for a necropsy.

At around 6:30 p.m. on Aug. 17, the Atlantic Ocean breached the dune north of the Indian River Inlet bridge, prompting an overnight closure of Coastal Highway in both directions. Park staff arriving from the north were able to access the park once the southbound lanes reopened, while staff coming from the south had to navigate two DeIDOT blockades. The northbound lanes were cleared by around 10:30 a.m. on Aug. 18.

Due to extreme high tides, all surf fishing dune crossings from Fenwick South Crossing northward were temporarily closed for the rest of Aug. 17. Faithful Steward Crossing and Key Box reopened at 7:16 a.m. on Aug. 18, with other crossings becoming accessible after 10:30 a.m. Additionally, on Aug. 18, North Beach and its parking lot were closed to visitors due to debris and the presence of heavy machinery working to deliver sand and granite riprap for dune and beach stabilization by DeIDOT and Shoreline.

The beach at Tower Road proved to be a beautiful setting for the special event “Outstanding In The Field” seated dinner into the evening on Sept. 4.

## Indian River Marina

The Marina hosted several events this season, including:

- June 8 - The Marina successfully hosted their inaugural Car Show, featuring 35 vehicles and drawing approximately 100 visitors.



- June 21-23 - The 9th Annual Kids Catch-All Tournament took place, attracting over 140 registered participants. The event is open to kids aged 3-18, and trophies are awarded for the heaviest fish in each division.



- July 20 - The Tuna Tournament for Marina slip holders was held, with 30 vessels participating. The event culminated in an exciting weigh-in, with the first-place tuna weighing 172.4 lbs. and the top flounder at 4.6 lbs.
- September 14 - The Marina welcomed 3,000 patrons to the Annual Autumn Art Festival. The event showcased 55 art vendors, live music, delicious food, pumpkin painting, piñatas, wagon rides and family-friendly activities.



The piling and bulkhead inspection was completed at a cost of \$89,010. The upcoming work will be put out to bid, with an

estimated cost of approximately \$800,000.

## Interpretation and Programming

### Statewide Programming

---

#### 2024 Summer Concert Series

The Delaware State Parks 2024 Summer Concert Series provided several opportunities for visitors to get outdoors and enjoy live music showcasing a variety of genres. The series hosted 72 concerts for around 29,395 visitors across seven locations within Bellevue State Park, Holts Landing State Park, Killens Pond State Park, Trap Pond State Park, White Clay Creek State Park and Wilmington State Parks. The Summer Concert Series sponsors included premium sponsor Dogfish Head Brewery and additional sponsors 302 Horseshoe Crab, Cape May-Lewes Ferry, Wilmington Brew Works, Delaware Division of the Arts and several



Friends organizations to include Friends of Bellevue State Park, Friends of Holts Landing State Park, Friends of Killens Pond State Park, Trap Pond Partners, Friends of White Clay Creek State Park and Friends of Wilmington State Parks.

#### 2024 Summer Camp

About 1,271 campers ranging from ages 5-15 years old attended 95 total camps across Alapocas Run, Bellevue, Brandywine Creek, Cape Henlopen, Killens Pond, Lums Pond, Trap Pond, White Clay Creek and the Brandywine Zoo. Sites did not offer before and after care, but continued to fill to camp capacity. Ninety-five percent of the available 1,337 camp spots were filled, providing 2,931 contact hours of programming to campers. Summer 2024 saw a minimal decrease in the number of camps and campers compared to 2023 (1,400 campers across 98 camps). Several camp scholarships



were awarded due to the support of the following Friends groups, the Friends of Brandywine Creek State Park, the Friends of Bellevue State Park, the Friends of Killens Pond State Park and the Friends of White Clay Creek State Park.

#### Smokey Bear Visits Summer Camps

Delaware State Parks partnered with the Delaware Forest Service to bring Smokey Bear to the parks in celebration of Smokey's 80th birthday. During each visit, Smokey interacted with campers and park visitors, promoting the Smokey Bear Reading Challenge to engage youth in reading about wildfire prevention, forests and natural resource careers while exploring their local environment. Since 1944, Smokey Bear has taught millions of Americans about their role in preventing wildfires nationwide.



#### Camp Feedback

99% of respondents rated their child's Day

Camp experience 4 or 5 out of 5 stars.

97% of respondents said they would recommend a Delaware State Parks Day Camp to a friend.

97% of respondents rated the registration process 4 or 5 out of 5 stars.

The state parks received many comments on camp evaluations. Below are a few highlights:

Creekin' for Critters at White Clay Creek State Park:

*"Keep doing what you're doing! The "old school" style of camp is so fun, and I am so grateful we were able to attend!"*

Pond Adventures at Killens Pond State Park:

*"Both of my sons loved everything every day! They couldn't wait to come each day and always wanted to stay longer. I don't think they can pick a favorite thing, but the variety is probably what they loved the most."*

Nature Explorers Week 2 at Brandywine Creek State Park:

*"My son has attended this camp for three years and consistently tells me it is his favorite! Thank you to the camp staff for helping to create wonderful memories and inspire a true love of nature."*

### **Delaware Division of the Arts Programming**

This quarter, there were several programs that received funding from the Delaware Division of the Arts (DDOA), including the following highlights. On Aug. 2, at the Brandywine Zoo, Lia Andrews from Language U presented an English and Spanish language storytelling and song-based performance in honor of International Golden Lion Tamarin Day. Visitors learned about different types of monkeys and colors through storytelling, art and music. On Aug. 24, at Fort Delaware State Park, performer Carson Hudson played Civil War-era music throughout the day for 84 visitors. At Lums Pond State Park, the Campground Performing Arts series began. This series featured several performers including Diamond State Swing, the School of Rock Hockessin and Edgewater Avenue.

### **Girl Scouts Love State Parks**

Delaware State Parks participated in the 2024 Girl Scouts Love State Parks event held Sept. 14 to 15. Ten programs were offered in seven parks – Alapocas Run, Auburn Valley, Bellevue, Cape Henlopen, Delaware Seashore, Lums Pond and White Clay Creek, with a total of 164 scout participants. Programs included tree plantings where scouts planted 50 trees, Leave No Trace principles, Coastal Cleanups and animal tracking. The Friends of Auburn Heights at the Marshall Steam Museum conducted an automotive and engineering program for scouts to receive a badge. The event is conducted in partnership with the Girl Scouts and the National Association of State Park Directors. The 2025 Girl Scouts Love State Parks event will occur on Sept. 13 and 14.



### **Passport Program**

The summer season was a great opportunity for the 79 Passport Program participants to make progress on their statewide checklists. The participants explored the parks, attended programs and concerts, interacted with waysides and volunteered across the parks. Eight participants have already completed the program.

The 2024 Passport program concludes on Nov. 30, and the Interpretive Services team is planning updates for the 2025 Passport Program.





### **Parks for Pollinators**

In September, the Brandywine Zoo and Delaware State Parks participated in the National Recreation and Park Association's Parks for Pollinators. This nationwide campaign utilizes iNaturalist to raise awareness of pollinators which are vital to our ecosystems and food supply and are struggling due to habitat loss.

Parks staff encouraged visitors to share images of pollinators and plants, and 142 participants documented over 1,050 observations within Delaware State Parks and the Brandywine Zoo. This program has been a great way to prompt visitor engagement and collaboration across the state.

### **PaddleQuest at Delaware Seashore State Park**

Introduced in 2017, PaddleFest quickly became a popular event at Delaware Seashore State Park. However, environmental conditions made it difficult to guarantee the event could be held on the scheduled date, in fact, it was cancelled about half of the years it ran. In order to address this issue, PaddleQuest was introduced. Instead of one day, PaddleQuest lasted all of August 2024. The goal was to have the public either conduct self-guided paddle experiences in Delaware Seashore/ Holts Landing/Fenwick Island waters or attend one of several guided paddling programs offered. Those that submitted three different experiences were rewarded with a prize bag of Delaware State Parks-branded gear. PaddleQuest had 53 participants, of whom 16 completed the quest and received a prize bag. The program will be reviewed in preparation for summer 2025, with the goal of connecting paddlers to parks to celebrate local bodies of water.

## **Interpretive Planning, Exhibits and Publications**



### **2024 Interpretive Leadership Retreat at the Biden Environmental Center**

From Sept. 18 to 19, an Interpretive Leadership Retreat was held at Cape Henlopen. The 20 participants, including Interpretive Services Team members and Interpretive Program Managers, in attendance participated in the first overnight stay at the newly renovated facility. The retreat included conversations about interpretive goals and discussions about the Telling Full Stories project. Guest speaker Vertie Lee, the Curator of Education with the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs (HCA), led a session highlighting HCA's journey towards a more inclusive interpretation of history. The retreat concluded with a trip to the Zwaanendael Museum, an HCA site, where parks staff interacted with exhibits highlighting inclusive stories.

### White Clay Creek State Park Interpretive Plan

The White Clay Creek State Park Interpretive Plan draft was completed and shared with committee members working on exhibit development for the new nature center.

### Bellevue Interpretive Plan and Mount Pleasant Schoolhouse Exhibit

The Bellevue State Park interpretive plan was completed in 2023 and was used to develop the Mount Pleasant Schoolhouse exhibit proposal. The exhibit proposal was approved by committee members and outlines content plans for the future schoolhouse exhibit, including a walk through the site’s past, a focus on telling community stories and an outdoor interpretive signage loop near the site.

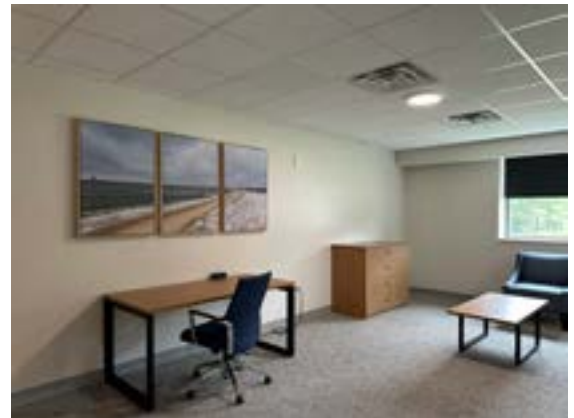
### Cape Escape: Art by Ed Lewandowski

In late July, the Interpretive Services Team installed Cape Escape, an art exhibit by artist Edward “Ed” Lewandowski. Displayed at the Biden Environmental Center, the exhibit is a collection of 14 oil landscape paintings highlighting several adventures and activities around Cape Henlopen State Park. The works on exhibit were created with the intention of being sold and proceeds going towards the O’Neill Environmental Education Fund which supports Delaware State Parks in providing environmental education opportunities throughout the state.



### Room Art: Biden Environmental Center

In late July, the Interpretive Services Team installed a series of 21 framed canvas landscape photographs in the bedrooms at the Biden Environmental Center. These images depict the unique beauty and wide variety of natural resources at Cape Henlopen.



### Creativity in Captivity

The Interpretive Team re-installed Creativity in Captivity in the visitor center at Fort Delaware State Park in early August. The exhibit is a collection of nine intricate drawings done by a former Confederate prisoner at Fort Delaware, Max Neugas. Initially installed in 2023, the exhibit was refabricated to withstand weather conditions at Fort Delaware. The project was supported, in part, by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

## Programming Attendance Data

	Number of Programs	Number of Participants
Nature Center/Historic Building Visitation		78,478
General Public Programs	1,363	49,831
Youth Programs (school, camp, scout, etc.)	124	2,176
Free Programs	783	42,040
Total Participation (visitation and programming)	1,523	130,302

\*Data to be finalized in annual yearly reporting. Several subsets not reported on in PCR.

### Programming Data and Feedback

We received 190 Online Feedback Submissions during July, August and September.

- 98% of participants rated their enjoyment of the program 4 or 5 out of 5 stars.
- 90% of participants said the program made them feel a sense of belonging.\*
- 48% of participants were first time program attendees.
- 37% of participants heard of the program they attended from our website, making it the most common source.



