



DNREC Digital Newsletter - December 2025

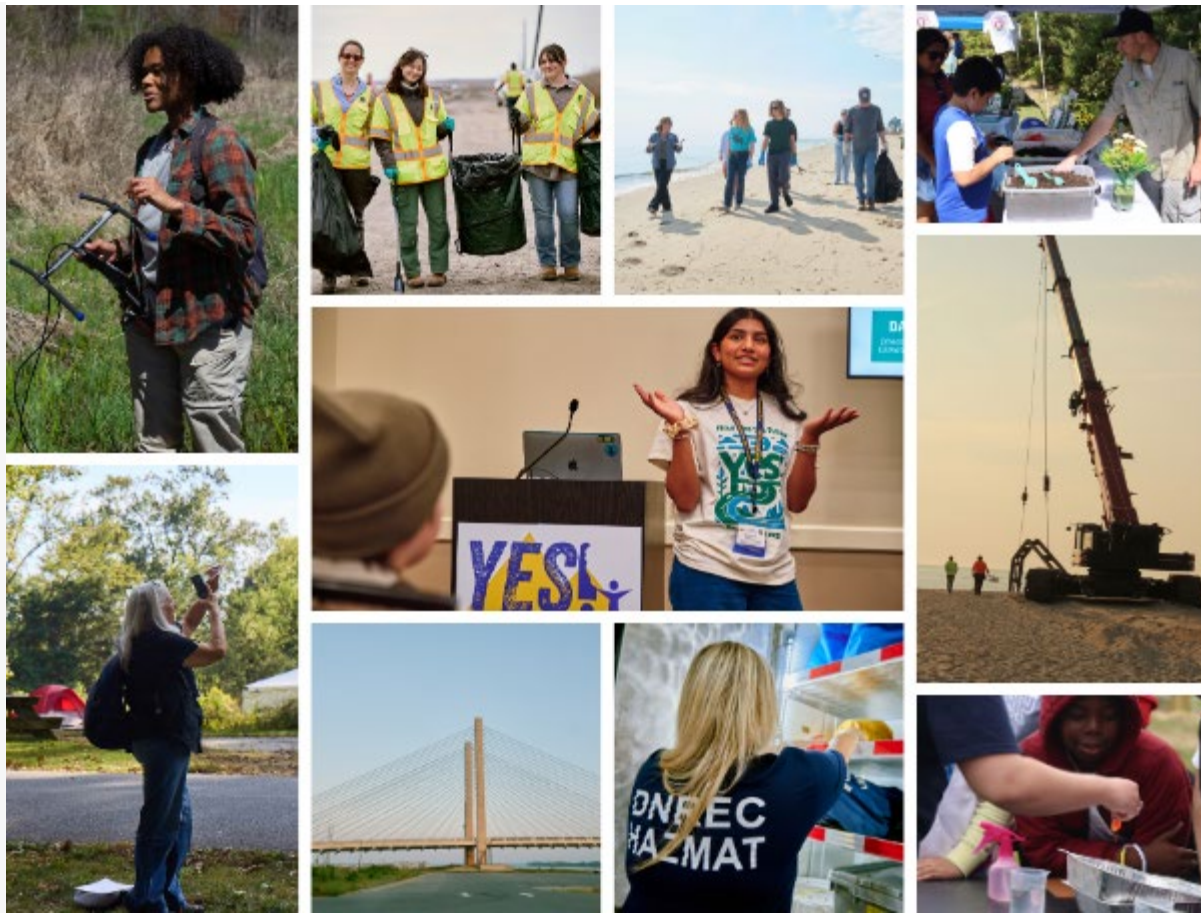
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control sent this bulletin at 12/18/2025 02:04 PM EST

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DNREC Newsletter - December 2025

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This year has been one of growth, restoration and community action.

Thanks to your support, this year saw the planting of 7,000 trees, the reintroduction of 25 bog turtles (doubling their population), the restoration of 20 acres of wetlands, the completion of the 200th well to the groundwater monitoring network, the weatherization of 400 homes, the addition of 1,000 acres of open space, the removal of 5,000 pounds of trash during Coastal Cleanup and so much more.

With the holidays upon us, we want to thank you for being part of our community. We wish you a joyful season and a hopeful, sustainable 2026.

Outdoor
Delaware



From Our Bays to Your Plate: Inside Delaware's Shellfish Aquaculture Industry

Significant progress in the shellfish industry has been made since the beginning of the 2010s, when Delaware was the only state on the Atlantic coast without shellfish aquaculture. Just a decade later, hundreds of thousands of oysters are being harvested via aquaculture and sold to restaurants and distributors right here in the state.

