



# Welcome!

## Our goals for this meeting:

- **Present the Draft Visitor Use Management (VUM) Plan**
- **Get your thoughts and ideas**
- **Answer your questions during the open house**
- **Outline the next steps and the timeline for implementation**

**Thank you for joining us!**

***Please sign in.***



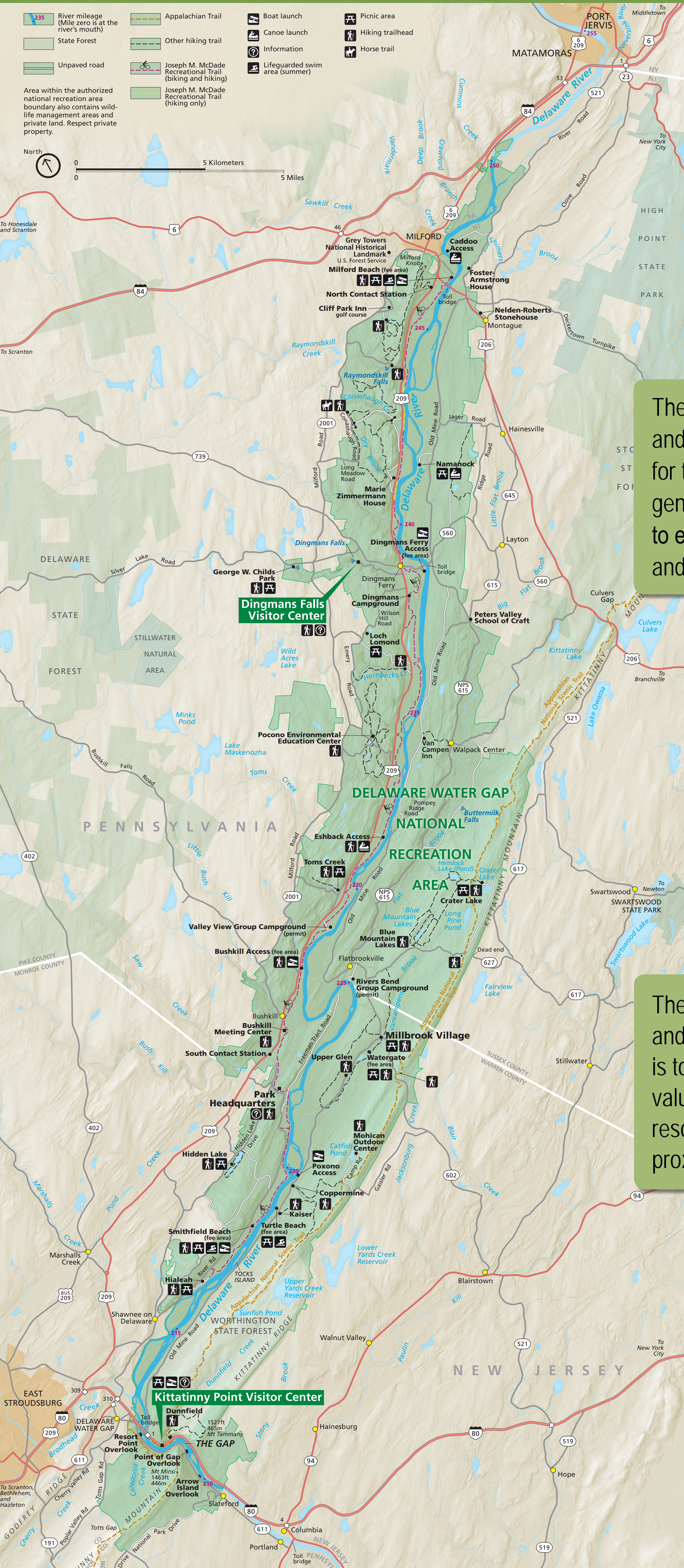


# Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

## Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River

### New Jersey and Pennsylvania

National Park Service  
US Department of the Interior



The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.



The purpose of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River is to preserve the natural, cultural, and scenic resources and values of the Delaware River valley and provide opportunities for resource-based recreation, education, and enjoyment in close proximity to the most densely populated region of the nation.







