Killens Pond State Park Proposed Trail Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we making the changes to the trail system at Killens Pond State Park?

Changes in trail mileages from the current trail system to the proposed trail system are most directly related to providing a broader range of trail experiences for a more varied user group, expanding into untapped areas of the park, and changes in allowable uses. Currently there are 7.4 miles of trails in the park. The proposed trail system will increase the miles of trails by 8.1 miles and expand shared use. Sharing allows for a wider range of users across any trail system, promotes a broader range of user access from communities, promotes inclusion, and allows for a higher volume of users.

How many miles of trails are currently at Killens Pond State Park and what are the permitted trail uses?

Current Miles	Current Permitted Trail Uses
7.4	
3.4	Pedestrian only
3.0	Pedestrian & bicycle

How many miles of trails are proposed in the new trail plan at Killens Pond State Park and what are the permitted trail uses?

Proposed Miles	Proposed Trail Uses	Change (miles)
15.5		+8.1
2.4	Pedestrian Only	-1.0
13.1	Pedestrian & bicycle	+10.1

When will this trail work start?

A trail concept plan is the first step in actually seeing changes out in the park. Following the public comment process you are participating in, the Division will release a final trail plan. Project development and prioritization, funding allocation, engineering and development of project details, and finally project initiation occurs over time. Depending on the scope of the individual project, the process can take several months to several years. If you have ideas or suggestions about future projects, pass them along.

Protecting the environment in the Park is very important. How does this plan propose to protect habitat and environmental conditions?

Changes from the current trail network to the proposed trail network would eliminate problematic trails to reduce habitat impacts, harden select trail surfaces to reduce erosion and increase sustainability, and increase the diversity of experiences to appeal to a broader range of trail enthusiasts to reduce the unwarranted development of new trail by the public.

What are the benefits of trails?

Trails improve quality of life by adding character and vitality to a community. They promote community meeting places and provide a canvas for social interaction. Trails improve health and fitness by promoting physical activity. This in turn combats obesity and prevents disease. Research shows a strong positive relationship between recreating outdoors and physical and mental health and well-being. Numerous studies indicate that interaction with nature reduces stress, improves cognitive performance and increases one's sense of connection to the world. Park trails are part of a greater network of sidewalks and pathways that provide places for alternative transportation.

Trails build strong, economically vital communities. Trails, according to a National Association of Homebuilders study cited by The New York Times, are the number one amenity potential homeowners cite when they are looking at moving into a new community. Trails provide communities with a valuable amenity that translates into increased housing values and revenues.

Trails provide a quality-of-life asset that aids in recruitment of new companies. In many cities around the US, businesses have located or look to establish themselves in communities with trails. Minneapolis, Little Rock, San Jose, Chattanooga, Cumberland, MD, Wilmington, DE and many others, are cities where trails have attracted companies.

Trails build local businesses. The amenity of a trail provides the pull for a new market for local businesses. Bicycle tourists, a growing, affluent segment of the tourist market, contribute significantly to local businesses that are well-connected to trails. Along the Virginia Creeper Trail in southwest Virginia, visitors spend $1.59 million annually providing an estimated 27 new full time jobs.

Communities are realizing the economic potential of trails as highly desirable destinations that bring dollars into the places they serve. Trails attract visitors who facilitate job growth in tourism-related businesses like restaurants, local stores and lodging.

How many trail users are there in Killens Pond State Park?

Trail counters provide accurate information on trail use and types of trail usage. Each trail has different volumes of trail use and can be influenced by many factors such as allowable uses, level of difficulty, width, length, or access limitations. Trail use has not been monitored over the years at Killens Pond, however, based on park attendance estimates for the last five years, park attendance has risen from 193,000 in 2010 to over 240,000 today.

Why are some trails wider than others?

Trail widths may vary greatly and there are several factors used to determine the optimal width of a trail. Those factors are: anticipated traffic volume; type of use; site conditions; experience desired; construction and maintenance costs; and environmental and cultural protection. High-use trails tend to be wider with smoother harder surfaces and allow visitors to travel side by side under a broader range of weather conditions. Narrower less used trails that branch from high-use areas will likely be natural surface narrow single track (3ft).

Why should hikers and bicyclists and others share trails?

Building separate trails for hikers and bikers and others is not only expensive but does not make good sense with the limited park acreage. A shared-use trail can accommodate a variety of users including walkers, hikers, runners, bicyclists, mountain bikers, people with disabilities, people walking pets, and sometimes skaters, cross-country skiers and equestrians. All of these users may be recreating, but some users may be on a trail to commute to work.

What will be done to manage conflict between user groups?

Recognizing that not all trail users are polite, Trail Etiquette signs will be posted in the park. A basic etiquette rule is Wheels Yield to Heels and all yield to equestrians**.** Keep this in mind when approaching other trail users. If you have never considered trail etiquette to be one of the more important aspects of trail use, you may want to reconsider. Trail etiquette should be a major part of any trail users experience.

In 2009, in the nearby White Clay Creek State Park, a survey of trail users was conducted by the Delaware State Park staff. Two things learned were that most reported conflict occurs between trail users with dogs and trail users with headphones.

Why are many trail designed as loops?

Trail systems with loops are appealing because they offer more variety compared to out-and-back trails. Trail users like the adventure of starting down one path and returning to the same point by way of a different trail. Loops let visitors enjoy trails of varying distances, difficulty, or landscapes in the same outing. A trail network may be comprised of several different loop types. Small loops allow visitors to experience the park for shorter distances while larger loops will take longer to complete and can cover various landscapes. Stacked-loops, a series of loops that connect, make optimal use of available land and landscapes.

Who maintains trails in Delaware State Parks?

Trails in Delaware State Parks are maintained by park staff and by volunteers. Light maintenance may be conducted by volunteers enlisted in the Adopt a Trail Program or Park Watch. Still other trail maintenance is performed by Friends and trail advocacy organizations. Contact the Park Office or http://www.destateparks.com/volunteers/ to learn more about how you can help maintain trails.

Why are community connections important?

Trail connections to community entrance points encourages more park use by the community. Creating trail links to communities makes getting to trails and other park facility easier while leaving your car at home.

Why are some trails paved?

There is a vast array of surfaces a trail user may encounter in a park. By far the most prevalent is compacted native soil, but crushed stone and asphalt may also be present. In determining the appropriate trail surface type, the following factors are considered: type and volume of traffic; durability; site conditions; construction and maintenance costs; and continuity. Soft surfaces are less sustainable for all recreational users than firm or hardened ones. Good trail maintenance guidance suggests that the tread should be firm and stable and maintained to provide a safe trail

surface (unless otherwise noted), free of obstacles and erosional features such as washouts, gullies, and mud holes, and is well draining. The sandy soils at Cape Henlopen are well draining but do not remain stable under trail use. To dramatically improve trail sustainability, the use of asphalt and stone is required.