In July, the survey was condensed and the opportunity to create site specific questions was introduced to improve data collection.

*\*"Did the program make you feel a sense of belonging?"* was added to all parks surveys. At our programs, we want people to experience a reasonable amount of acceptance, attention and support. "Belonging" not only encompasses Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion (DEAI) issues such as communication barriers or cultural sensitivities, but also emotional connections that can lead to further support. Participants can answer yes, no or unsure and elaborate on answers in an optional text box. Ninety percent of participants answered yes, 6% were unsure and 4% responded no. Fifty-six percent of those who chose to elaborate specifically mentioned interpreters.

Many shared additional constructive and complimentary comments. Below are a few highlights:

Cape Cadets Codebreakers at Fort Miles Historical Area: *"The codebreakers activity was awesome. The instructors were great – enthusiastic, in character, knowledgeable, patient with kids, etc. Kudos to them!"*

Fairies in the Pollinator Garden at Brandywine Creek State Park: *"This was such a cute event! We've been meaning to get to Brandywine Creek State Park and this was the perfect sort of event to get us to finally visit. The state park coordinators were kind and knowledgeable and taught us that milkweed has been taking care of the lantern flies which was a great fun fact to learn. Thank you for the wonderful program! We love to visit the state parks but hadn't done any formal activities before this, so hope to attend more activities soon!"*

Bellevue Hall Guided Tours at Bellevue State Park: *"My family has been coming to Bellevue State Park for over 30 years, but I never knew the history of the Park or mansion. Our guides were informative, always willing to take our questions, enthusiastic without being overbearing, worked very well together as a tag team. Will definitely suggest others to take this tour."*

## **Environmental Stewardship Program**

---

### **Copperhead Project at Alapocas Run State Park**

DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife staff continued to track copperheads with implanted radio transmitters at Alapocas Run State Park during the summer of 2024. An additional 10 radio transmitters have been purchased with the hopes of implanting additional snakes during the fall. Hopefully, we will be able to track the snakes to hibernacula this fall and monitor them through the winter into next spring when they remerge from hibernation.

### **White-tailed Deer Management**

State Park hunting permits became available through the Digital DNREC online license portal, the Richardson and Robbins license desk and authorized license agents statewide on Aug. 14. An initial bug in the system, which did not permit the purchase of our permit and a hunting license in the same transaction, was rectified by the next day. We received a few complaints from previously exempt hunters, but otherwise the switch to online sales has been successful. As of Sept. 24, 2,189 permits have been sold. In 2023, a total of 1,288 permits were sold.

### **Invasive Species Management**

The Environmental Stewardship northern crew joined forces with the southern crew on two projects to manage invasive grass species in two State Nature Preserves. On Aug. 13, the combined crews and equipment were ferried north across Rehoboth Bay from Indian River Marina to Thompson Island Nature Preserve to treat invasive fountain grass that has become established in the preserve in recent years. A 2023 treatment resulted in nearly 75% control and this year we targeted remaining grass and patches inside the native burial site that was not treated last year.

On Aug. 21 the crews assembled once again to treat invasive Asian sand sedge at Beach Plum Island Nature Preserve. A 2023 treatment here resulted in better than 50% control and this follow-up is hoped to be equally effective.



## Volunteer Groups and Projects

TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS YTD Jan 1 to Sept 30	Q3	YTD
Alapocas Run	29	419.98
Auburn Valley	168	406.67
Bellevue	359	1297.5
Brandywine Creek	459.5	1590.73
Brandywine Zoo	564.79	1664
Campground Hosts	5913.5	16601.17
Cape Henlopen	1856	18622.08
Delaware Seashore	107.8	562
First State Heritage	141	499.5
Fort Delaware	762.75	1068.5
Holts Landing	525	1088
Internship Program	6117.6	10883.73
Killens Pond	285.75	999.75
Lums Pond	391.77	1313
Trap Pond	463.75	2301.24
White Clay Creek	3472.5	30361
Wilmington		1234.5
AmeriCorps		2160
Youth Conservation Corps		7892.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31670.21</b>	<b>90913.35</b>

### Key Highlights for Volunteer Unit

On Sept. 14, 60 volunteers completed three hours at Fox Point State Park as part of the Annual Coastal Cleanup Day. Volunteers cleaned up litter along the coastal waterways, contributing to environmental preservation and beautification efforts.

On Sept. 14, Delaware State Parks, in partnership with other DNREC divisions, successfully hosted the Annual Coastal Cleanup event across 10 different Delaware State Park areas including Cape Henlopen, Delaware Seashore, Holts Landing, Fenwick Island, Deauville Beach and Fox Point coastlines. A total of 316 volunteers contributed 948 hours of service. The Friends of Cape led the effort at the Point, organizing 58 volunteers and generously providing lunch after the event.

On Sept. 20, Bank of America Volunteers participated in the Coastal Cleanup efforts at Battery Park, collecting 400 pounds of trash over three hours.

On Aug. 1, AmeriCorps National Civilian Conservation Corps (NCCC) group completed the six-week Summer of Service working on reforestation, removal of invasive plants, paint projects and supporting summer concert events in the Northern Parks. The group completed 2,160 hours of service.



## Friends Groups Highlights

In July, August and September six to 12 volunteers participated each month for four hours at Lums Pond State Park during public Trail Trimming Days, supported by Friends of Lums Pond. These community events focused on maintaining the park's 17 miles of trails.



On Sept. 3, the Fort Miles Historical Association hosted members from the Friends of Auburn Heights for a field trip and day of connection at Battery 519 in Cape Henlopen. Members received a tour of facilities and engaged in conversation around common challenges, successes and vision for continued support of their parks around historical restoration, education and outreach. The Friends of Auburn Heights have invited Fort Miles (FMHA) members to Auburn Valley for their next field trip and continued connection. This is the first of many opportunities for Friends groups to connect and build a network among Parks partners.

On Sept. 5, the Friends of Bellevue hosted a community input session, inviting the public and youth to participate in discussions about their partnership with KABOOM!, an organization that unites with communities and diverse partners to build play spaces in places where data shows that access has been historically denied. This partnership will support the installation of a new playground at Bellevue State Park for children ages two to five. The Friends group played a key role in securing the partnership with KABOOM! and funding partner Discover, as well as contributing to the planning and logistics throughout the process.



On Sept. 7, the Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park held their annual youth fishing tournament at the Cape Henlopen fishing pier. Over 60 attendees participated in the youth fishing tournament, making it the largest tournament to date. Their Chocolate Tasting event at the Officer's Club took place the same day. This popular annual event benefits the Friends' Education Fund, which provides financial assistance for students attending nature programs in the park, as well as other sponsored activities.



On Sept. 28, the Trap Pond Partners hosted the Beer and Wine Festival at Trap Pond State Park, promoting community engagement and supporting park initiatives. Earlier in July, they secured a \$103K grant from the Delaware Community Reinvestment Fund to further support their work.



The Friends of Auburn Heights completed the Auburn Valley State Park Marshall Steam Museum Strategic Framework Plan and submitted the Final Report to the Division for review.

On Sept 19, the Friends of White Clay hosted the support volunteer recognition event at White Clay Creek State Park. The event was attended by over 100 of White Clay's dedicated volunteers who have completed over 30,000 hours of service to the park so far this year. The Friends provided funding support for food, beverages and supplies.



## Workforce Programs

---



On July 29, over 50 Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), Interns and AmeriCorps NCCC members participated in an end-of-year celebration at Lums Pond State Park. The day featured service projects across the park, with a catered lunch and speeches from DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin and Parks Director Ray Bivens, honoring their summer contributions.

The Division had 44 interns across the state in positions like Collections, Volunteer Management, Historical Interpretation, Summer Camp Leader, Environmental Educator, and Land Preservation complete summer terms. Interns completed 6,117 hours from summer service to parks statewide.

## School/Youth Group Volunteers

---

On July 26, five students and one teacher with Upward Bound program completed 3.5 hours at Trap Pond State Park. The group started their day at the Nature Center with environmental education followed by a service project. The group removed landscape fabric from the Officers building flower beds, pulled invasives by the pollinator garden and installed an insect habitat.

On Aug. 28 and Sept. 3 five volunteers dedicated time to the Good Cemetary project at Trap Pond State Park, replacing fence posts, pulling weeds and invasives and unloading fill dirt.

On Sept. 11, 12 reading assist volunteers completed two and a half hours at Bellevue State Park, removing invasive vines and clearing the garden bed around the Smoke House, enhancing the park's aesthetics.

On Sept. 25, 20 Wilmington Friends Middle School students completed three hours at Alapocas Run State Park. The group helped clear trails near the rock-climbing wall and removed invasive species, contributing to the park's maintenance and trail safety.



## Corporate and Group Volunteers

---

On July 5, Delaware Surfrider volunteers collected 175 pounds of trash and marine debris at the Life Saving Station.

From July 1 to Sept. 3, volunteers from the Salt Air Gardeners group donated 75 hours to gardening around the Lifesaving Station.

On Aug. 23, 40 volunteers from Bank of America completed two hours each at Wilmington State Parks mulching the 18th street playground, cutting back vegetation and cleaning up trash around the playgrounds and Brandywine Zoo.

On Sept. 11, eight volunteers completed several hours at the Carpenter Recreation Area in White Clay Creek State Park, cutting back a mass infestation of invasive species, including porcelain berry, multiflora rose and autumn olive. The team uncovered sassafras and black walnut trees that were at risk of being overtaken by invasives. Two new volunteers joined the group, contributing to the effort.

On Sept. 12, 29 volunteers from Capital One spent two hours each at Bellevue State Park's Pollinator Garden removing invasive Japanese stilt grass, thistle and overgrown vegetation. The group also gave the patio furniture a fresh coat of paint. The group spent the rest of the day enjoying the park with lunch and a company game of flag football.

On Sept. 12, 24 volunteers, including nine from Barclays Bank and 14 veterans, completed several hours at Judge Morris Estate in White Clay Creek State Park. The team focused on removing larger viburnum shrubs just beyond the hunting pin, using saws and hand tools to make significant progress. Many Barclays participants were return volunteers.

On Sept. 15, 11 volunteers, including three veterans and eight from the University of Delaware Native Species Initiative, completed several hours at Judge Morris Estate. The group successfully tackled viburnum dilatatum, targeting seed-bearing plants to prevent further propagation. This project contributed to the park's ongoing efforts to control invasive species.

On Sept. 26, a group of 15 to 20 Amazon volunteers completed two hours at Judge Morris Estate. They assisted in the removal of invasive viburnum shrubs and continued ongoing reforestation efforts.

## Scout Volunteers

---

On Aug. 17, nine Boy Scout Troop 33 volunteers completed five hours at Bellevue State Park. They worked on removing invasive plants and cleaning cemetery tombstones at Mt. Pleasant Meeting House and Parsonage. The troop learned about the history of the people buried in the cemetery as they worked.

On Sept. 24, seven Daisy Scouts completed one hour at Bellevue State Park, learning about and removing invasive vines from the walls of Mt. Pleasant Meeting House, contributing to conservation education.

On Sept. 14, Boy Scout Troop 902 volunteers completed projects at Lums Pond State Park, helping sand and stain the park's hayride wagon rails as part of their project to refurbish park amenities.



## Volunteer Supported Events

On Sept. 14, Coastal Cleanup Day at Fox Point State Park involved 60 volunteers who completed three hours cleaning the coastal waterways. Volunteers under 18 also painted a wayside, contributing to the park's overall beautification.

On Sept. 19, 115 volunteers attended the Volunteer Appreciation Celebration at the Carpenter Recreation Center in White Clay Creek State Park. The event, catered by Bachettis and supported by the Friends of White Clay Creek, recognized volunteers for their ongoing contributions to the park's maintenance and improvement projects.