# Purpose, Need, and Objectives

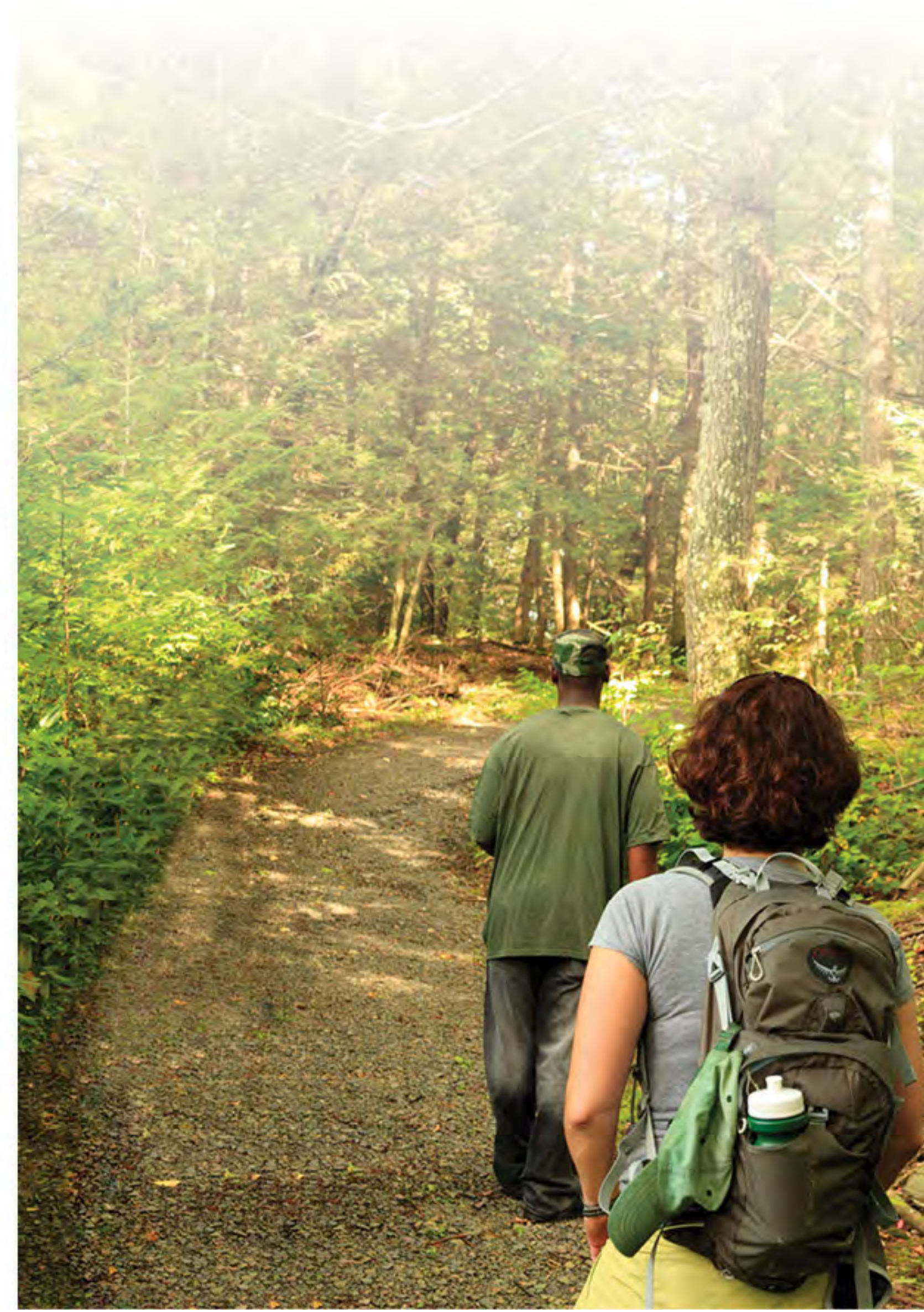
## Purpose and Need

The purpose of the draft Visitor Use Management Plan (VUM Plan) is to maximize the ability of the National Park Service to encourage access, improve visitor experiences, and protect the natural and cultural resources of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River (the park). This planning process examines current and potential visitor opportunities and develops long-term strategies for providing access, connecting visitors to important experiences, and managing visitor use. Many of the park's planning and management documents do not reflect current visitor use patterns and needs, so this plan provides updated guidance for addressing current and future visitor use opportunities, management techniques, and resource protection concerns.

## Objectives

The draft VUM plan identifies the highest value resources, defines locations throughout the park to enhance visitor experiences, and sets priorities for resource protection where visitor use occurs. Through the draft VUM plan, the National Park Service seeks to achieve the following goals and objectives:

1. Minimize and mitigate impacts to the park's natural and cultural resources and visitor experiences caused by conflicting visitor use.
2. Enhance opportunities for the park's key visitor experiences.
3. Assess the appropriateness of current and new/evolving visitor opportunities while considering visitor safety and resource protection.
4. Align public expectations for use with availability of resources or infrastructure.
5. Increase understanding of existing and emerging visitor interests, use characteristics, patterns, and trends.
6. Manage visitor demand and expectations throughout the park.
7. Identify and evaluate various visitor use management strategies.







