



# FWCCSP RECORD

February 2024

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## A Note from Our Superintendent

What's New at the Park?

In staffing news at the park, we said goodbye (sort of) to a good friend and hello to a new one. Ann Burruss, our dedicated volunteer manager, made the decision to retire (a second time!) to spend more time with her family. She will be sorely missed however she's not gone far- she is already a regular volunteer at Judge Morris and is captaining a new stewardship team to attack the area near Creek Road/University of Delaware. Thank you, Ann! Our assistant superintendent Alivia Plump left us as she has a new baby on the way (any day now!) and we have welcomed Sheila Linn as our first (in a LONG time) full-time Assistant Superintendent. Sheila comes to us with a wealth of experience both at Brandywine Creek (17 years) and Killens Pond State Parks (6 years). She has hit the ground running and we are thrilled to have her.

Our Deerfield Golf Club will start the year with new management, as Troon inc. was awarded the new vendor contract. Troon® started as one facility in 1990 and has since grown to become the world's largest professional club management company. They provide services to 825+ locations and manage various amenities at their sites.

The year 2024 will start out with a bang as we prepare to put four properties on the market for Requests for Proposals. Parks is seeking supporting partnerships that fit with the park mission to improve these properties, catch up on deferred maintenance, and make them available to the public. We expect these to hit the market in late February. They include the Niven property (Nine Foot Road), Krapf property (Creek Road), Lamborn property (Pleasant Hill Road), and Judge Morris Estate (Polly Drummond Hill Road).

Over at the Nature Center, planning continues for a new structure and a general location has been identified. Due to budget challenges the structure already costs more than the funding allotted, so we are taking a hard look at how to manage the challenge. A new nature center bridge could not come fast enough, as we had a repeat of the 'floating bridge' scenario with an early January storm. The engineers working on the new bridge design were out during the high-water event to eyeball the conditions as part of the planning process.

A dam removal project is slated for the dam on Creek Road adjacent to the old pump house, and work continues on the design and planning. An archaeological survey was conducted, and more work is expected before the project moves forward. We look forward to announcing public meetings to discuss the project in more detail.

Lots of good things are happening at White Clay- and spring is just around the corner! Be sure to take part in one of our many park programs, and we'll see you at the annual meeting!

## PARK EXPANSION ANNOUNCED

Governor John Carney, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), and the Delaware Open Space Council announced an expansion of 275 acres to White Clay Creek State Park in Newark. This expansion of the nearly 3,650-acre park marks an historic investment to enhance recreational opportunities, bolster wildlife habitats, and preserve additional open lands in New Castle County.

The Fiscal Year 2023 budget included an increased budget of \$20 million for the Delaware Open Space Program. This allowed the Open Space Program to acquire three key land parcels. These parcels included the last major privately-owned land within the park.

“This expansion of White Clay Creek State Park is part of DNREC’s commitment to preserving and conserving Delaware’s natural resources for current and future generations,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. “I would like to thank all of the partners who are helping to make this expansion possible, including Mt. Cuba Center and The Conservation Fund, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through Walmart’s Acres for America program, and with special thanks to the du Pont family.”

In a tribute to dedicated conservationist William K. du Pont, Sabrina du Pont-Langenegger and her husband Conrad Langenegger gifted a \$1.3 million endowment through the Delaware Community Foundation to support Delaware State Parks.

The acquisition of the three parcels, near the intersection of Pleasant Hill Rd and Corner Ketch Rd is progressing in three phases:

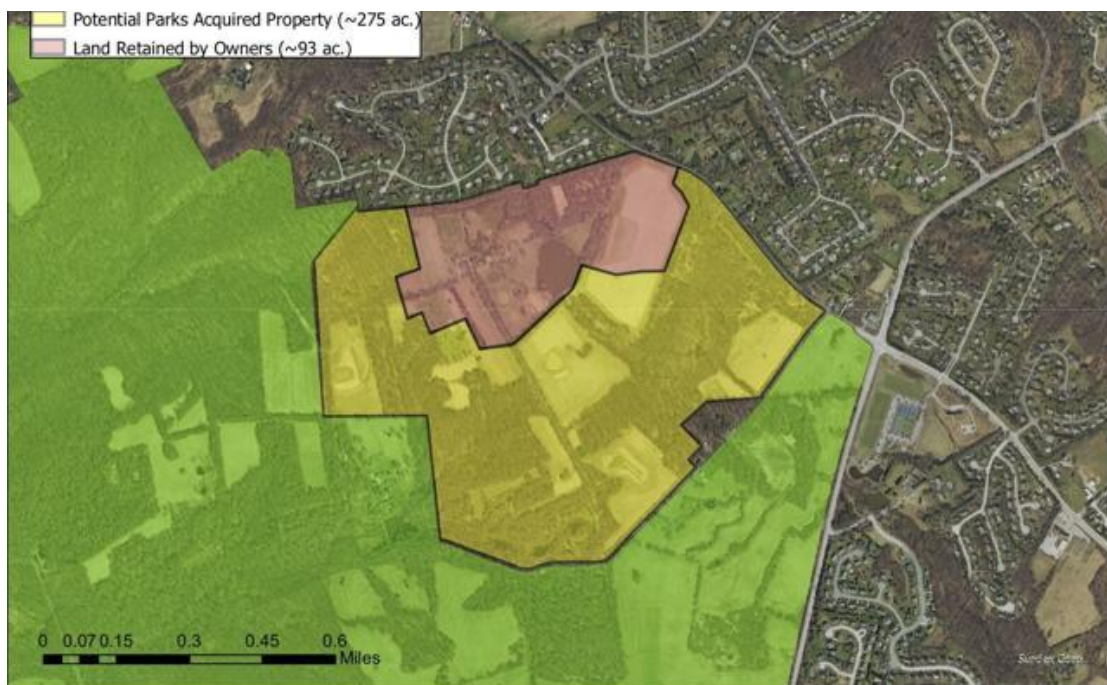
Phase 1 - about 90 acres – Acquisition completed in September 2023.