## Grant Program

### 2024 TEDI Grant Applications

The DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation team held an information session for Delaware Friends Groups about the 2024 TEDI Grant process. The webinar, attended by Friends Groups and DNREC employees, outlined application tips and data gathering procedures. By the Aug. 26 application deadline, two Friends Groups successfully submitted proposals, with one Friends Group committing to submitting for the next round.

The Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park requested \$22,225 for reforestation efforts, including \$5,050 for the Biden Center and \$17,135 for Holland Glade Reforestation. They estimated planting 127 trees and anticipated 320 volunteer hours, valued at \$10,710.

The Friends of White Clay Creek State Park requested \$14,220 for the Judge Morris Afforestation project. The group plans to plant 1,250 trees and anticipates 423 volunteer hours, valued at \$14,166.

### Biden Center Environmental Careers Camp

DNREC is developing a proposal for an overnight camp that will introduce rising junior high school students to environmental careers through educational and hands-on experiences led by DNREC experts. If funding can be obtained the program would start in the summer of 2026.

## Enforcement and Lifeguard

### Natural Resources Police

State Parks Enforcement conducted 612 total surf vehicle checks over eight days this summer. The highest number of vehicles checked on a single date was 118 at Herring Point on July 14. Below you can see the historical surf fishing surge data documenting the number of vehicles checked per year, how many refused to be checked and turned around and the highest number checked on a given date.

Surf Vehicle Checks 2024											
REFUSAL CODES: 1= FISHING EQUIP, 2= SAFETY EQUIP, 3= PERMIT											
Date	Time	Location	Weather	STAFF LEVEL			#	VEHICLES			
				PPO	RNGR	PW		REF	FISH	EQU	PER
6/8/2024	0900-1100	Herring	Clear	7	3	3	117	5	2	0	3
6/9/2024	0900-1100	3R's	Clear	8	4	2	59	5		4	1
6/29/2024	0900-1100	Key Box	Clear	8	4	3	65	3	1	1	1
6/30/2024	0900-1100	Point	Cloudy	5	4	3	15	1	0	0	1
7/14/2024	0900-1100	Herring	Clear	6	2	2	118	5	0	2	3
7/27/2024	0900-1100	York	Clear	5	3	3	105	6	0	3	3
7/27/2024	0900-1015	Middle	Clear	2	1	0	16	4	0	0	4
7/28/2024	0900-1100	Point	Cloudy	4	3	3	55	5	1	1	3
8/24/2024	0900-1100	Conquest	Clear	3	3	2	62	10	2	1	7
				48	27	21	612	44	6	6	26

Both surf checks and surges (during a surge, a specific beach or park is identified, and staff check every vehicle on the beaches for compliance with surf fishing regulations ex. checking for appropriate equipment and peak season beach reservations, having visitors reel in their rods to check for appropriate bait) were down this year due to presidential protection duties. This quarter, a surge was performed on June 15 at Cape Henlopen beaches. Three rangers, six park patrol officers (PPO's) and two administrators worked the surge. A total of 245 vehicles were checked; 22 warnings were issued, and three tickets given out. The majority of warnings were for improper bait equipment (a total of 14 warnings).

This quarter there were 368 special duty hours worked by enforcement staff. Of those 368, 272 hours were for the northern region, which consisted mainly of Abessinio Stadium events. The remaining hours were worked in the southern region, with 44 hours for events, and 52 hours for presidential protection duties.

## Delaware State Park Beach Patrol

---



Delaware State Parks successfully hosted and won the USLA Mid-Atlantic Regional Lifeguard Competition at Towers Ocean on Wednesday July 10. This event occupied the beach just south of the Towers Beach boardwalk and the public were still able to utilize the northern end of the beach. Overall, the wide beach and ample parking suited the needs for the tournament with minimal additions to park operations. Delaware State Parks Beach Patrol won with a total of 388 points, followed by Rehoboth Beach Patrol with 352 and Sea Colony Beach Patrol with 302. On a related note, Delaware State Park Beach Patrol had their annual Inner-Parks competition, where all five beach patrols compete against one another, on July 16 at Towers Ocean Beach. The Deauville Beach Patrol took first place, followed in order by Cape Henlopen, Towers Beach, South Inlet and lastly Fenwick Island Beach Patrol.



The 2024 Jersey Mike's USLA National Lifeguard Championships were held from August 6-9 in South Padre Island, Texas. The competition took place on the beach in front of the Isla Grand Beach Resort. The Sussex County Lifesaving Association (SCLA) won the competition, with lifeguards from Delaware earning 1,465 points. Of the 79 guards that were a part of the Sussex County team, 15 are Delaware State Park Beach Patrol members.

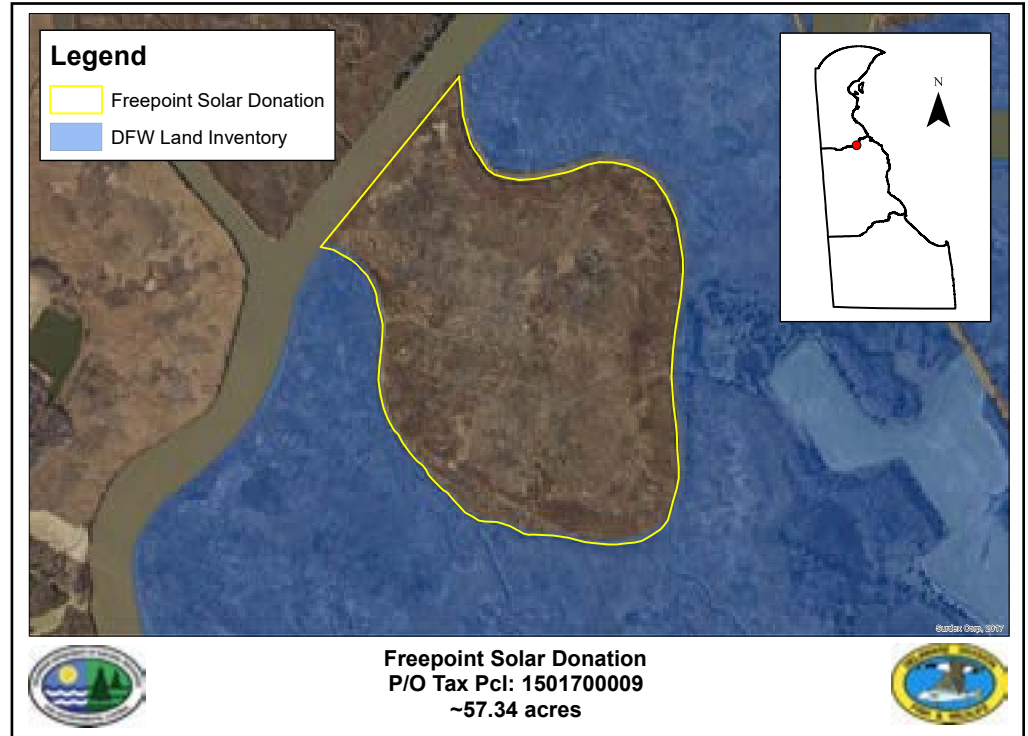
# Planning, Preservation, and Development

Brooks Cahall

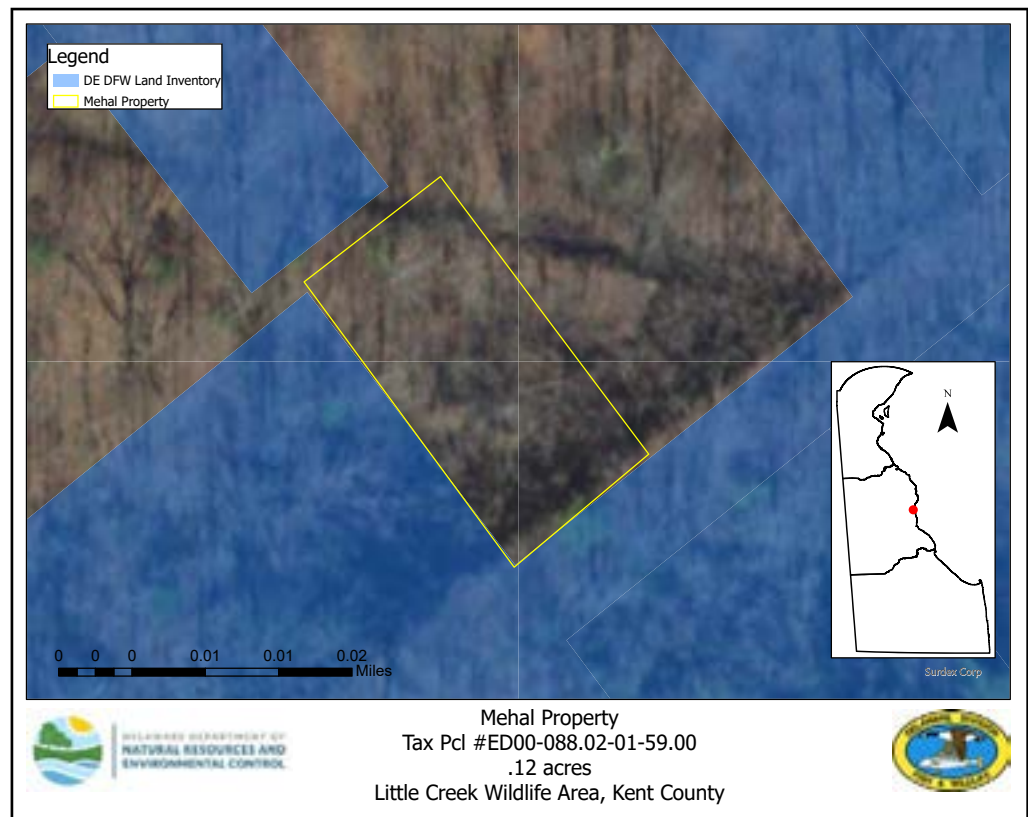
## Open Space Program

The Open Space Council quarterly meeting was held on Sept. 4. There were three Open Space Program projects completed:

**Freepoint Solar Donation**  
(Fish and Wildlife)  
Woodland Beach Wildlife Area  
57.34 acres  
\$0

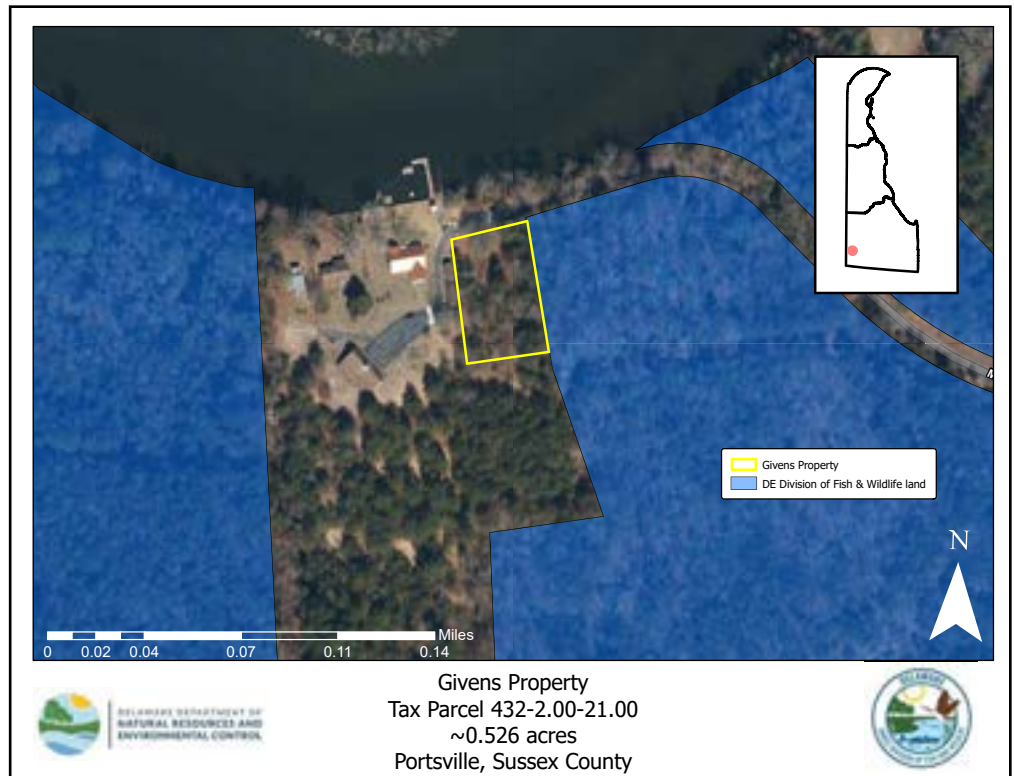


**Mehal Property**  
(Fish and Wildlife)  
Little Creek Wildlife Area  
.12 acres  
\$2,100





**Givens Property**  
 (Fish and Wildlife)  
 Nanticoke Wildlife Area  
 .526 acres  
 \$115,000



The potential balance of the Open Space Program fund, including encumbered funds, is \$13,293,008. The next quarterly meeting will be held Wednesday, Dec. 4 at 9 a.m. in the Senate Hearing Room at Legislative Hall.