# Desired Conditions

Desired conditions are defined as statements of aspiration that describe resource conditions, visitor experiences and opportunities, and facilities and services that an agency strives to achieve and maintain in a particular area. Desired conditions focus on:

- 1. fundamental resources and values and management zones
- 2. the visitor experience opportunities associated with them
- 3. the types and levels of management, development, and access that would be appropriate in a particular location

The goals and desired conditions presented in the draft VUM plan, specific to visitor use, were developed for the park’s fundamental resources and values and management zones. Please see chapter 3 of the draft VUM plan for goals and conditions for all fundamental resources and values. Presented below are goals and desired conditions for the two fundamental resources and values.

## Sustainable Access to High-Quality Recreation Resources

**Goal:** Provide visitors of all abilities with opportunities to enjoy the natural and cultural resources of the park during all four seasons.

**Desired Conditions:**

- Provide access to high-quality seasonally appropriate outdoor recreational opportunities such as canoeing, swimming, hiking, hunting, boating, horseback riding, fishing, scenic driving, bird watching, biking, and cross-country skiing.
- Work with local communities to connect and engage visitors with a range of recreational opportunities.
- Actively engage traditionally underserved communities in park recreational experiences connecting people to the resource.
- Opportunities are available for visitors to safely enjoy the area and its resources through a variety of appropriate activities.

## Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River and Tributaries

**Goal:** The river corridor would provide for visitor use in a way that is consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to protect and enhance the values for which the river was designated.

**Desired Conditions:**

- Visitors experience shorelines that are largely undeveloped with natural processes predominating and visitor use does not degrade water quality.
- Visitors have a range of river-based recreational opportunities and opportunities of high- and low-density experiences.
- Visitor use sites are managed to the capacities of which they were designated.
- River access for visitors of all abilities is provided.
- Viewsheds are managed in a manner consistent with wild and scenic river values of this river segment and development along the river (located in other management zones) is consistent with the outstandingly remarkable values.
- Values of the wild and scenic river are shared by visitors, partners, and adjacent land managers.





# Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

## Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River

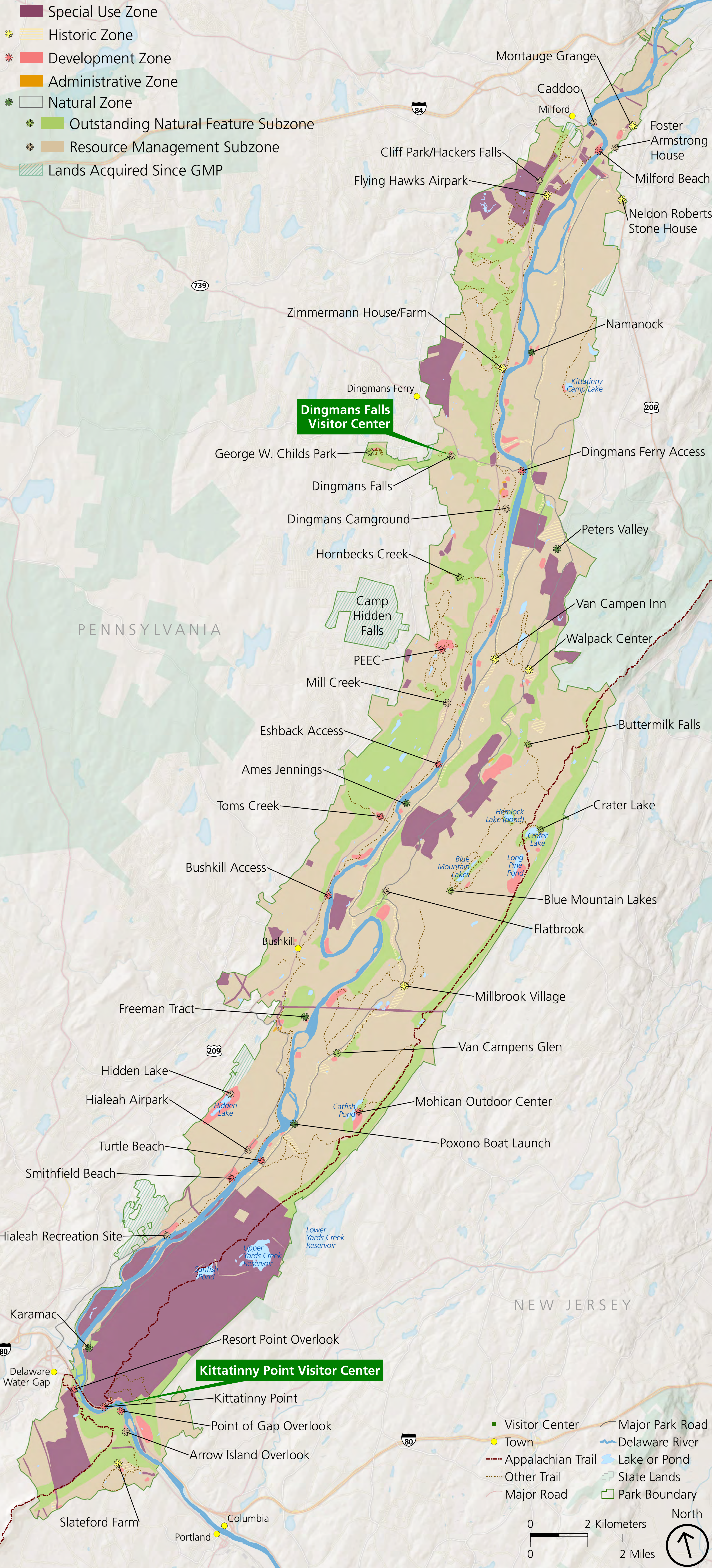
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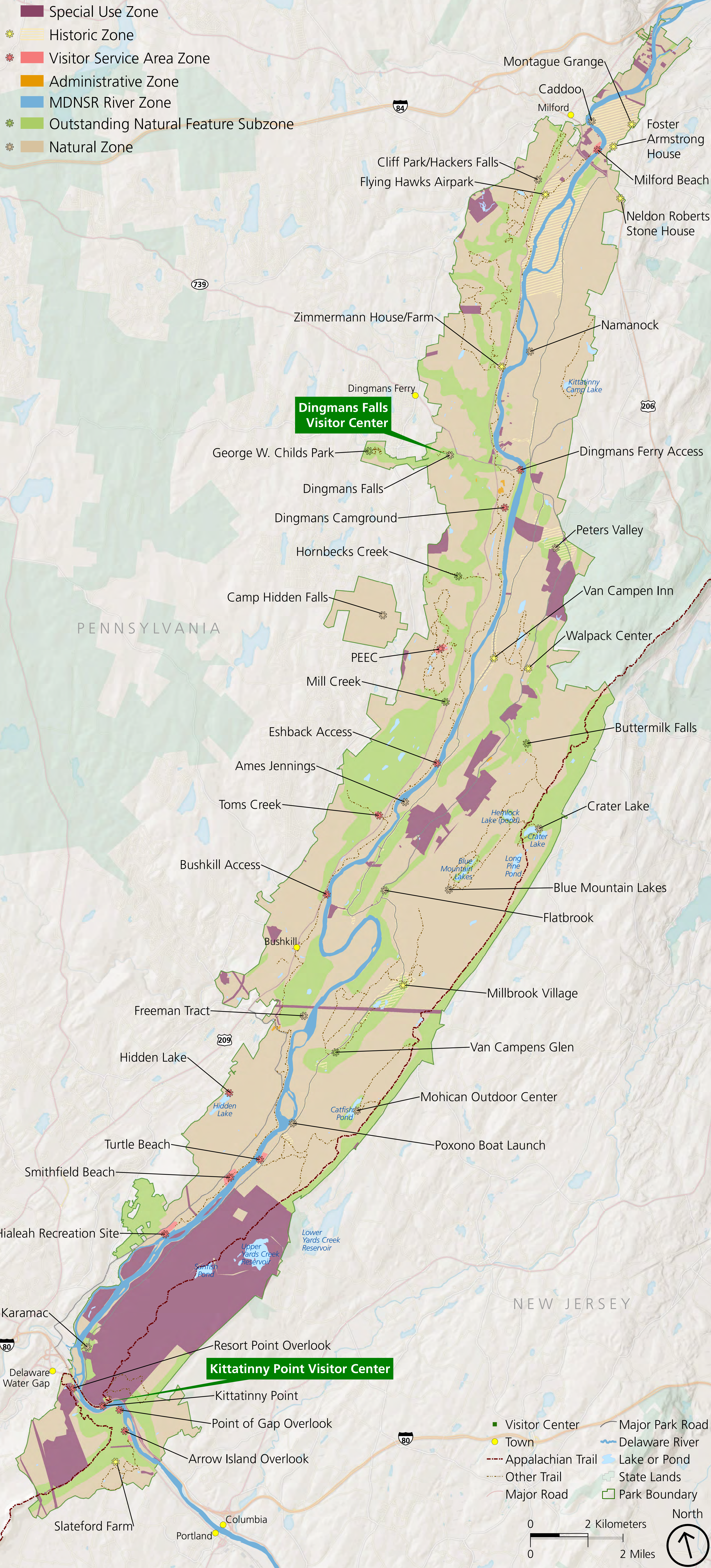