Phase 2 - about 97 acres – Acquisition anticipated in early 2024.

Phase 3 - about 88 acres – Acquisition anticipated in later 2024.

The \$26 million project was made possible with \$19.5 million from the Delaware Open Space Program and \$6 million secured from Mt. Cuba Center through The Conservation Fund. The project was also awarded a \$500,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through Walmart’s Acres for America program. This is the first time Acres for America has funded a project in Delaware and one of only ten competitive grants awarded nationwide.

The expansion project aligns with the White Clay Creek State Park Master Plan, which emphasizes keeping the park natural and maximizing its 37-mile trail system, a favorite feature among park users. This map shows the property, at the corner of Pleasant Hill Rd and Corner Ketch Rd.



## Friends Annual Meeting March 26

Deerfield Golf Club, Newark,

Doors open at 6:30 pm , with presentations at 7 pm. **Non Members** are welcome.

The Friends will provide an update, followed by the Park. Topics will include the recent land acquisition, and the status of the new Nature Center.

We will also have a presentation by Jay Custer from the University of Delaware.

Light refreshments!

### What Does Recent Archaeological Research Tell Us About the Lenape and Their Ancestors

Numerous large-scale archaeological excavations associated with highway construction and other development projects have taken place over the past 25 years in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain of Delaware. Two major findings are: 1) There is little to no evidence for agriculture among indigenous groups. Instead, there is abundant evidence for the intensive use of a variety of wild plant food resources including seed plants, acorns, and tuberous roots. 2) There is no evidence for “village communities” prior to European Contact in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. On a local level, at the Minguannan Site in the White Clay Creek Preserve of Pennsylvania the most significant archaeological materials excavated from the site are 3000 – 4000 years old.



Jay F. Custer –Professor of Anthropology, University of Delaware  
(abbreviated summary vita)

*Teaching and Research Interests:* Native American archaeology of Eastern North America  
technology, arts, and crafts of Native North America; modern Native American cultural issues;  
images of North American and Mesoamerican Indians in popular culture; modern American  
Anabaptist cultures (Amish, Mennonite, Brethren)

*Research Experience:* Excavation and testing of more than 150 prehistoric and historic  
archaeological sites in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and New Jersey; Delaware,  
Maryland, and Pennsylvania and a computerized archaeological data base of 4000 sites for the  
Delmarva Peninsula and adjacent areas of Pennsylvania; development of archaeological and  
ethnohistorical research programs in association with the Nanticoke Indian Tribe of Delaware and the  
Delaware Indian Tribe of Oklahoma.

## Come out and help the park!

De-vine Intervention is just that – intervening by cutting vines using a curtain technique (try it and learn) so invasive vines such as oriental bittersweet don't overtop or strangle trees. This new event is led by Bill Slater, who you may find out in the park working on vines on any other day!

To sign up for any volunteer opportunity create a Galaxy Digital account at this link <https://destateparks.galaxydigital.com/> and search for opportunities at White Clay Creek State Park.

**OR go to our website** <https://www.whiteclayfriends.org/volunteer> , and fill out the Volunteer form.

## Upcoming Park Activities

### Hiking Series

#### **Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at 10:00 AM**

New to the park? Ready to find a new favorite trail? Then join the park naturalist on this series to explore trails and discover nature in White Clay Creek State Park. Dress for the weather, bring bottled water and come ready for adventure! Pre-registration required, call 302-368-6900 by Tuesday at 3 p.m. Free.

### Intro to Birding

#### **Saturday, February 17, 2024 at 9:00 AM**

Join the park naturalist to learn about birds in the winter! Learn about local birds, observe the feeders at the Nature Center and go on a short hike. Pre-registration required by 3 p.m. on Friday 302-368-6900. Free.