## Cultural Resources Unit (CRU)

### Delaware State Parks Administrative History Book

For over 15 years the Division has worked to better document our history. Thanks to countless hours of research by people like George Contant and Lee Jennings and gathering oral histories, our story has been preserved. The book is available in ebook form and the Division is waiting on printed hard copies.



### Time Travelers

The Time Travelers have surpassed over 800 volunteer hours since the expansion of opportunities that include archaeology, collections processing and scanning. Notable projects volunteers have assisted the CRU with include the Oversee Farm archaeological survey, processing of John Bell House artifacts and the scanning over 400 photographs of Fort Delaware.

### Oversee Farm Time Traveler Event

Eleven Time Traveler volunteers, nine AmeriCorps members, and division staff conducted an archaeological survey of the Oversee Farm at Auburn Valley. An early 19th century farmstead, the property had never been surveyed until the event. Two hundred and forty total objects were recovered from the dig along with the original roadbed that ran parallel to the front of the house.

### Boem US Wind

As part of the proposed US Wind turbines, the Division submitted a mitigation plan proposal that includes funding for the updated exhibition and display of artifacts in the new lobby addition of Battery 519.

### John Bell House

The bathroom at the John Bell House was completed and with it the submission of the Dovetail archaeological report for the newly discovered privy. First State Heritage Park has also incorporated a Native American and Enslaved Garden to interpret 18th century gardening, as well as the installation of a white picket fence around the perimeter of the backyard.

### **Killens Pond Building Survey**

A building survey was conducted at Killens Pond using Survey123 to begin the initiative of documenting historic structures within the division. The survey covers a variety of historic facets unique to each structure that will also assist in the long-term conservation and preservation of structures in Delaware State Parks.

## **Programming**

---

### **Bellevue Summer Camp**

The Cultural Resources Unit attended two separate history themed camp days at Bellevue State Park that included an activity of matching five collection objects from the repository to their historic use, followed by playing a series of 1850s Victorian games with the campers.

### **Cultural Resource Intern Networking Events**

Three separate cultural resources intern networking events were hosted over the course of the summer that included a meet and greet at Fort Delaware, a collections conservation and care workshop at the repository and a cemetery conservation of Wingate Cemetery at Trap Pond. A proposed archaeological survey at White Clay Creek was unfortunately canceled due to inclement weather. Cultural resources interns from nearly every park attended the events and feedback received from participants was very positive.

### **YCC Cemetery Preservation**

Thirty Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) staff attended a cemetery preservation training at Bethesda Church Cemetery at Trap Pond. YCC staff learned the basics of headstone conservation and assisted in a full data inventory of all headstones in the cemetery. The park's interpretive program manager then provided a brief history of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the Trap Pond area.



## **Collections and Conservation**

---

### **Fort Miles Collection Inventory**

A full collection inventory was conducted of all objects in the Division's Fort Miles collection. Over 2,000 collection objects were cataloged with the help of Fort Miles staff, interns and Time Traveler volunteers. This inventory is the first full inventory of the collection that has been conducted and will be used in the planning and design of the exhibits in Battery 519 following upcoming renovations.

## **Resident Curatorship Program**

---

### **Cleaver House**

One potential curator is interested in the Cleaver House. A site visit was conducted and a proposed scope of work by the applicant is currently underway for submission to the division.

### **Sarah Brooks House**

One potential curator is interested in the Sarah Brooks House. Currently, the Division is in the design phase of the sewer hookup to the house and once completed the potential curator can submit a proposed scope of work.

# Office of Nature Preserves (ONP)

## Nature Preserve Updates and Management

The Natural Areas Advisory Council quarterly meeting was held on Thursday, Sept. 12. Recently acquired, the Woolfolk property was presented to the council to be dedicated as an addition to the Frenchtown Woods Nature Preserve. During the meeting, the Articles of Dedication were approved by the council.

Bellevue Woods Nature Preserve celebrated its 30th birthday on Sept. 16. The interpretive team at Bellevue State Park hosted a birthday party for this beloved preserve.

ONP reached out for quotes on a boundary line survey at Cedar Creek Nature Preserve. With longstanding encroachment issues, the survey is the first step in addressing and rectifying problems at the preserve.

Red Tail Restoration & Land Management, LLC. has been working for two years to clear invasive species from the Dragon Run Nature Preserve. With their contract ending in 2022, ONP intends to renew the contract to continue work.

During the Girl Scouts Love State Parks event, Auburn Valley State Park and the Office of Nature Preserves collaborated on a tree planting to reforest land adjacent to the dedicated Red Clay Creek Nature Preserve. This reforestation expands the wooded Red Clay Creek Natural Area and earned 30+ Girl Scouts their Tree Promise badge.

## Park Planning

### White Clay Creek State Park

An updated version of the online White Clay Creek map was created, and the new DuPont-Langenegger parcels added. The new map is posted on the division's website.

### Cape Henlopen State Park

The park map for Cape Henlopen was revised, printed and sent to the park for distribution.

### First Map

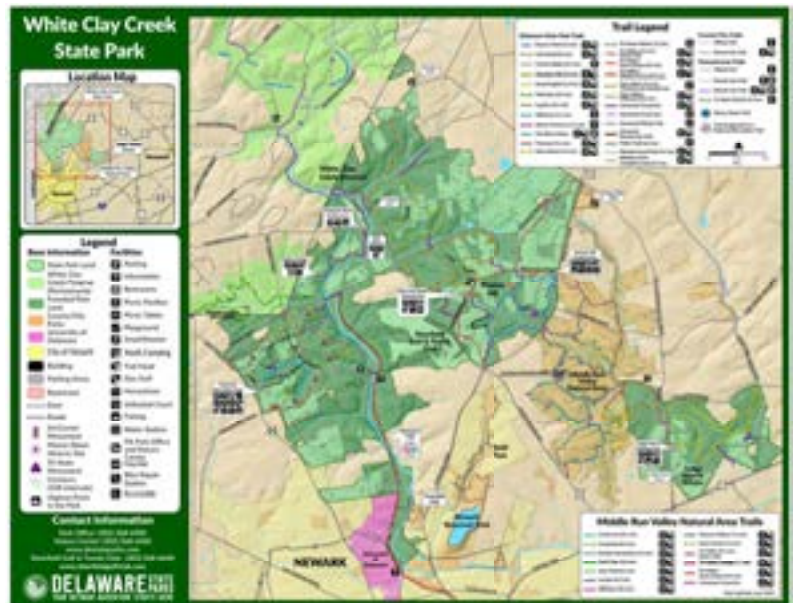
Division staff met with DTI to discuss options to simplify and improve the update process for GIS data shared on First Map. The plan is to move some of the datasets over to the state's Enterprise server making it much easier to update First Map. The transfer of data is expected to be complete by the first week of October.

### Bluebird Nest Boxes

At the request of the Stewardship Program, GIS staff developed a field survey application using ESRI's Survey123 software to monitor bluebird nest boxes throughout Delaware State Parks.

### Lums Pond State Park

Using coordinates provided by park staff, a map was created identifying the location of fire hydrants throughout the park. The map was created for distribution to the local fire companies.



## Bellevue State Park

Updates to the Bellevue Disc Golf Course maps are complete. The new signs were printed, laminated and adhered to aluminum sign blanks. The completed signs were sent to the park for installation along the course.



## Trail Closure Maps

At the request of the Stewardship Program, maps highlighting trail closures for the upcoming deer hunting seasons were updated for White Clay Creek, Delaware Seashore, Fresh Pond, Cape Henlopen, Lums Pond and Trap Pond. The new maps will be posted on the Delaware State Parks website.

## 2024 Aerial Photography

The new 2024 aerial photography is ready for statewide review. Planning staff have agreed to review tiles again this year to ensure that tiles on state park lands are clean and free of defects. The new photography should be available for everyone's use by January 2025.

## Grants

### Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant for Campground Improvements

Design of campground improvements at Lums Pond, Killens Pond, Trap Pond, Delaware Seashore/Indian River Marina and Cape Henlopen State Parks are underway. Consultants are developing 30% concept plans and hosting virtual public workshops to provide early opportunities to learn about the process and share thoughts and concerns. Architectural and engineering plans are on track to be completed this summer per grant requirements.

### Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

Planning continues for 10 of the 11 projects in the FY2023 work plan approved by DeIDOT. The annual Recreational Trail Advisory Committee meeting was held in August which brought together diverse trail user interest groups to discuss existing projects, share organizational updates and provide insight into the state of trail use in Delaware. Division staff also reported on the status of the 2024 SCORP update process and the Assawoman Canal Trail, as well as the acquisition of the DuPont-Langenegger property and deployment of the new track chair pilot program, both at White Clay Creek State Park.

### Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant

The Division continued updating the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the draft recommendations and was provided the full SCORP survey report as a reference. The plan is in draft and will go to design before being shared for public comment this fall.

The SCORP is a 5-year recreation plan required to remain eligible for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) contributions and is helpful in better understanding the outdoor recreation needs in Delaware. Responsive Management, an independent research firm that specializes in natural resources and outdoor recreation, conducted this survey in partnership with the division.

## **Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Trails Grant (ORPT) Program**

The 2024 grant cycle closed on Sept. 16 with 22 submissions. The review committee convened in October to determine final grant recommendations to share with the Parks and Recreation Council. The total request came in at \$1.5 million while the program budget is \$1.6 million.

Staff is also reviewing potential grant management solutions to modernize the program by improving sponsor/grantee interface, process efficiencies and reporting functions.

One project was completed this quarter:

### **Newark**

Improvements at Devon Park were completed and included installation of yard drains/inlet structures, replacement of existing play structure, relocation of the playground and related landscaping improvements.



## **Office of Design and Development (ODD)**

### **Alapocas Run and Wilmington State Parks**

---

#### **Bancroft Bridge – Construction**

The Bancroft Bridge was damaged by flooding from the remnants of Hurricane Ida and subsequently closed in September 2021. There has since been significant coordination with FEMA, various agencies and the public to proceed with design. Following the formal bid process in June, the division has awarded a contractor and began construction in October. The project is tentatively scheduled to be complete in April 2025.

#### **North Park Drive Sidewalk – Design**

A portion of the sidewalk and stone retaining wall along North Park Drive, just across from the Brandywine Zoo, needs repair. Our consultant is proceeding towards 90% design review.

### **Auburn Valley State Park**

---

#### **Auburn Heights Assessment – Complete/Review**

The division hired an architectural consultant to evaluate repair and renovation needs for the mansion, carriage house and pump house. A detailed report was received ranking needs with cost estimates. There are \$4.6 million needed for repairs in the next 10 years, of which \$2.6 million will be needed in the next three years. There is not dedicated funding for these items, so the division is discussing which items to prioritize.