# Zoning

## Current Park Zoning



## Proposed Park Zoning







# Proposed Fee Changes

## Overview

- Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is proposing to convert from an amenity fee program to a parkwide entrance fee program.
- Collection of fees would be expanded from seasonal to year-round sales.
- A park-specific annual pass will be available for users at \$45 a year.
- A park-specific seven-day pass would cost visitors:
  - \$25 (vehicle); \$15 (person); \$20 (motorcycle)
- Entrance fee rates are standardized by the NPS.
- Fees may be reevaluated in the future per NPS policies.

## Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act

- In accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), entrance fees are not charged to persons under 16 years of age or
  - Holders of the following passes:
    - The National Parks and Federal Lands Annual Pass
    - Senior
    - Access
    - Military
    - Volunteer
- Passes would be made available for sale online, through participating local businesses, or at the park.

## Why is There a Need for Fee Changes?

Benefit to visitors concerning site selection, dispersion, and resource protection:

- Some visitors currently select recreation sites to avoid paying fees rather than for the appropriateness of the site for their desired activity. A parkwide entrance fee would encourage visitors to pursue sites designated for their specific activity.
- Money collected from the entrance fees would be used to help to maintain visitor access, protect park resources, address the park's deferred maintenance and provide services, such as lifeguards, site monitors, sanitation at river campsites, and maintaining trails.



## How Will the Fee Change be Implemented?

- Site-specific amenity fees (such as those at beach access sites) will no longer be charged but the existing booths may still be used to collect the entrance fees.
- Rather than adding new entrance stations, the park would collect entrance fees using both physical passes (sold in the park and at local businesses) and digital or electronic passes that could be purchased online and used through mobile devices or transponders.
- The park will consider reopening entrance stations/ fee booths on US Route 209 to provide visitor information and fee collection. The park will not be adding gates or closing roads related to fee collection.