[Read more](#)



Careful Management Ensures the Delaware Bay Remains a Horseshoe Crab Haven

Every spring, millions of living fossils make their way to the beaches along the Delaware Bay, continuing a cycle that's been underway for thousands of years. Creepy-crawlies more than a foot long clad in carapaces and trailing a tail-like spike emerge from the waves to gather along the shoreline en masse in hopes of finding a mate. These are horseshoe crabs, and the body of water dividing Delaware from New Jersey is home to their largest spawning grounds in the world.

[Read more](#)

DNREC Newsroom

With Waterfowl Seasons Reopening After Recent Virus Detection, DNREC Urges Safe



Handling of Harvested Wild Birds

As Delaware’s waterfowl hunting season reopens this week, DNREC reminds hunters that safe handling of harvested wild birds is imperative following the recent detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a sick snow goose found Dec. 8 in eastern Kent County. [Read more](#)

DNREC Adds New Leaders to Delaware State Parks

Five key leaders were promoted to new positions in Delaware State Parks, including Inland Ponds Regional Administrator Jayce Madden, Northern Regional Administrator Pat Thompson, Superintendent Chris Pauley at Delaware Seashore State Park, Superintendent Lindsey Goebel at Trap Pond State Park and Curator/Registrar Amy Haddock at the Brandywine Zoo. [Read more](#)



DNREC Demands Delaware City Refinery Install New Fenceline Air Sensors After Volatile Compound Release

DNREC has issued an order demanding the Delaware City Refining Company (DCRC) quickly install fenceline sensors at the Delaware City refinery after the facility revealed that a recent release of butane and related volatile organic compounds was significantly more extensive than initially reported. [Read more](#)

Snow Goose Tests Presumptive Positive for Avian Influenza; Delaware Poultry Producers Encouraged to Take Precautions

DNREC reports a presumptive positive case of H5 avian influenza in a sick snow goose collected Dec. 8 in eastern Kent



County and urges anyone who finds sick or dead wild birds — especially geese and ducks — to report the location and avoid handling the birds. [Read more](#)



Big Chill Wins National Recognition for Public-Private Partnership

The Big Chill Beach Club was presented the President's Award for Corporate Partnership by the National Association of State Park Directors for its contributions to Delaware State Parks and surrounding communities. [Read more](#)

DNREC Awards Nearly \$350,000 in Community Environmental Grant Funding for 2026

Ten Delaware projects will receive a total of \$348,777 in 2026 through the Community Environmental Project Fund administered by DNREC. The money is collected through fines and penalties for environmental violations and returned by DNREC to communities where the violations occurred. [Read more](#)



2026 Delaware State Parks Passes and Permits Went on Sale Dec. 9

Annual passes provide access to the state's 17 state parks, including Trap Pond State Park in Laurel and others inland or at the beach. Photo by Delaware State Parks Delaware State Parks began the sale of its 2026 park passes and surf fishing permits on Dec. 9. Passes and permits can be purchased online. [Read more](#)

[Visit the Newsroom](#)

DNREC Videos

How Deer Donations Feed Delaware Families

Across Delaware, food pantries are seeing more families experiencing food insecurity. DNREC's Delaware Hunters Against Hunger program (DHAH) brings together hunters, wildlife managers, processors and community partners to turn donated deer into thousands of pounds of high-quality protein for Delawareans in need.

The story highlights the work of food pantry leaders, DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife staff collecting donated white-tail deer and the Sussex Community Corrections Center's butchery program, where trained Level 4 offenders process venison that goes directly to food pantries statewide.

Every donated deer starts a chain of care that ends with a family receiving healthy, locally sourced venison. DHAH helps deliver tens of thousands of meals annually and supports Delaware families all year long.

?? Learn more at de.gov/DHAH

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Find out whether to recycle it, drop it off or toss it in the trash.

de.gov/recyclopedia





Recycle Right this holiday season



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Not Acceptable 

- bows
- ribbon
- glitter or foil
- batteries
- string lights
- ornaments

Acceptable 

- wrapping paper
- cards
- envelopes
- paper gift bags
- cardboard boxes
- paper gift boxes

Upcoming Events

Winter Solstice Hike

December 20, 12 p.m.
Brandywine Creek State Park
Nature Center
4244 Wilsons Run Rd,
Wilmington (Pre-registration
Required)

First Day Hikes

January 1
Delaware State Parks
Statewide
[More Info](#)

Public Hearing:

More Info

Night Hike: Winter Solstice

December 21, 5 p.m.

Killens Pond State Park

5025 Killens Pond Rd, Felton
(Pre-registration Required)

[More Info](#)

Sunset Beachcombing

December 22, 3:30 p.m.

Slaughter Beach Pavilion

359 Bay Avenue, Milford

[More Info](#)

Regulations Governing Solid Waste

January 6, 6 p.m.