#### **Quarry Walk Construction – Review**

The Quarry Walk development, a 61-residential unit development along Yorklyn Road, remains under construction. It is a brownfields site with known contaminants including arsenic, which were removed. Bulk grading and installation of utilities and infrastructure are ongoing. This is a private development but tied into the Auburn Valley Master Plan. The division will be responsible for architectural compatibility and building permitting. The developer is obtaining permits for construction of the pump station and force main as well as a holding tank permit.

### **Farm Lane Realignment – Construction**

This project will realign and raise Farm Lane to use the historic bridge that was installed previously. Construction has been ongoing since the spring of 2023. Though we expected it to be complete this past winter, several unanticipated circumstances have delayed completion to fall 2024.



### **Benge Road Pump Station – Design**

This project will install a new pump station and force main connecting the Auburn

Heights area of the park to the new regional pump station. When complete, this project will connect the park office, Marshall mansion, steam museum, paper mill and private rental properties to the New Castle County sewer. The project is nearing the end of the design phase with construction to follow contingent upon funding.

### **Snuff Mill Trail and Yorklyn Trail – Design**

The division is working with an engineering consultant to begin the design of two trails; one trail connecting the Snuff Mill area to the Gun Club Road area, and another trail connecting Hockessin and Yorklyn. These are two different projects which are each funded 80% from DelDOT’s Recreational Trails Program. The division is having some preliminary conversations and is hoping for a partnership with Wilmington and Western Railroad for the Yorklyn Trail. Otherwise, the path will follow Yorklyn Road and will need acquisitions or easements from nearly a dozen private properties, three of which have structures potentially obstructing the trail.

## **Bellevue State Park**

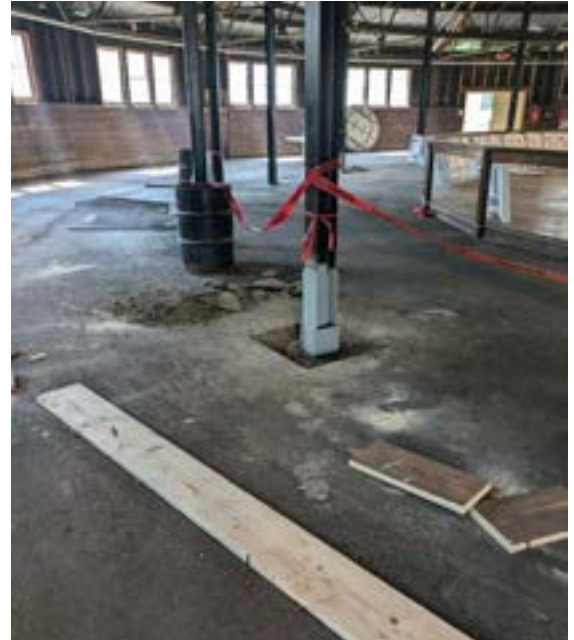
---



Bellevue State Park received \$1.2 million in the FY2020 capital budget, \$2 million in the FY2022 budget and \$1.2 million in the FY2024 budget. The division has been working with the Friends of Bellevue to identify and prioritize projects for this funding.

### **Track Improvements – Complete**

This project regraded the surface of the track to improve drainage off the surface, replaced numerous drainage structures around the track and provided a new stone dust surface. Construction began in March and was completed in August 2024.



### **Figure 8 Barn Roof – Construction**

This project will replace both the metal and flat (membrane) roofs on the Figure 8 Barn. Construction started in June and is expected to be done in late fall.

### **Figure 8 and Tennis Center Parking Lot – Construction**

This project will rehabilitate the parking lot and address stormwater requirements. It will also repair and repave some sections of the asphalt trail between the Mansion and Figure 8 Barn. The goal was to have construction start Sept. 1. There were delays with design and permitting, and high-cost estimates required some budget regrouping. Construction is now expected to start in late October, but there is a concern final paving may not happen until spring.

### **Mount Pleasant Schoolhouse – Planning, Design, Construction**

The Office of Design and Development is developing an approach to make the Mount Pleasant Schoolhouse an exhibit space for use by programming staff. A joint committee has been formed to develop how the schoolhouse will be used and what exhibits are needed. That effort is being led by the Operations, Maintenance and Programming section of the division. Building renovations are occurring in phases as a design-build project. Exterior renovations were completed in 2021. Demolition and stabilization of the interior work was completed in 2022. This phase included demolishing the stairs, bracing and leveling the floor and repointing the stonework inside. Exterior windows and the door facing Philadelphia Pike were replaced during the summer of 2023. The next phase will include an accessible entrance, mechanical systems, flooring and other interior work. This work is being coordinated with the development of the building's exhibits.

### **Sarah Brooks House Sewer Connection – Design**

One of the Division's engineering consultants began design of a sewer connection to the Sarah Brooks House in the Cauffiel Estate area. Technical options and cost estimates were considered recently. The design is expected to complete this fall. A major point of difficulty in design is communication with a landowner at the point of sewer tie-in for temporary construction access.

### **Maintenance Building – Bidding**

Bellevue State Park staff have planned for a new building in the maintenance complex. The Division's consultant was notified, in working through New Castle County approvals, that the DNREC Sediment and Stormwater Program requires a detailed plan which will also require additional infrastructure. New Castle County and Sediment and Stormwater approvals were received this spring. The Division bid out sitework this fall, but the project is overbudget and the Division is considering options for how to move forward.

## Brandywine Creek State Park

---

### **Thompson Bridge Restroom - Construction**

This project replaced a failed and long-closed composting restroom with a prefabricated restroom and well. The well was installed and prefabricated restroom placed in July 2023. This project faced many delays, working through several permitting issues with New Castle County and DNREC, but was thought to be complete in October 2023. New Castle County required the division to pursue a variance via the Board of Adjustment because the building is within a DeIDOT setback from Thompson Bridge Road, even though it replaced a long existing building at that location and DeIDOT provided a letter of no objection. The Division paid \$2,000 (plus multiple months delay) to go through the process and was successful at obtaining the variance. We subsequently learned during a building inspection that railing adjustments were needed despite plans being approved by the county. The Division contracted out the railing adjustments, which were custom fabricated and installed in October 2024. New Castle County reinspected and issued a certificate of occupancy. The restrooms are now open to the public.

### **Wheelwright Trail - Design**

The Division has been working with an engineering consultant to begin design of an accessible loop trail connecting the nature center area to the hawk watch area. This is funded 80% from DeIDOT's Recreational Trails Program. Design has passed the 60% mark.

### **Office Restrooms - Construction**

The Division's in-house architect redesigned the restrooms in the park office to be ADA compatible and more modern. A contractor was hired to complete the work which should be done in late 2024.

## Cape Henlopen State Park

---

The Division of Parks and Recreation held a community workshop at Cape Henlopen State Park on July 31, where 135 attendees, including Senator Russell Huxtable and Representative Jeff Hilovsky, gathered to learn about eight capital projects in the planning and design phase, as well as the Biden Environmental Training Center which has yet to open. The Division presented informational project boards and accepted comments via a survey until Aug. 14. The survey received 86 responses from 17 zip codes, with 63% of responses provided by Lewes residents and 82% from Sussex County residents. The majority of respondents were frequent park visitors, with 71% visiting the park multiple times per month.

### **Cape Sewer Connection to Lewes - Design**

This project consists of connecting the Cape Henlopen sewer system to the system operated by the Lewes Board of Public Works (BPW). An agreement between the division and the Lewes BPW for the rehabilitation and the maintenance of the Cape Henlopen wastewater treatment facility continues to be negotiated. Preliminary design has been completed and accepted by the Lewes Board of Public Works. Multiple options exist for connection to Lewes BPW's system outside the park which each have different design, construction, cost and BPW coordination issues. The Division's preference is to connect directly to the Lewes Wastewater Treatment Plant, but the project is in a holding pattern awaiting feedback from Lewes BPW.

### **Cape Office - Design**

The Division is planning for a new office for the staff at Cape Henlopen. This building will be located near the entrance to the park and compatible with design for future entrance and traffic improvements. Design will proceed through 60% and pause until construction funding becomes realistic.

### **Point Trail - Design**

The Division has started working with an engineering consultant to design an accessible trail connecting the main bathhouse parking lot area to the Point comfort station parking area. This is funded 80% from DeIDOT's Recreational Trails Program. Design is nearly complete pending final regulatory reviews.

### **Gordon's Pond Trail - Design**

Flooding and over wash from Gordon's Pond have created erosion concerns on some sections of the trail. An engineering consultant is working on design that will likely include elevating or armoring those sections of concern. The Division has received 60% design plans.



### **Wolfe Neck Trail – Design**

The Division was working with an engineering consultant to begin design of a loop trail around the Wolfe Neck area. It included the possibility of extensive archaeological work. After some delay and coordination with Federal Highway Administration (source of funding) and federal tribes, there is a major unknown of how cultural resources will impact Sussex County's future use of the site and affect important trail design considerations. The Division is closing out the federal trail project. Staff will coordinate with the County, DNREC Division of Water and other parties regarding a future smaller trail project.

### **Fort Miles Battery 519 Museum – Design**

The Division is using one of its architectural consultants to design renovations to accommodate new exhibits and to design an addition to Battery 519 to include reception, restroom and storage areas. Design development is continuing and includes coordination with the Fort Miles Museum Board.

### **Fishing Pier Assessment – Inspection**

The Division is working with a marine engineering consultant who has assessed the condition of the wooden fishing pier in late 2023. Due to concerns, the last 145 feet of the pier were closed. Further analysis and design called for five additional areas of the pier to be closed off. Two additional sections need to be restricted from fishing and congregating but pass-through access is acceptable. These seven additional areas are above pilings in need of various repairs and total about 2,700 square feet of pier area. Estimated repair costs are close to \$1 million for which the division does not have funding. It also raises the question if regular, costly repairs are better than replacement. The 2024 inspection is expected to occur in December.

## **Deerfield Golf Club**

---

### **Door and Window Replacement – Design**

The Deerfield clubhouse has walls that are nearly all glass but has wood framed doors and windows which are significantly deteriorated. Patching and painting is no longer an option. This project will be a full replacement in the ballroom with alternates for the two other meeting rooms if funding becomes available. Design was complete but subpar, and the consultant architect had failed to get needed approvals. That architect was given notice of their deficiencies. Following corrections, the project is finally out to bid. Work will occur in 2025 with significant coordination around events.

## **Delaware Seashore, Holts Landing and Fenwick Island State Parks**

---

### **Fenwick Island Improvements – Planning**

The Division has reimagined Fenwick Island to enhance the visitor experience and address operational needs. This project will include a new centralized concession area with restrooms and showers that meet current ADA requirements, new ingress/egress to the park that will provide better access for emergency vehicles and prevent queuing on Route 1 and relocation of the Chamber of Commerce building into the park.

### **Fresh Pond Pipe Replacement – Design**

The Division is working with an engineering consultant to design the culvert replacement along a main section of the Fred Hudson Road Trail. Design is nearly complete and will include a sinkhole repair on the adjacent Prickly Pear Trail which arose over the course of the project. Environmental permit coordination has caused some delay and uncertainty for design phase completion.

### **Assawoman Canal Trail Extension – Design**

The Division has worked with one of its engineering consultants to develop a design for the future Assawoman Canal Trail extension south of Route 26. There is no funding for construction at this time, but prior to moving forward, the division will host a meeting for public input.

### **Holts Wildlife Platform – Design**

The Seahawk Trail boardwalk across the marsh will have a bump out added for wildlife viewing. One of the Division's engineering consultants has completed 90% design and is coordinating environmental permitting.

### **Thompson Island Shoreline Stabilization – Construction**

The Rehoboth Bay shoreline of Thompson Island has been subject to significant erosion. The Division and Center for the Inland Bays (CIB) are partnering to address the issue. The CIB coordinated design consistent with state procedures and helped fundraise. The Division will be managing construction. The project includes wave attenuating devices on the shoreline. All work will be from barges in the water, carefully avoiding any contact with the sensitive nature of the island. The project started in October 2024 and is anticipated to be completed in March 2025.

