



# DELAWARE STATE PARKS

## YOUR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE STARTS HERE

## Park Theme and Essential Experiences

The Division of Parks and Recreation has embarked on the Visitor Experience initiative in an effort to develop themes and essential experiences for each state park. This will provide clear direction on the importance of the resources and experiences that we, as park professionals, feel are critical and form the foundation of creating meaningful visitor experiences that inspire stewardship of our parks' natural, historic, and cultural resources.

### Theme

A theme is the underlying message, or "big idea" of your park. The theme identifies what is critical to the park's story and shares the natural and cultural importance that make each park special. The theme is universal in nature allowing visitors to easily relate and connect.

### Essential Experience

The essential experiences are the landscapes, structures (natural and historic), resources, and interactions within the park that connect with the visitor to evoke passion, care, and commitment, to the greater good of the park as a whole, the life of the individual, and future generations to come.

# ALAPOCAS RUN STATE PARK



## OUR VISITOR EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

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## ABOUT THE PARK

Surrounded by development and the remnants of industry, Alapocas Run State Park preserves mature woodlands, traces of an industrial past, and the cultural significance of an earlier era.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Journey through mature forest and Blue Granite cliffs along the Northern Delaware Greenway Trail to experience Delaware's only natural rock climbing wall and the Blue Ball Barn.

# AUBURN VALLEY STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

Auburn Valley State Park is nestled in the piedmont's Red clay Valley. Visitors to the park will discover the history of the Marshall Family, Yorklyn's rich industrial history, and the revitalization of this site.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Appreciate the beauty of Auburn Valley by exploring Red Clay Creek. Discover the role of water in the industrial development of Yorklyn and the revitalization of this community.
- Step back in time to the magic age of steam as you ride in a vintage steam car, on a miniature steam railway, or on a tour of the Marshall Estate.

# BELLEVUE STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

A duPont family estate preserved as an urban oasis for recreation and nature study, Bellevue State Park offers users a glimpse into the elite leisure class of the Gilded Age.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Escape into the duPont's tranquil life of leisure. Stroll the paths of this elegant DuPont estate, visiting Bellevue Hall, the tennis and equestrian facilities, natural areas, the pond and race track.

# BRANDYWINE CREEK STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

The rolling meadows, old growth forest, and freshwater marshes at Brandywine Creek State Park are reminiscent of an agricultural landscape and way of life in northern Delaware's piedmont region.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- The stone wall and rolling hills at Hawk Watch Overlook provide a stunning backdrop for soaring birds, majestic sunsets, and man's indelible impact on the natural world.
- Enter Tulip Tree Nature Preserve, Delaware's first nature preserve, and hike among 200 year old Tulip Poplar giants, discover the "Hidden Pond" vernal pool, and listen to the babbling of the Brandywine Creek.
- Enjoy the tranquility of the Brandywine Valley while floating down Brandywine Creek, hiking Rocky Run Trail's bed of blue granite from Thompson Bridge to Rocky Run Bridge, or quietly fish the creek's edge.

# BRANDYWINE ZOO



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## ABOUT THE PARK

In the heart of historic Brandywine Park, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums accredited Brandywine Zoo fosters connections in support of wildlife conservation through up-close, interactive visitor experiences with exotic and endangered animals.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Celebrate your favorite animal while it eats, plays and sleeps. Consider how your visit to the Brandywine Zoo can lead you to advocate for local and global conservation efforts.

# CAPE HENLOPEN STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

The dynamic coastal environment that has shaped the natural and cultural history of Cape Henlopen State Park continues to enchant visitors today.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Discover Cape Henlopen's military history with a guided tour of the Fort Miles Museum and Historic Area.
- Experience the park's recreational opportunities from the fishing pier to Gordons Pond by fishing, hiking, paddling, swimming, and surfing along the bay and ocean coast.
- Gain a new perspective of the park's natural and cultural landscapes by visiting overlooks at The Point, Herring Point, the Great Dune at Battery 519, and Tower 7.

# DELAWARE SEASHORE STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

In addition to many saltwater recreational opportunities, Delaware Seashore State Park's six miles of wild ocean and bay shoreline and the dynamic Indian River Inlet provide a framework for understanding natural history and maritime heritage.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Hike over the Indian River Inlet Bridge and along the coastline to take in the sweeping vistas of the Inland Bays and Atlantic Ocean.
- Tour the Indian River Life-Saving Station to learn about maritime heritage, the role of surfmen, and the heroic rescues they performed.



# FENWICK ISLAND STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

Nestled between ocean resorts, Fenwick Island State Park offers three miles of clean ocean beaches, and tranquil bay access in a natural setting.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Take in the setting sun at the Assawoman Recreation Area as it dips below the undeveloped shoreline of the Little Assawoman Bay.
- Swim, stroll, bask, or play, on the picturesque beaches of Fenwick Island for a true Delaware beach experience.