Virtual

[More Info](#)

Office Hour: Delaware PFAS Awareness and Outreach Grant

January 8, 10 a.m. (Pre-registration Required)

Virtual

[More Info](#)



DNREC DIVISION OF
WATERSHED
STEWARDSHIP

2026 Delaware Wetlands Conference Jan. 27 and 28



- ✓ Regular registration rate now through Dec. 28
- ✓ Late registration rate Dec. 29 to Jan. 21
- ✓ Conference agenda now available

[Register Now!](#)



Chase Center on the Riverfront

Two days focused on wetlands science, policy and conservation

[See All Upcoming Events](#)

FIELD TRIP FRIDAY



This month, Secretary Greg Patterson visited several sites across Delaware to spotlight environmental stewardship, education and research.

Secretary Patterson began with a visit to the Russell W. Peterson Urban Wildlife Refuge in Wilmington, a 200-acre freshwater tidal marsh along the Christina River restored through strong partnerships. The refuge provides critical wildlife habitat, volunteer-supported stewardship and outdoor access for nearby communities, with connections to the DuPont Environmental Education Center and the Jack A. Markell Trail.

Another Field Trip Friday took Secretary Patterson to the University of Delaware, where DNREC staff and partners met with students to discuss summer internships and career pathways. Students learned about hands-on opportunities in research, GIS, outreach and law enforcement, and toured UD's farmland, forests and wetlands that support long-standing collaborative research and monitoring efforts.

The most recent Field Trip Friday highlighted service beyond the field, as Secretary Patterson and Deputy Secretary Cobb joined Delaware Natural Resources Police to wrap up their annual Toys for Tots drive. For more than a decade, DNRP officers, DNREC staff, community members and local businesses have worked together to donate thousands of toys, helping bring holiday joy to families across the state.

Together, these visits showcase DNREC's continued commitment to collaboration, education and science-based stewardship across the state.

Want to explore with us? Check out our [#FieldTripFriday playlist](#) and follow us on social!

DNREC Programs



Digital DNREC E-Permitting

Use the **Digital DNREC** ePermitting system for recreational fishing and hunting licenses, license exempt numbers, deer harvest report cards and tags, deer damage assistance, hunter education, waterfowl stamps, permits, Conservation Access Passes and

harvest reporting.

DNREC Language Services

We provide free interpretation services, upon request, to help ensure full participation by all communities, primarily those with limited English proficiency.

Requests for oral interpretation of an application or assistance with submitting a public comment must be made no later than 10 days prior to the close of that application's comment period. Requests for live oral interpretation must be made no later than 10 days prior to date of the DNREC-hosted public hearing, meeting, or community event.

Submit a request using the interpretation services request form: de.gov/dnrectranslations

Learn more at de.gov/titlevi



[View More Programs](#)



Employee Spotlight



If you've ever wondered who helps make sure Delaware has enough water to go around, meet Patty Murray, a program manager in the Division of Water who works on water allocations and well permitting. Patty's job focuses on large-capacity wells, including irrigation, industrial and public supply wells — the kinds of water sources communities and businesses rely on every day.

A big part of Patty's work is connecting with people. On any given day, she might be

talking with a farmer, a well driller or a property owner to guide them through the permitting process and ensure wells are installed correctly. That includes public notice, technical reviews, and the permits that allow wells to be drilled and used responsibly while protecting Delaware's water resources.

And yes, there's plenty of field work, too. Patty and her team spend about half their time out in the field inspecting wells, collecting GPS coordinates, checking construction details, and confirming required equipment is in place. "That's the fun part of my job," she said.

Patty has been with DNREC 27 years full time, after five years as a seasonal employee, and she's spent more than 20 years in the Division of Water. Along the way, she's earned a nickname many permit holders know well: "Permit Patty." She wears it with pride because, as she puts it, protecting water is the mission — and Delaware's freshwater supply is limited.

Outside of work, Patty is a self-described "beach girl" who loves native plant gardening, scrapbooking and traveling. And even on her days off, she admits the mission follows her: she's always picking up trash, keeping an eye on beach grass and sharing tips to help protect the places she loves.

Thank you for your years of dedicated service.

DNREC Jobs

Administrative Specialist - Wastewater | Division of Water

Conservation Technician III | Division of Fish and Wildlife

Conservation Technician IV | Division of Fish and Wildlife

Engineer I -IV - Drainage Program* | Division of Watershed Stewardship

Engineer I - Wastewater and Stormwater* | Division of Water

Engineer Program Manager I | Division of Air Quality

Engineer VI - Modeler | Division of Air Quality

Environmental Scientist III - Shellfish | Division of Watershed Stewardship

- Fiscal Analyst III** | Office of Budget and Finance
- Management Analyst III - Grants** | Division of Waste and Hazardous Substances
- Park Superintendent IV- Alapocas Run** | Division of Parks and Recreation
- Park Superintendent V - Cape Henlopen** | Division of Parks and Recreation
- Planner IV – Parks GIS Specialist** | Division of Parks and Recreation

***Sign-on Bonus**

[View All Openings](#)

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