## **Fort Delaware State Park**

---

### **Pier Inspections – Design**

The Division is using a marine engineering consultant to inspect the Pea Patch Island pier and the three piers/docks used by the park in Delaware City. Reports and recommendations were provided and reviewed by staff. No immediate repairs are required.

### **Port Penn Renovations – Construction**

The Port Penn Interpretive Center is currently closed due to significant structural concerns. Engineering design to evaluate the situation and provide bid documents for repairs and/or renovations has concluded. The building needs structural repairs and will be raised to enable new foundation work. The contract has been awarded and a notice to proceed was issued in April. The contractor has encountered difficulties in gaining the building permit through New Castle County. Because the building was close to the 100-year floodplain, the County required the division to have an engineer perform fieldwork and submit paperwork for elevation confirmation of the building. Those were additional costs and time but did result in confirmation of the building being outside that floodplain. The contractor now has a building permit and can proceed with construction.

## **First State Heritage Park**

---

### **John Bell House Restroom and Storage – Complete**

An accessory structure behind the John Bell House containing a new bathroom and storage closet has been fully operational since July 2024. Fencing was recently installed around the building, completing the project.

## **Garrisons Lake Golf Course**

---

### **New Clubhouse and Cart Barn Complex – Construction**

Design recently completed for a new clubhouse for the Garrisons Lake Golf Course. It will include a pro shop with food and beverage service. A new cart barn was completed in July 2023 and a temporary office trailer has been installed to continue golf sales. New fencing and gates were installed around the maintenance yard while the existing clubhouse was demolished. The clubhouse project went out to bid in May and the low bid was significantly higher than the estimate. The Division ultimately came up with funding to move forward. As part of the contractor’s coordination of the building permit, the Fire Marshal determined that fire suppression (a sprinkler system) is necessary. This will result in a slight delay and an increase in costs. Construction began in October 2024.



## **Lums Pond State Park**

---

### **Lums Pond Cabin Complex – Bidding**

Design is mostly done on a new cabin complex adjacent to the Lums Pond campground, the design is for up to 14 two and three-bedroom cabins depending on funding and final bids. The design team is working through final approvals. The Division received a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to match state funds. Construction is expected to begin in winter 2024.

### **Lums Mill House Stabilization – Construction**

After receiving proposals from contractors, the Division began work in August 2023 to demolish the mostly collapsed interior, repair masonry and perform structural carpentry work before replacing the roof of the Lums Mill House. As that work started, sections of brick wall began to collapse on its own and serious safety concerns became more present. Division staff, including the Cultural Resource Unit, considered options. An updated structural engineering assessment recommends demolition. The University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Design has provided a structural report. The Division is evaluating next steps.

### **Swamp Forest Trail – Bidding**

The Division is working with an engineering consultant for the design of two bridge replacements along the Swamp Forest Trail at Lums Pond. These two bridges are west of Area 1 near the Go Ape course and east of Area 4. This is funded 80% from DelDOT's Recreational Trails Program. Construction is expected to begin this winter and be complete before Go Ape reopens for 2025.

### **Buck Jersey Connector – Design**

Design is ongoing for the Buck Jersey Connector trail in Lums Pond, which is essentially a trail paralleling the main internal road. This is funded 80% from DelDOT's Recreational Trails Program. The scope of this project has been expanded to include reconfiguration of traffic flow at the fee booth. Construction would be anticipated for the fall of 2025 depending on funding availability.

### **Courtesy Dock – Design**

The Division has requested a proposal from one of its engineering consultants to design a courtesy dock for the boat ramp. Initial costs were high, resulting in further discussions regarding scope and costs.

### **Tennis Courts – Construction**

The tennis court fencing, nets and court surface in Lums Pond are all in need of repair or replacement. Initial costs were higher than expected. The Division contacted additional vendors to try to get reduced costs. The project is on hold due to funding availability.

## **Killens Pond State Park**

---

### **Main Pool – Design**

Design consultation started in the summer of 2023 to replace the current main pool and small adjacent pool with a larger new pool. The goal was to complete design in time to start construction in September 2024. Despite Division efforts, the design is not going to be complete this summer. The new goal will be to bid in the winter to have the contractor prepare everything and schedule for a fast start September 2025. Prior to the 2025 season the water park will require some ongoing patches and repairs to keep the existing main pool usable.

## **Trap Pond State Park**

---

### **Splash Park – Design**

Design started in September to create a new spray water feature area in Trap Pond. Initial cost estimates were significantly higher than funding available. Efforts proceeded to reduce costs which would include reduction in the number of spray features, overall area and types of support buildings. Design is moving forward with the more limited scope. The project is scheduled to be bid in March 2025 with an expected opening in spring 2026.

### **Sewer Wet Well – Construction**

After the completion of engineering design, the Division solicited bids to restore the wet well in the existing sewer treatment system. The project should be relatively short, with construction originally anticipated to be complete before April 2024. However, unforeseen delays have occurred, and the division and contractor have pushed the project to December 2024 to avoid risks as the campground is busiest now through the fall.

# White Clay Creek State Park

---

## **Big Pond Construction - Design**

Design is ongoing to reestablish Big Pond by reconstructing the dam that failed. The design consultant completed the dam breach analysis and determined that the new dam would have a significant hazard classification. This would require the dam be regulated by DNREC's Dam Safety Program and require the dam to safely withstand a larger magnitude storm than previously anticipated with tree clearing and armoring dramatically different than the current aesthetic. There have been recent discussions with our consultant and the Dam Safety Program to address a number of complex items and modeling. At the time of drafting of this report it looks like a redesign could exempt the project from the Dam Safety Program requirements and high-hazard classification. The project will still require a lengthy permitting process that will include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Program and DNREC Wetlands and Subaqueous Lands section.

## **Dam 7 Removal - Coordination**

Several organizations are collaborating on the removal of Dam 7, which lies between Hopkins Bridge and Wedgewood Road, for various environmental reasons. The Division is not leading this effort but is coordinating. The New Castle Conservation District is working with an engineering consultant on design and permitting. The group is careful to include representation from Deerfield's golf operations and the Division of Water as the course pulls water from the creek for irrigation. The timing of construction is dependent upon permits and approvals, including coordination with the National Wild and Scenic River Program.

## **Relocation of Office to Maxwell House - Design**

The Division plans to move park operations staff from the current park office to the Maxwell House. This is the third-ranked priority in the White Clay Creek Master Plan and is a major operational need for the park. The planning phase is complete. The Division's in-house architect is coordinating design considerations.

## **New Nature Center and Complex Improvements - Design**

Planning is complete for a new nature center and improvements to the nature center complex. This is the top priority in the White Clay Creek Master Plan. In addition to a new nature center, elements include new restrooms, increased parking and outdoor programming space. Design is well underway.



## **Bridge Replacement - Design**

The Division is working with an engineering consultant to design a replacement for the bridge to the nature center adjacent to Hopkins Bridge. The wooden bridge has been displaced by flooding multiple times in recent years and ingress/egress to this area of White Clay Creek is critical to staff, campers and program groups. This is funded 80% from DelDOT's Recreational Trails Program. Environmental permitting coordination and design development are underway.

## **Niven Barn - Construction**

Structural repairs of the historic Niven Barn within the Nine Foot Road area of White Clay Creek were completed in September 2024. The next step is replacement of the roof.



# Administrative Services

Greg Abbott

## Marketing/Social Media

### Official Outdoor Recreation Sponsor of University of Delaware Athletics

At the opening game of the 2024 University of Delaware football season, it was announced that Delaware State Parks has become the official outdoor recreation sponsor of University of Delaware Athletics. This exciting partnership brings a range of promotional elements, including prominent signage throughout the football stadium and Delaware State Parks logos displayed on the field goal nets. Additionally, the sponsorship extends to name, image and likeness (NIL) rights with the University of Delaware Softball team, allowing the parks to collaborate with the athletes on promotional campaigns. Advertisements will also feature on the stadium's big screens during games, further integrating the parks into the game-day experience.

This partnership not only enhances the visibility of Delaware State Parks but also encourages University of Delaware fans to explore the natural beauty and recreational opportunities offered by the state's parks. Whether hiking, camping or participating in outdoor activities, fans are invited to experience everything Delaware's diverse park system has to offer, fostering a deeper connection between the university community and the state's natural treasures.



### 2024 Hershey RV Show

In September, the marketing team had the opportunity to connect with over 3,000 attendees at the Hershey RV Show, one of the largest gatherings of outdoor enthusiasts. During the event, the team distributed more than 5,000 promotional items, helping to increase visibility for Delaware State Parks. The outreach provided a platform to introduce the parks to those who had never visited while rekindling a sense of excitement and loyalty among returning visitors. Many who had previously experienced the parks shared glowing feedback, highlighting the parks' natural beauty, serene environments and the variety of adventures they offer. This personal interaction allowed the marketing team to deepen connections with park enthusiasts and create awareness of the unique experiences Delaware State Parks provide, from hiking and camping to wildlife viewing and family-friendly activities.



Overall, the event was an invaluable opportunity to build relationships and further promote the the parks' value to a broader audience.

## Best of Delaware Show

Delaware State Parks had a successful presence at the Best of Delaware show, engaging with approximately 300 attendees throughout the event. Visitors to our booth expressed great enthusiasm and interest in the wide range of outdoor activities, programs and natural beauty our parks offer. Many attendees shared positive feedback on their personal experiences at Delaware's parks, with several expressing a desire to explore new locations and participate in upcoming events. The overall response was highly encouraging, reinforcing the value of our outreach efforts and highlighting the importance of Delaware State Parks in promoting outdoor recreation and conservation within the community.



## Digital Marketing

### eNewsletter

The eNewsletter remained strong with an average open rate of 40% and a 2.1% click rate. Currently 63,937 subscriptions to the eNewsletter.

### Year-to-Date Statistics:

- Current average open rate: 40%
- Current average click rate: 2.1%
- Unsubscribe rate: 0.13% (down 27%)

### Social Media

- **Facebook**
  - Followers: 50,305
  - Reach: 568.4K
  - Engagement: 5.8K (only counting reactions/likes and shares)
- **Instagram**
  - Followers: 30.6K
  - Reach: 68.7K
  - Engagement: 8.7K
- **Twitter/X**
  - Followers: 13,900

View this email in your browser



**DELAWARE STATE PARKS**  
YOUR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE STARTS HERE



**15 Days of Free(dom)**

Ready for an island adventure? Enjoy 15 themed, free entry days for select individuals at Fort Delaware State Park! From military and scouts to agricultural workers and Delaware college students, we're offering you entry to explore the wonders of the fort. Details for eligibility will be posted two days ahead of the adventure on Fort Delaware's Facebook page.

Not eligible for free entry? No warrant Delaware adult library cardholders can check out two ferry tickets per reservation via the Delaware Libraries Midweek Pass. [Contact](#). Two reservations are available daily, all season long!

[Plan Your Visit](#)

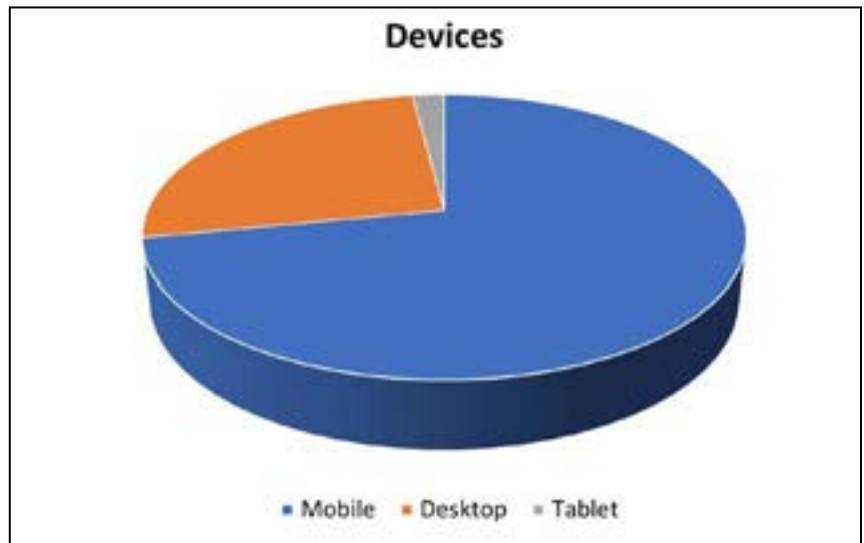
# Website Update

## Quarterly Overview

During this quarter, there were 540,529 page views and 407,701 visitors, reflecting an increase in both metrics compared to the previous quarter. This growth showcases strong engagement with the website as we head into the fall season.