# FIRST STATE HERITAGE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

First State Heritage Park reveals the cultural treasures of Delaware's capital city from pre-history to the modern day.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Walk in the footsteps of Delaware's patriots with an interpreter in period clothing to experience the stories of Dover, capital city of the First State.

# FORT DELAWARE STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

Experience the journey to Pea Patch Island, its history, and the remarkable stories of perseverance that surround Fort Delaware.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Travel back to 1864 with a first person interpreter where you will experience life during the Civil War and the firing of a cannon from the 1850s. View the island from the fort's ramparts and visualize the complex of structures and 12,000 prisoners that once resided on the island.
- As you travel from the ferry terminal to the dock on Pea Patch Island, observe the flight of herons, ibises, and egrets to and from the heronry in Pea Patch Island Nature Preserve

# FORT DUPONT STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

Fort DuPont State Park shares the story of coastal defense from the 1870s until World War II.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Walk south along the River View Trail past Batteries Read and Gibson. Stop at the point to consider the role of Fort DuPont as part of a three-fort system in the evolution of coastal defense.

# FOX POINT STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

Waterways and railroads are still relevant at Fox Point State Park. See working rail lines and deep water shipping at this sprawling recreational site along the Delaware River.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Walk along the Riverview Trail to experience the size, speed and power of modern transportation from yards away. Trains rush down the rails and container ships lumber down the Delaware River, ferrying the people and goods that are the lifeblood of the world economy.

# HOLTS LANDING STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

Situated on the south shore of the Indian River Bay, Holts Landing State Park's diverse habitats and water access offer a tranquil retreat.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Hike the shoreline and Sea Hawk Trail through the park's intertidal zone, salt marsh, maritime forest, and borrow pits.

# INDIAN RIVER MARINA



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## ABOUT THE PARK

Located minutes from the rich fishing grounds of the Atlantic Ocean and Inland Bays, Delaware Seashore State Park's Indian River Marina is the largest marina in Delaware and serves full-time and transient mariners.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Experience the sights and sounds of a bustling marina while you enjoy fishing, dinner, or a stroll along the water's edge as the sun sets over the Inland Bays.

# KILLENS POND STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

The Murderkill River's natural bounty drew Native Americans and settlers to the ancient waterways. The remaining habitat surrounding the millpond provides a recreational oasis for today's visitors.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Journey along the pond's edge to experience the natural, historical, and cultural stories that shape Killens Pond State Park.



# LUMS POND STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

Lums Pond, Delaware's largest pond, and the diverse habitats conserved beyond its shoreline, creates a setting for a variety of recreational activities

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Embrace the tranquility of the pond's edge, exploring its diverse habitats by foot, horseback, bike or boat.

# PORT PENN VISITOR CENTER



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## ABOUT THE PARK

The Port Penn Interpretive Center provides an intimate glimpse into village life in a seasonal economy tied to the natural resources of the Delaware River.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Walk the Port Penn Interpretive Trail and discover how people made a living from the natural resources of the Delaware River.

# TRAP POND STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

A remnant of vast cypress and cedar swamps, Trap Pond is where industry and nature flow together, shaping our history, culture, and community.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Experience the solitude of the cypress swamp. Immerse yourself in the sights, sounds, and smells as you travel beyond the pond.

# WHITE CLAY CREEK STATE PARK



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## ABOUT THE PARK

From creek's edge to piedmont ridge, the natural vistas and rich history of the White Clay watershed persist because communities surrounding present day White Clay Creek State Park advocated on behalf of this critical resource.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Discover White Clay Creek's National Wild and Scenic Watershed by exploring the Chambers House area. Experience the watershed on trails that meander from the bank of the creek to scenic views of the valley.
- Explore the most diverse trail system in Delaware State Parks with scenic views, the Millstone Pond, Mason-Dixon marker, and bridges spanning White Clay Creek.

# WILMINGTON STATE PARKS



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## ABOUT THE PARK

Experience nature and recreation in the heart of the city through Wilmington State Parks, an urban retreat along the Brandywine River that has fostered family memories and traditions for generations.

## ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES

- Walking the river's edge in Brandywine Park, adjacent to the Josephine Fountain, Brandywine Zoo, Swinging Bridge, and Jasper Crane Rose Garden, witness the development of Wilmington State Parks as the recreational hub for the city of Wilmington.
- Drive along Wilmington's iconic streets to appreciate the cultural history preserved in Wilmington State Parks, stopping at the Sugar Bowl, H. Fletcher Brown Park, Rockford Park, and numerous memorials and sculptures throughout the city.