



James Farm Master Plan

Planning for the future of the James Farm Ecological Preserve

Project Completed September 2014

The James Farm Master Plan provides a path forward to accommodate increased visitation to the James Farm Ecological Preserve while protecting ecosystems and enhancing education opportunities.

Background

The James Farm Ecological Preserve is a 150-acre tract of land located in Sussex County Delaware on the Indian River Bay north of the town of Ocean View. It is open everyday from sunrise to sunset and is free to all visitors. The Preserve consists of upland fields, freshwater wetlands, a mixed hardwood forest, tidal salt marsh, a sandy bay beach, a saltwater cove, and walking trails throughout.

In 1992, the property was donated to Sussex County by Mary Lighthipe, a descendant of the James family, to be preserved for education and recreation. It has been managed by the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays since 1998.

Project Objective

The James Farm Ecological Preserve is a beloved oasis for thousands of walkers, beachcombers, birdwatchers and nature lovers who visit each year.

As its popularity has soared and programs offered there have expanded, the need to plan for growth to protect the Preserve became evident. The CIB invited the community to participate in the development of a Master Plan; to give input on the needs of visitors, and to collectively envision a future for James Farm that enhances opportunities for education and recreation.

In developing the Plan, the consultant addressed the physical restoration, improvement, and management of the property and considered emerging issues such as sea level rise. Cost projections for implementing the Plan in phases were provided.

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

The James Farm Ecological Preserve belongs to all of us, and it will take the support of those who value this oasis of open space to successfully implement the Master Plan. To learn how you can contribute to this important work contact development@inlandbays.org



Project Lead

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Partners:

- Oasis Design Group and Biohabitats
- University of DE Sea Grant
- Sussex County

Funding Partners

- EPA Grant
- University of DE Sustainable Coastal Communities Initiative
- Sussex County
- And YOU—
CIB members who are on board with the Bays and make these projects possible

Timeline:

Feb 2014 Consultant selected
Mar 2014 Site evaluation
May 2014 Public input meeting
July 2014 Master Plan presentation
Aug 2014 Final Plan delivered

Interesting Facts

- The Preserve is open to the public seven days a week, from dawn to dusk.
- An estimated 10,000 visits were made to the Farm in 2012.
- Each school year, our education staff provides a full day of watershed education at the Preserve to nearly 1,000 middle school students.



This project fulfills objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) for the Delaware Inland Bays.

Outreach and Education

Objective 2. Educate stakeholders in the watershed about their impacts on water quality in the Bays and how they can help.

- A. Develop and deliver watershed education programs for children.
1. Programs for school age children are offered at the James Farm Ecological Preserve.



Outputs and Outcomes

- A Master Plan document that includes site planning concepts to accommodate increased visitation while protecting natural resources and enhancing education opportunities at the Preserve.
- Estimated costs for implementation of the Plan in phases.
- Educational media on the resources of the farm and the planning process including press releases, news article, and social media posts.



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The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a non-profit organization established in 1994 to preserve, protect and restore Delaware's Inland Bays--the water that flows into them, and the watershed around them. With its many partners, the CIB conducts public outreach and education, develops and implements restoration projects, encourages scientific inquiry and sponsors research.

To learn how you can get on board with the bays go to inlandbays.org.