## Platform Engagement

Mobile devices continued to dominate website access, accounting for 294,206 visits, which is approximately 72% of total visits. Desktop visits made up 106,631, about 26%, while tablet usage was relatively small, with 8,292 visits, representing roughly 2%.



## Most Popular Pages

In terms of the most popular pages, Cape Henlopen State Park remains the most visited web page, with 106,014 views. RV and tent camping information holds the second spot, attracting 62,799 views. The Home Page followed with 55,860 views, reflecting continued interest in general park information. These statistics highlight the ongoing appeal of both practical resources, such as camping information, and detailed insights about specific parks.

Top Pages		
Rank	Page	Page Views
1	Cape Henlopen	106,014
2	RV and Tent Camping	62,799
3	Home Page	55,860
4	Delaware Seashore	53,427
5	Passes Tags Fees	41,992
6	Reservations	38,478
7	Killens Pond Water Park	35,344
8	Lums Pond	33,840
9	Fort Delaware	32,905
10	Killens Pond	30,283

## Website Modernization Project

The Division in collaboration with the Delaware Department of Technology and Information, partner Vanguard, and a dedicated team of division colleagues, began the Delaware State Parks Website Modernization Project on July 11, 2023. The project aims to enhance mobile usability, performance, navigation and accessibility, offering a significantly improved digital experience for all visitors and stakeholders.

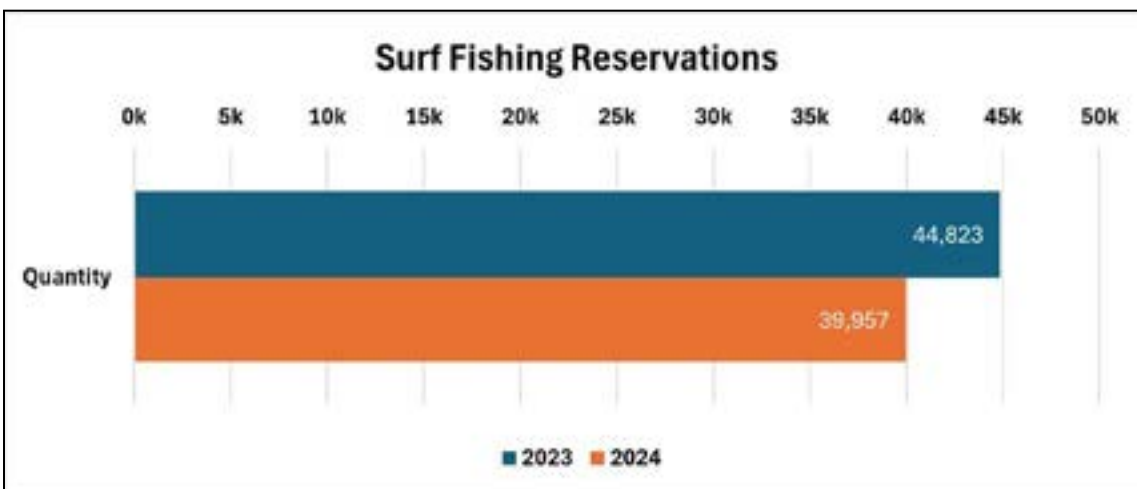
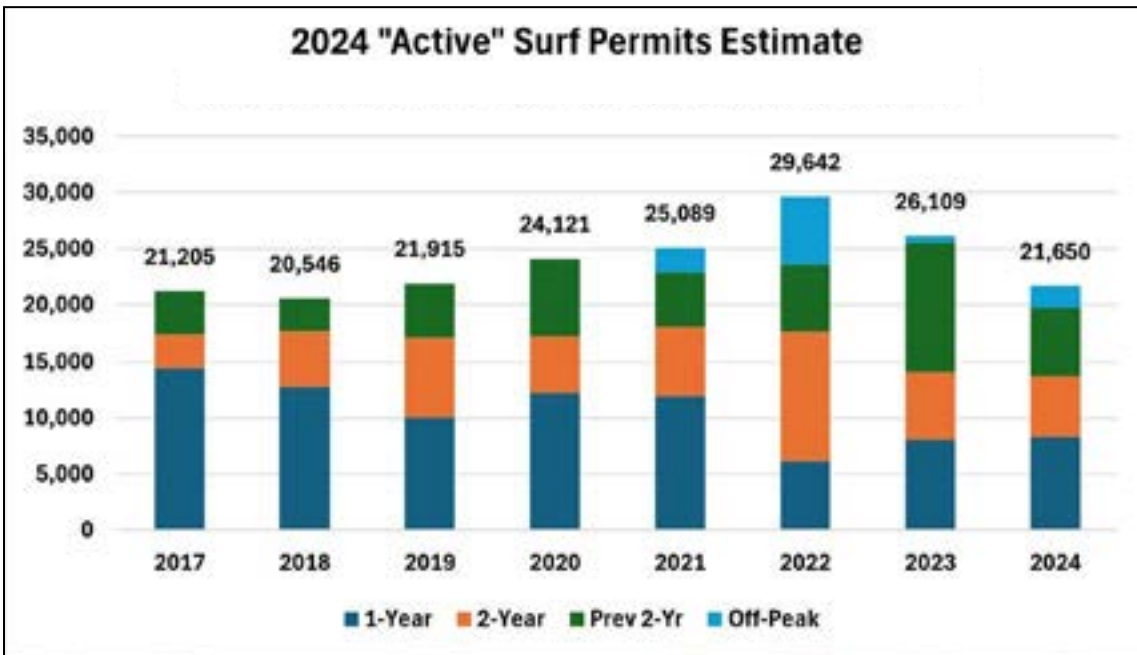
The project has been moving ahead of schedule, with a planned launch for late November 2024. This project is critical for improving user engagement and accessibility, as the website serves as the “digital front door” to Delaware State Parks. Since the initial start date last July, internal and external stakeholders have been working diligently to design, program and migrate over 100 pages of content to the new site. The website is currently in testing and content review.