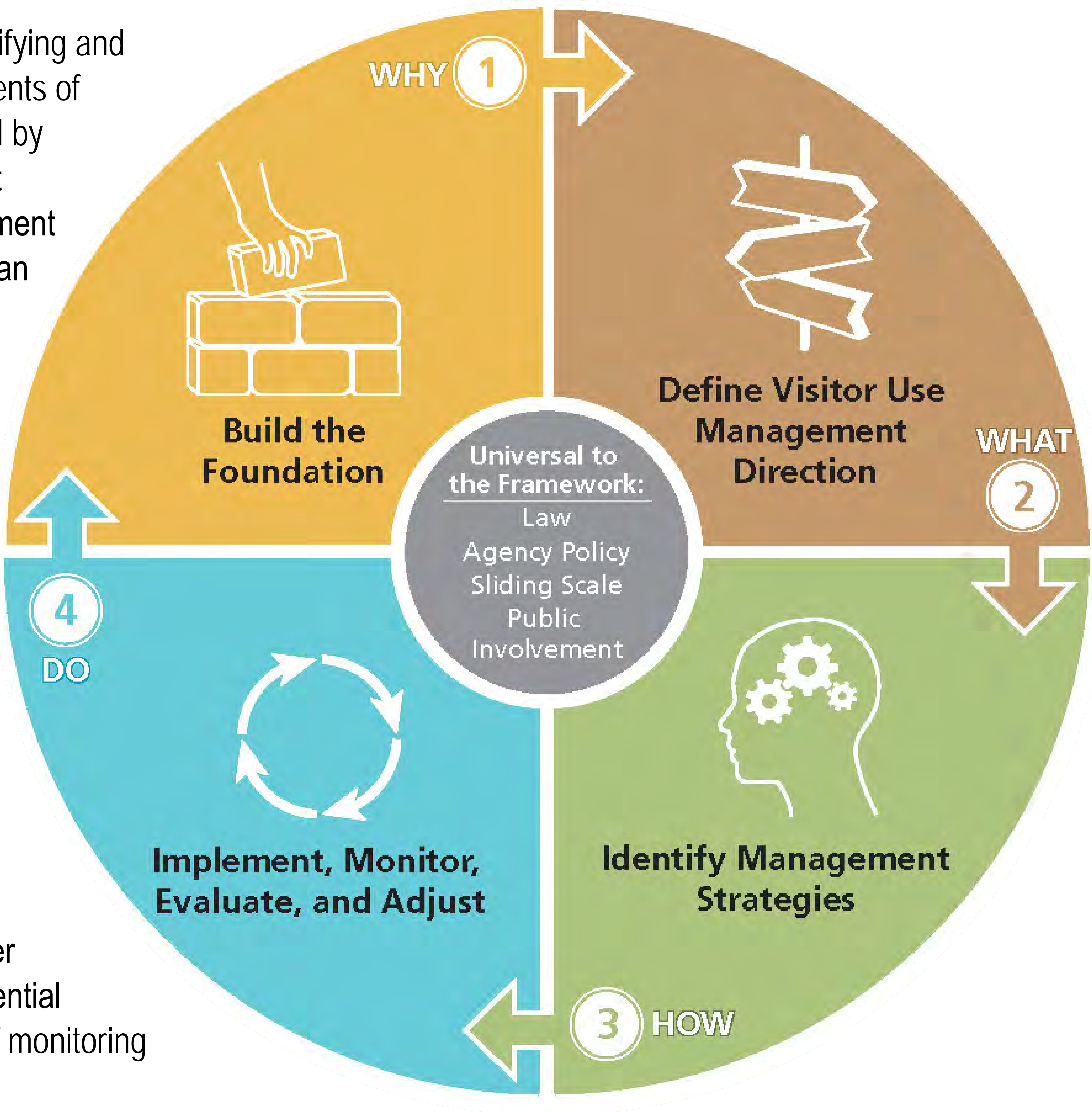




# Indicators, Thresholds, and Visitor Capacities

Establishing indicators and thresholds and identifying and implementing visitor capacities are key components of the Visitor Use Management Framework applied by the National Park Service. The figure to the right presents an overview of the visitor use management framework. VUM components included in this plan are defined below.

- **Monitoring strategies** generate usable data to compare existing and desired conditions, assess the need for management actions, and evaluate the efficacy of management actions. Monitoring strategies include the selection of indicators, establishment of thresholds and any needed triggers, systematic data collection of the indicators over time, and associated documentation and analysis.
- **Indicators** translate desired conditions into measurable attributes that when tracked over time, evaluate change in resource or experiential conditions. These are critical components of monitoring the success of the plan.
- **Thresholds** represent the minimum acceptable condition for each indicator and were established by considering qualitative descriptions of the desired conditions, data on existing conditions, relevant research studies, professional judgment of staff from management experience, and scoping on public preferences.
- **Triggers** are defined as conditions of concern for an indicator that is enough to prompt a management response to ensure that desired conditions continue to be maintained before the threshold is crossed.
- **Visitor capacity** is the maximum amount and type of visitor use that an area can accommodate while achieving and maintaining the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences that are consistent with the purposes for which the area was established.
- **Mitigation measures** are activities that will avoid, reduce the severity of, or eliminate effects to park resources.



## Key DEWA VUM Plan Strategies

- Articulate desired conditions, meaningfully manage resources, and provide context-appropriate recreation.
- Improve, restore, and protect park resources by intentionally zoning, reducing impacts, and accommodating more visitors.
- Provide enhanced recreation opportunities and experiences consistent with park fundamental resources and values, including camping, hunting, hiking, boating, and other experiences.
- Identify and prioritize short-, mid-, and long-term management strategies to accomplish the goals listed above.





# Key Plan Strategies: Trails, Accessibility, and Education and Interpretation

## Trails

*Improve the trail system by linking trail networks, enhancing accessibility, and diversifying trail experiences.*

### Examples:

- **Liberty to Water Gap Trail PA Extension** - Coordinate / partner with local municipalities, counties, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and stakeholders to develop a trail along State Route 611 that connects NPS overlooks.
- **Van Campens Glen** - Maintain low visitation levels consistent with the management direction and desired conditions for the Outstanding Natural Feature Zone; improve parking (e.g., clearly define parking spaces); restore visitor-created trails to natural conditions due to safety and resource concerns (e.g., water quality, trampled vegetation, and Search & Rescue efforts); and if necessary, install fences or signs to allow vegetation to be re-established.



