

Virginia State Parks

First Landing State Park

August 10, 2023

Bruce Widener, Park Manager



Virginia State Parks

The name for First Landing State Park comes from the landing of English colonists on April 26, 1607 on the shores of Cape Henry in the area of the current park property. These colonists were here to establish the first permanent English colony which would end up being at Jamestown.



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The park was called Seashore State Park from its opening day until 1997 when the name was changed to reflect the history of the park

In 1936 the Commonwealth of Virginia opened six state parks the same day on June 15, 1936, and by doing so the State Park system was born.

The other five parks were Douthat, Westmoreland, Hungry Mother, Staunton River and Fairy Stone.



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All six parks were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps which was part of Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" putting young men to work on conservation and natural resource protection projects.



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What do we do?

Provide recreational opportunities to the citizens of Virginia and visitors to the Commonwealth.

Protect and preserve the commonwealth's natural, cultural and historical resources.



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Total acreage – 2,888

Most visited Virginia State Park with 800,000 visits in 2022.

Education

666 programs conducted for over 21,500 people.

Over 38 school presentations and field trips enlightening over 1,400 students. (COVID)



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Consistently offering a diverse summer program schedule has helped establish First Landing State Park as a summer attraction for our park visitors including the local community.

In 2022 we expanded our Junior Ranger Program from six sessions to twelve and increased the number of children served from 150 to 300.



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Park Amenities

20 Overnight Cabins

6 frame cabins (CCC built)

14 are block cabins

201 Campsites

105 water/electric

74 standard tent

22 group

(3 camp hosts)



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Park Amenities (cont)

4 overnight yurts

Visitor Center

Chesapeake Bay Center
Exhibit area - Historical

Trail Center

Exhibit area – Natural and Cultural



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Park Amenities (cont)

Picnic Area

19 Miles of trails

1.5 miles of Chesapeake Bay beach

Boat Ramp – Located at the 64th street entrance



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Park Amenities (cont)

Camp Store – “The Cape”

Rental Facilities – Courtyard, Gazebo and Amphitheater.



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Staffing

Park Manager

Assistant Park Manager – Operations (LE)

Assistant Park Manager - Administration

Office Manager

Chief Ranger Maintenance (LE)

Chief Ranger Visitor Experience

Four Park Rangers (2-LE)



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Financial

Current Operating Budget - \$2,223,289 (FY24)

Revenue - \$3,165,724 (FY23)

Camping - \$1,252,926 (FY23)

Parking - \$894,703 (FY23)

Cabins - \$614,332 (FY23)



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Volunteers

Total registered volunteers – approximately 200

Total volunteer hours – 1,255 (2022)

Total Camp Host Hours – 5,360 (2022)

Opportunities:

Trails, Maintenance, Administrative,
Contact Stations, Educational
Programming



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Challenges

Volume of visitation

Encroachment from neighbors

Staffing – Full time and wage

System Wide – Significant unfunded maintenance and operational needs



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Improvements

Renovated two campground bathhouses in FY23.

Two more bathhouses are scheduled to be renovated in FY24

Replacement of three dune boardwalks (TBD)



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Improvements (cont)

Renovations of all 20 overnight cabins starting in September 2024.

Paved 64th street parking lot (VDOT)

Renovation of picnic area restroom (TBD)



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Improvements

Utilizing \$750,000 special allocation in the state budget for critical infrastructure projects:

- Radio antennae tower

- Bathroom partitions – several

- Restroom renovation – Camp Store

- Cabin Chimneys

- Parking lot improvements 64th

- Picnic table lumber

- Trail Center parking improvements
(\$250,000 allocated to VDOT)



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Comments/Questions