## Office of Business Services



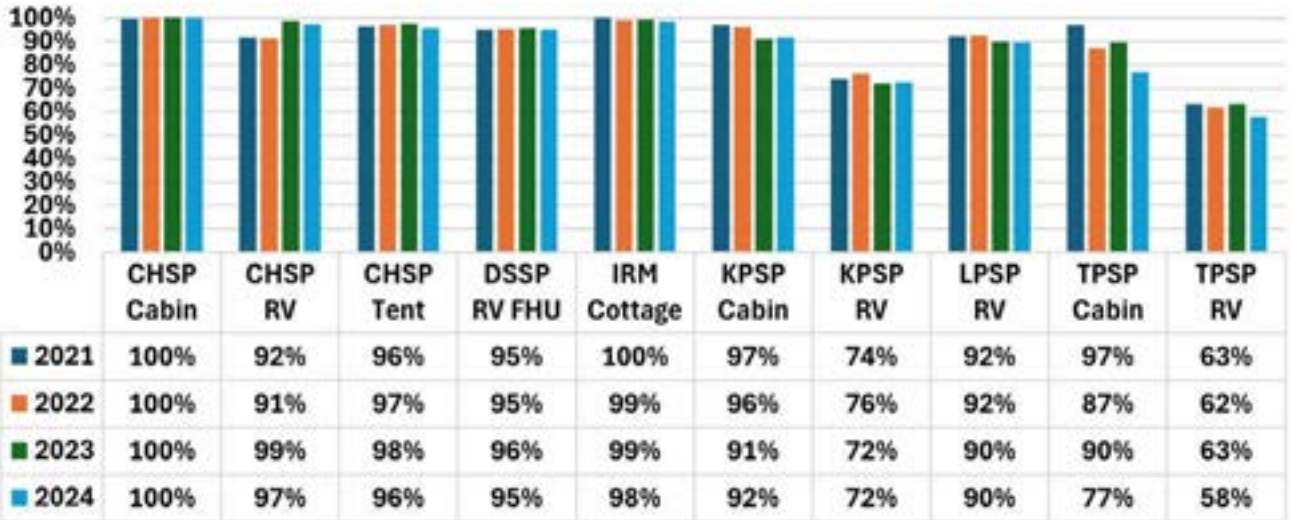
## Surf Permit and Annual Pass Sales



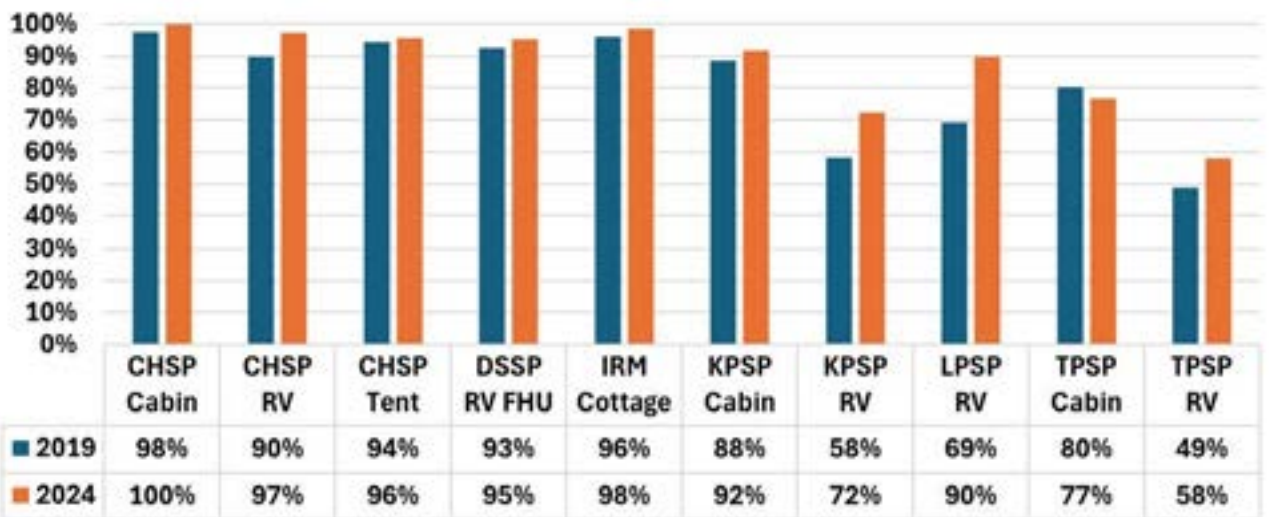


# Summer Camping

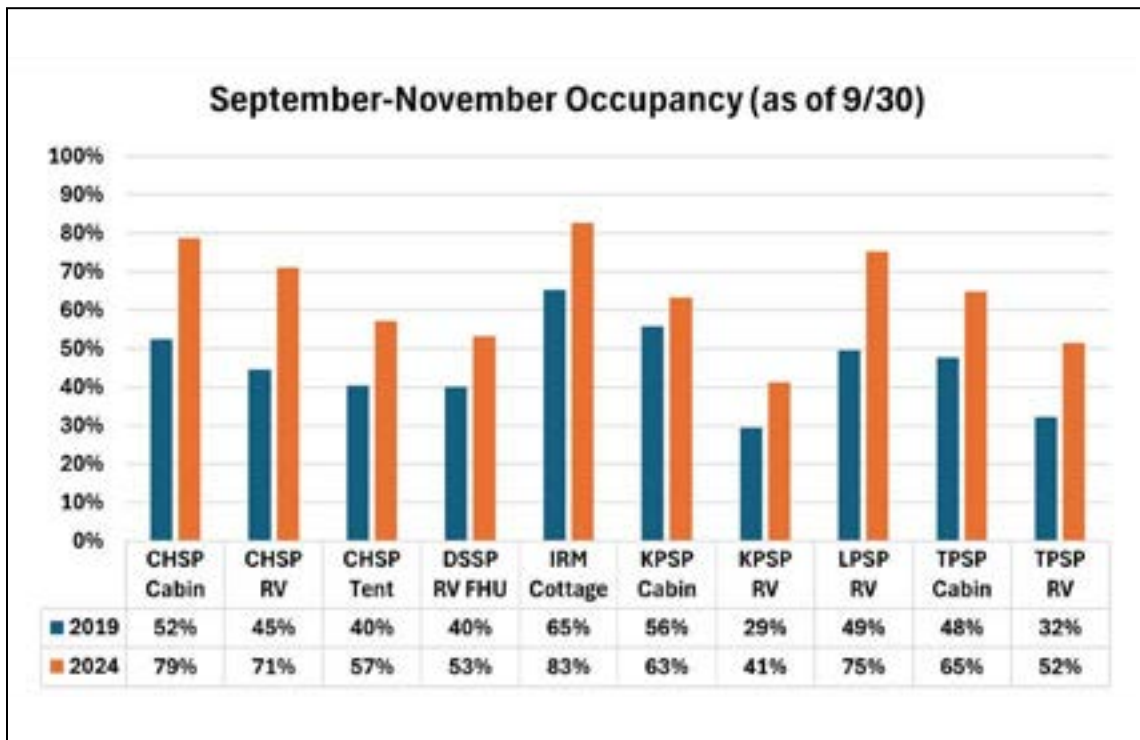
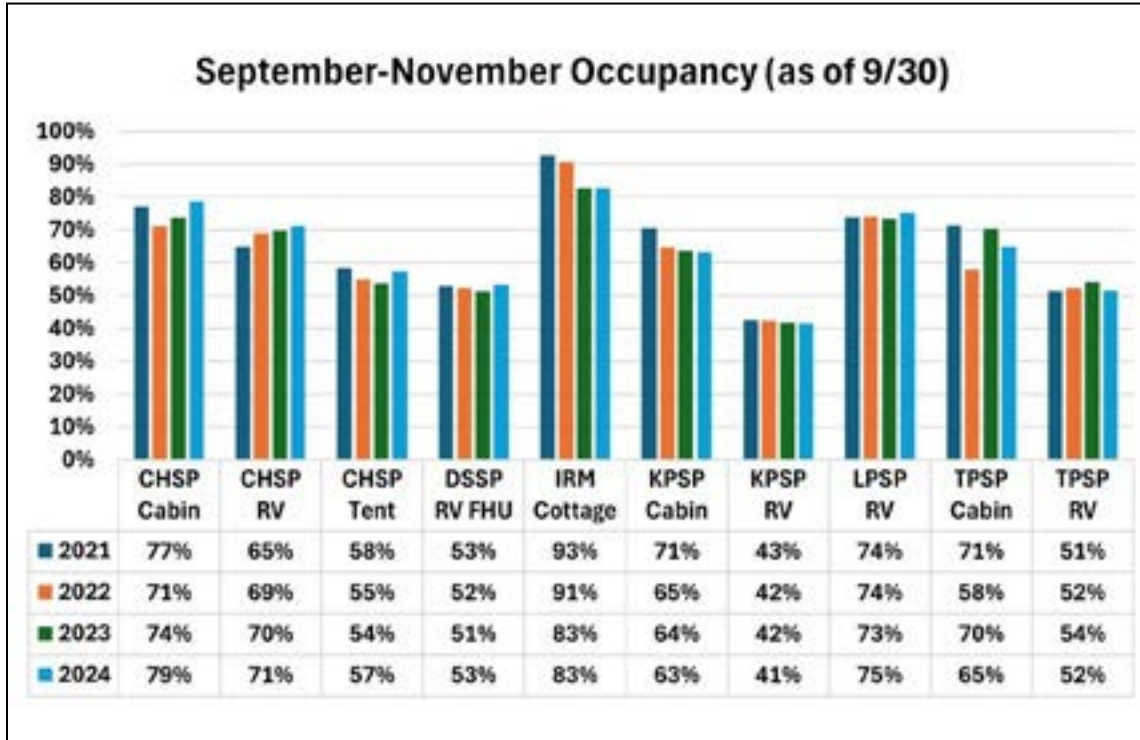
## June-August Occupancy



## June-August Occupancy



# Fall Camping



## Contract Updates

---

### Executed Agreements/Amendments:

- Statewide
  - Wilmington Brew Works Agreement – Collaborative agreement between Wilmington Brew Works, Delaware Tourism Office, and Delaware State Parks for a portion of revenue from the new “Adventure Awaits” beer which is featuring four of the Delaware State Parks to include Trap Pond State Park, Bellevue State Park, Cape Henlopen State Park and Fort Delaware State Park – expires December 31, 2024.
- Bellevue
  - KABOOM! Agreement – Collaborative agreement between KABOOM!, Inc., Friends of Bellevue State Park and Delaware State Parks to provide a new playground space at Bellevue State Parks – expires at the completion of the project.
- Fenwick
  - Bay View Park Association Extension – Allows for the continued non-exclusive use of 18 parking spaces located on Delaware Seashore
  - Bay Views deeded easement– expires September 30, 2029.
- White Clay Creek/Auburn Valley
  - White Clay Creek Mowing MOA – Provides semiannual mowing and retaining of the mowed hay by the farmer which the property is still in the planning stages for public access – expires December 31, 2024.
  - UD Coop Agreement regarding Kranz Property – Grants the UD Cooperative Extension office permission to operate their initiatives and activities at the Kranz Farm – expires July 14, 2025.

### Request for Proposals/Agreements/Amendments in process:

- Contract NAT24001-WHITE CLAY VENUES (White Clay Venues (Hospitality, Tourism, Events, Recreation & Cultural Services) – In Process
- Contract NAT24005\_OUTDOOR RECREATION (Outdoor Recreation at Lums Pond State Park) - Formally Lums Pond Equestrian – In Process
- Contract NAT24006\_OVERSEE PROPERTY (Management of the Oversee Property with Auburn Valley State Park) – In Process
- Contract NAT24007\_Packaged Ice (Package ice delivery for Delaware State Parks) – In Process
- Contract NAT24010\_Deauville Beach Accessories (Beach Accessories at Deauville Beach) – In Process
- Town of Fenwick Lifeguards MOA Extension – In Process

## Creative Services/Publications

The Creative Services team attended the CreativePro Conference in Arlington, Virginia July 8 through 11. This conference was crucial for the team to stay up to date with the latest technological advances in Creative Cloud software that we use on a regular basis. Staff was given an artificial intelligence (AI) road map of immersion into the design world with ways to integrate, update and produce artwork faster, capabilities to transfer text and graphics easily from one platform to another and ways to incorporate accessibility into design. Staff is excited to master these new-learned skills to better serve the Division.

Additionally, this training was great for connecting with other designers and invaluable for our own teambuilding.

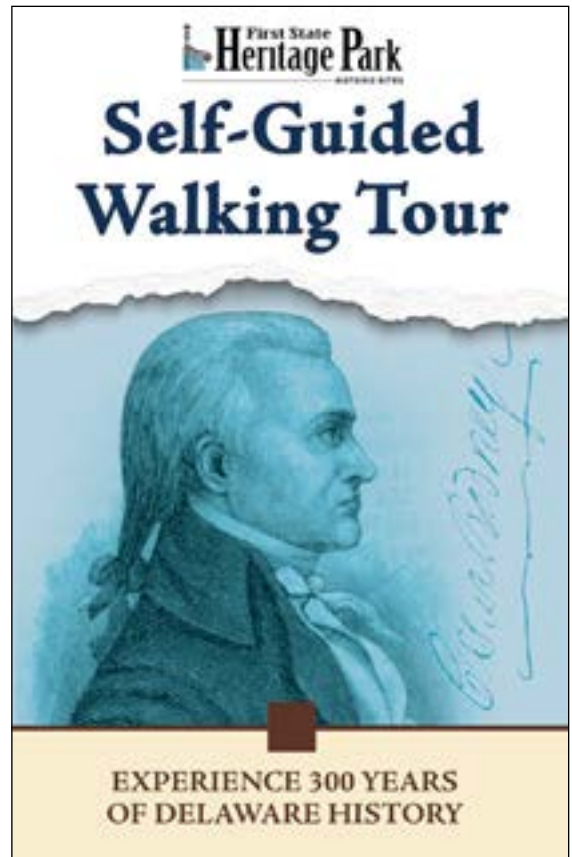
In quarter three of 2024, Creative Services designed and produced mid-summer and fall projects as well as materials to promote division programs.

**Projects Completed:**

- First State Heritage Park Self-Guided Tour Booklet
- Fort Delaware Neugas Exhibit Panels
- Collectors Pack for Trading Cards
- Delaware Seashore State Park Debris Signs
- Indian River Marina Autumn Art Festival Banner
- Killens Pond Puppies in the Pool Banner
- Killens Pond Water Park Brochure
- Summer Concert Series Rack Card reprint
- Wedding Rack Cards reprint
- Printing of State Fair Sticker Poster
- Wagon Ride Banners
- Annual Pass Cross Country Banner
- Fort Delaware Paranormal Brochure
- Fort Delaware Delafort Paranormal Sign
- Fort Delaware Visitor Center Exhibit Panel
- First State Heritage Park Market Fair Poster, Facebook Ad
- Trap Pond State Park Bethesda Church Waysides update
- Bellevue State Park Purple Martin Wayside update
- Three Wellness Committee Newsletters
- University of Delaware Sponsorship Signs
- Military Pass ID Card re-design
- Friends Celebration Invitation update
- First Day Hikes Banner
- Alapocas Run Brew Story Banner
- Delaware Seashore Graphic for Retail
- April Abel Photo Prints for Exhibit
- Employee Awards Seal update
- Volunteer Opportunities (for campgrounds) Template
- Programming Rack Card reprint
- Delaware State Parks Annual Passes
- Deauville Beach Annual Passes
- Friends Of Cape Henlopen Holiday Boutique Poster
- Printing of posters for Hershey RV Show
- Alapocas Run State Park Brew Story Glass Graphics
- Brandywine Creek Enchanted Meadows Banners and Signs
- Cape Henlopen State Park Fantasy Trail Banners, Posters and Flyers
- Market Fair Brochure
- Market Fair Sandwich Board Signs
- Indian River Life-Saving Station Self-Guided Tour Booklet Reprint
- Mount Pleasant Cemetery Wayside update
- Delaware Seashore Camp Store Signs for Retail
- Lighthouse and Seascape Poster reprints for Retail
- Pets in the Park Brochure
- Enforcement Business Card Template



Top: Creative Pro Design Conference Bottom Left: Cross Country Banner. Bottom Right: First State Heritage Park Self Guided Walking Tour Booklet



Design Projects This Quarter	
Project Type	Number of Designs Completed
Banner	8
Brochure	4
Booklet	2
Newsletter	3
Rack Card	3
Poster	7
Postcard	2
Advertisement	1
Signs	19
Wayside	3
Exhibit Panels	20
Misc.	9
Total	81



Above: Fort Delaware State Park Paranormal Brochure, Paranormal Sign on the Delafort. Below: Hazard Sign. Bottom Right: Trading Card Collectors Pack.



Left: Deauville Beach Pass. Annual Pass.



Bottom Left: Volunteer Opportunities (for campgrounds) Template.

Center: Folk Art Friday entrance sign

Bottom Right: Friends of CHSP Holiday Book Fair.