## Accessibility

*Provide or improve universal access at key locations to offer a range of recreational opportunities throughout the park for a variety of users.*

### Examples:

- Upgrade trail and install a fishing platform at Hidden Lake to meet accessibility standards.
- Increase hunting opportunities by developing a permit system for hunting for visitors with limited mobility.

## Education and Interpretation

*Modernize delivery and strategically locate education and interpretation services.*

### Examples:

- **Mobile Visitor Centers** - Rather than concentrating staff at two centralized visitor centers, this plan proposes taking the rangers to the people by redirecting Interpretation and Education programming to visitor use sites throughout the park. A mobile visitor center vehicle would be able to be stationed at different sites throughout the park in local communities based on visitor use patterns, needs, and current trends.
- **Partnerships** - Cooperative partnerships with volunteers to provide interpretation of key historic sites, such as Neldon Roberts Stonehouse, Van Campen Inn, Millbrook Village, and others would continue.

**Please see the draft VUM plan for more details on these key plan strategies.**





# Key Plan Strategies: River Camping and Key Recreation Sites

## River Camping

*Improve and expand river camping opportunities; address human waste disposal deficiencies; and implement a river campsite reservation and fee (\$16/site) system to improve oversight, safety, and amenities along the river and to prevent conflicts and competition for river campsites.*

- Restore up to 20 river campsites in clustered groupings
- Upgrade toilet facilities to meet standards for floodplains, public health, and sustainable park operations

## Key Recreation Sites / Activities

*Identify appropriate activities and services by location and identify and manage to visitor capacities.*

As a long linear park, use is widespread and each site offers its own unique opportunities and management challenges. This plan looks at approximately 30 unique sites and defines specific actions to pair with the overarching goals and desired conditions.

- **Group Gatherings / Picnics:** Develop sites to accommodate larger groups; provide shaded picnic shelters, if appropriate; and implement a reservation/permit system to regulate varying use levels at different sites. Examples: Namanock, Milford Beach, and Smithfield Beach.
- **Enhancements to Improve Visitor Experience:** Expand or improve existing developed areas, such as beaches and picnic areas, and explore ways to accommodate higher levels of use.
  - **Smithfield Beach:** Redesign the entrance and exit of this site to help alleviate congestion, reduce visitor use conflicts, and improve traffic flow and safety on River Road by separating boat and beach traffic and directing users to the appropriate recreational facilities for the activity they wish to pursue. The park is currently piloting separate canoe livery, shuttle, and private boat access points to reduce congestion at the launch sites and to reduce user conflicts.
- **Potential Sites for Expanded Use:** Sites like Blue Mountain Lakes and Crater Lake are very popular but are not designed for high levels of use. A design concept plan for these sites would be developed that could include road to trail conversion, mountain biking on the Blue Mountain Lake trail system, the addition of picnic sites with restrooms, and improvements to Skyline Drive; low impact picnic sites at Crater Lake would remain. These sites would continue to be managed according to park standards for Natural Resource and Outstanding Natural Resource Zones.
- **Protecting Resources:** Buttermilk Falls is a popular attraction in New Jersey. Accessibility and resource protection at and around this site would be improved by formalizing the parking area with defined spaces and by improving the viewing area at the base of the falls.



Please see the draft VUM plan for more details on these key plan strategies.

