Fees, passes required at state parks, wildlife areas starting Friday, May 8

Reduced cost state park pass available for those on state assistance, including unemployment

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control announced today that it will reinstate entry fees and park pass requirements at all Delaware State Parks and require a Conservation Access Pass to enter state wildlife areas starting Friday, May 8.

DNREC also announced that those receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits can receive an annual park pass for $10, and those passes can be purchased online for those on unemployment as well as other state or federal assistance. The Assistance Pass Program was already available to those on General Assistance, Medicaid, Social Security Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant and Children (WIC) or Purchase of Care, but was only available with an in-person application.

On March 16, DNREC suspended entry fees, park passes and access passes until April 30 to allow Delawareans to be active outdoors and to provide space for activity, and the free period was then continued.

For the safety of the public and for employees, a number of limitations and requirements will remain in place in parks, wildlife areas, fishing areas and boat ramps, including:

- Entrance booths at parks will not be staffed, so visitors without a park annual pass will pay the daily fee via automated credit card machines or the self-registration envelopes at park entrances.
- Bathrooms will remain closed or unavailable at parks, wildlife areas, fishing areas and boat ramps.
- Beaches remain closed except for exercising, dog-walking and surf fishing under very limited conditions, per the Governor's state of emergency orders.
- Playgrounds, campgrounds and park offices continue to be closed and tours and other activities in parks will not yet resume.
- Visitors to parks, wildlife areas, fishing areas and boat ramps must have masks with them, and must wear them when social distancing from others cannot be maintained.
- The Governor's requirement that out-of-state visitors must quarantine for 14 days upon entering Delaware before visiting parks, wildlife areas or other public spaces remains in effect.

"As the state's businesses take small steps toward reopening on Friday, we will start our delayed fee season for parks as well, since 65 percent of the funding that runs our state parks system comes from visitor fees. And we are extending our discounted Assistance Program annual pass to those on unemployment for the first time ever," DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin said. "Like businesses, we still need some limits out of concern for health and safety, so we will not yet back to full operations but hope to take more steps soon."

Delaware State Parks

State park entrance fees for vehicles registered in Delaware are $4 at inland parks and $5 at ocean parks. Fees for out-of-state vehicles are $8 at inland parks and $10 at ocean parks. Entrance fees will remain in effect through Nov. 30, which is

the normal fee season end date.

Annual passes and surf fishing permits may currently only be purchased online, as all state park offices remain closed to the public, with annual passes for Delaware vehicles at $35 and for out-of-state vehicles at $70, with discounts for seniors, military and others. Those who purchase an annual pass before June 1 may place their receipt of purchase in the window of their vehicle to use state parks while waiting for the pass to arrive via mail. For information on pass and permit fees, go to www.destateparks.com/Know/PassesTagsFees, which includes a link to apply for the reduced cost Annual Pass Assistance Program for those on state and federal assistance, including unemployment.

Delaware Fish and Wildlife areas

A Delaware Conservation Access Pass is required for any registered motor vehicle that's used to access most of state wildlife areas. Conservation Access Passes are available as annual passes, which may be used from July 1 through June 30, or as three-day passes, which may be used for three consecutive days. The conservation pass provides needed funding to help the Division of Fish and Wildlife maintain and improve public access, facilities, and wildlife habitat on state wildlife areas. Conservation Access Passes may be purchased and more information is available online at https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/conservation-access-pass/.

For the latest information on COVID-19 in Delaware, visit de.gov/coronavirus.

About DNREC

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state's natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. For more information, visit the website and connect with DNREC on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.

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