### Day Off Scout Program

#### **Monday, February 19, 2024 at 1:00 PM**

Join our naturalist each month to work on various Girl Scout badges, this month's topic is First Aid. Scouts may be dropped off with signed permission slip. Badges will be mailed after the program. \$10/scout, register online. Register online at <https://destateparks.com/whiteclaycreek>

### Full Moon Friday: Hot Chocolate Hike

#### **Friday, February 23, 2024 at 7:00 PM**

We will provide hot chocolate to help keep you warm on this early evening winter hike along the Creek Road trail! Bring a travel mug with lid. Online registration ends 24 hours prior to the program. After that, please call 302-368-6900 before noon. Register at <https://destateparks.com/whiteclaycreek>

### Intro to Fly Fishing

#### **Monday, February 26, 2024 at 7:00 PM**

Bring any equipment you have and join Ed O'Donnell and Sam Palermo of the Friends of White Clay Creek State Park and learn the basics of fly fishing on day one and fly tying on day two. Must pre-register by the Friday before the program by calling the park office (302)368-6900. Free.

### Murder at the Mansion

#### **March 1 and 2, 2024 at 7:00 PM**

The year is 1943, you've been invited to our USO Dance here at the Magnolia Estate Club. Even though we are stateside, many dangers lurk, keep your eyes and ears open as we gather to commemorate our continued work with the War Effort. \$30 per person, register online. Light refreshments provided. Register online at <https://destateparks.com/whiteclaycreek>

## Friends Annual Report

As Friends welcome you to a new year in the Park we wanted to look at our recent activity.

### 2023 Highlights

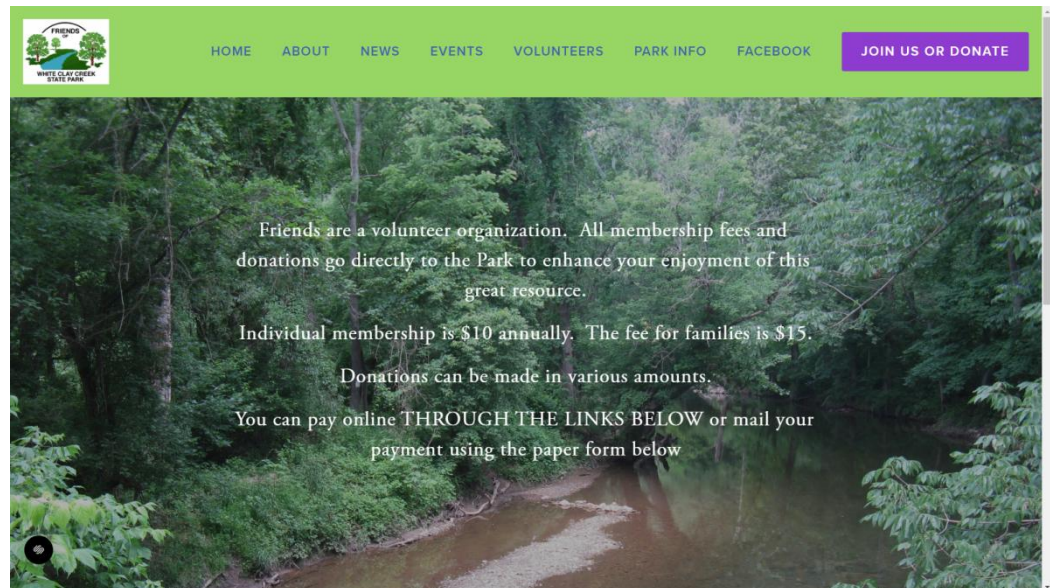
- 123 volunteers contributed 1943 hours (this does not include the Judge Morris Environmental work)
- membership
  - Paid members: 335
  - # of people on email list: 477, Includes volunteers, state reps, park staff, and previous members
- major expenses
  - Scholarships for school programs and summer camps at the Nature Center
  - Benches that meet ADA guidelines
  - Security camera equipment
  - Invasive plant spraying equipment
  - Meeting support for Fishing programs, Youth deer hunt, Volunteer Appreciation

### 2024 Plans

- continue to support ADA facilities, and Nature Center programs
- continue grant applications for Park infrastructure
- contract for seasonal Intern for Environmental Education
- fill vacancies on our board (Vice President, Volunteer Coordinator, Publicity Chair)

## Support the White Clay Creek State Park by Renewing your Membership!

The more members we have, the more our voice is heard when we seek to preserve and enhance our Park. Please go to our [website](#) and click on the purple button.



The screenshot shows the website for Friends of White Clay Creek State Park. The header is green with a navigation menu: HOME, ABOUT, NEWS, EVENTS, VOLUNTEERS, PARK INFO, FACEBOOK, and a purple button labeled "JOIN US OR DONATE". The main content area features a background image of a forest stream. The text on the page reads: "Friends are a volunteer organization. All membership fees and donations go directly to the Park to enhance your enjoyment of this great resource. Individual membership is \$10 annually. The fee for families is \$15. Donations can be made in various amounts. You can pay online THROUGH THE LINKS BELOW or mail your payment using the paper form below".