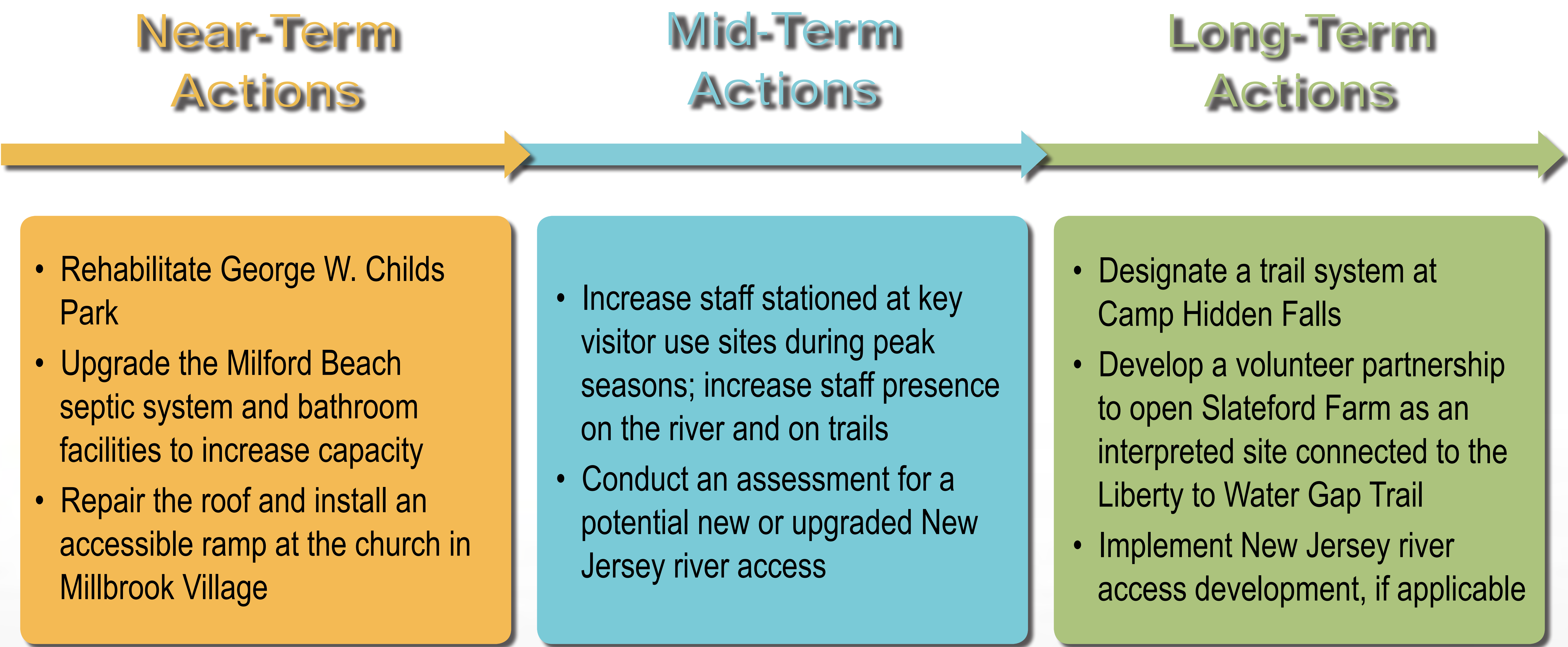




# Implementation Timeline

This plan identifies management strategies and actions to achieve and maintain desired conditions. This plan includes actions that are taken at a parkwide level, for specific zones, and then for specific sites.

- Actions for specific sites are organized into near-term, mid-term, and long-term actions with target completion dates.
- Phasing is subject to change, as proposed actions may change based on funding, new information, or due to the results of previous actions taken.
- Actions will be evaluated, prioritized, and incorporated into a 5-year strategic plan for park operations that will be updated bi-annually.
- Many actions identified in this plan will require additional reviews as they become more defined to ensure compliance with laws, regulations, and policies.
- See examples of near-term, mid-term, and long-term actions below.







# Visitor Use Management Plan Process

## Setting the Framework

Why are we here and what does this plan need to accomplish?

Completed  
Fall 2014

Completed  
Spring 2015

- Foundation Document
  - Park Purpose and Significance
  - Law & Policy
  - Fundamental Resources and Values
- Purpose and Need of the Plan
- Civic Engagement

## Understanding Current Conditions and Initial Management Options

What's going on with visitor experiences and resources (conditions, threats, and opportunities)?

Completed  
Summer 2015

- Resource Condition Assessment and Visitor Surveys
- Issues the Plan Will Address
- Visitor Use Management Goals and Best Practices
- Public Scoping and Review of Possible Management Strategies
- Preliminary Alternatives

## Exploring Management Possibilities for Visitor Use Management at DEWA

How do we achieve desired conditions for park experiences and park resources?

Fall 2019

- Management Strategies and Fee Change Proposal
- Indicators for Monitoring Experiences and Resources
- Zoning Changes
- Desired Conditions and Best Management Practices
- Visitor Capacities and Adaptive Management Strategies
- Public Comment on Draft Plan

We Are  
Here

## Final Document and Decision





## How to Comment

### Your voice matters!

Your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions are critical as we finalize the VUM plan and make a decision. Comments are welcome and will be accepted during the 60-day public comment period, which ends on December 6, 2019.

**Share your thoughts • Ask questions • Stay informed**

You can provide input in several ways:

- Submit written comments in person at this meeting on the comment card provided.
- Submit comments online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/dewa>.
- Submit written comments by mail or hand-deliver to:

Superintendent Sula Jacobs  
Attention: VUM Plan Comments  
1978 River Road  
Bushkill, PA 18324

**Comments must be postmarked by December 6, 2019.**

***Thank you for your involvement!***

