

Fields to Forest: A Park is Born

Tuckahoe State Park was created through the purchase of farmland from local families, transforming what was once working agricultural land into a public natural space.

While not everyone was enthusiastic about selling their land at the time—understandably, as it often held deep personal and generational ties—many have come to appreciate the lasting impact of that decision.

Today, the park offers a place where the land is protected from development, wildlife thrives, and visitors can enjoy hiking, paddling, fishing, camping and exploring the natural beauty of Maryland's Eastern Shore. What was once private farmland is now shared and preserved for generations to come.

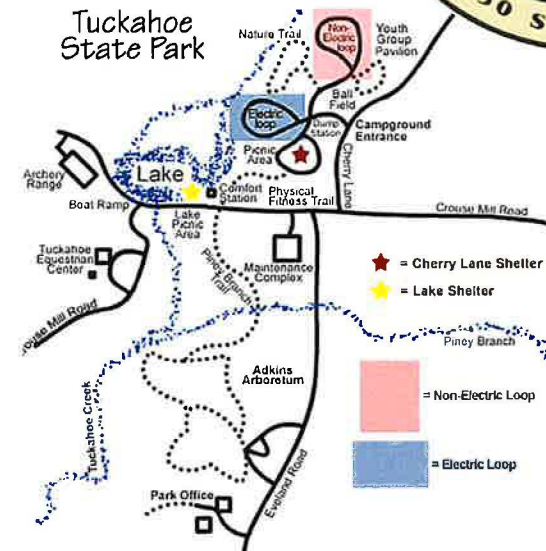
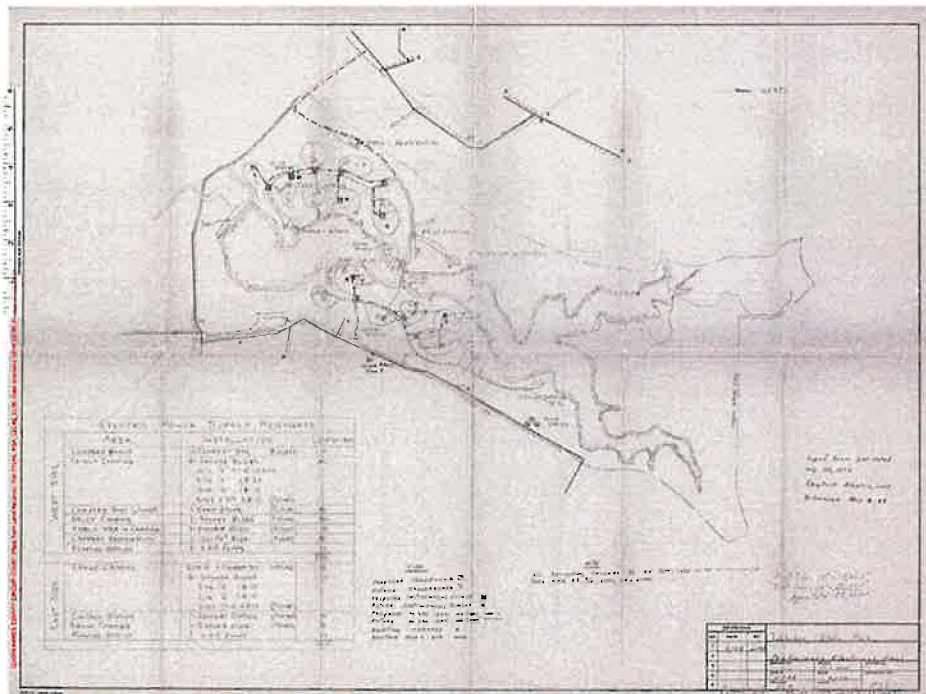


"I'm grateful that my great-grandfather, State Senator Robert P. Dean, along with State Senator Harry Hughes, had the foresight to sponsor legislation preserving the land and waterways that make up Tuckahoe State Park. Their efforts, supported by community leaders like Caroline County Commissioner Charles T. Dean, helped ensure this place would be protected for future generations. From growing up with Scales & Tales in school to egg hunts at the Cherry Lane Pavilion, I've always felt lucky to have Tuckahoe nearby—a place of comfort, adventure, and home. Working at the park this summer has been incredibly rewarding and has deepened my connection to the land, my family's history, and the community it continues to shape."

– Hannah Eastman (pictured above), Park employee

Big Plans, Cozy Campground

Back in 1974, big plans were in the works for Tuckahoe! As you can see on this original plat, the vision included a much larger lake and a massive campground—665 campsites and 21 washhouses were once on the table.



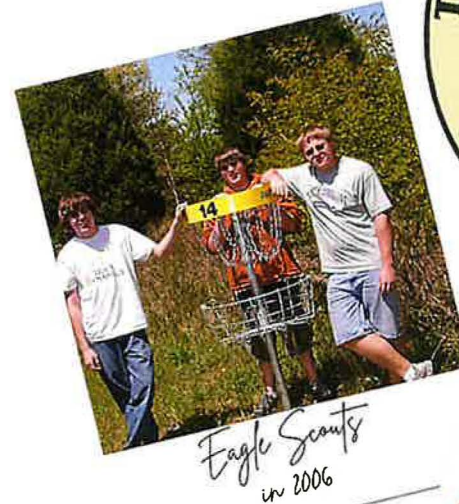
Fast forward to today, and the campground has taken a more thoughtful, sustainable shape. Tuckahoe now offers 33 electric sites, 20 non-electric sites, 7 mini cabins, 4 youth group sites, and 2 washhouses—just the right size for enjoying nature without overwhelming it.

Fairways Reimagined

Early plans for Tuckahoe State Park once included an 18-hole golf course—but that idea never teed off. Instead, in 2006, an Eagle Scout and his troop built this disc golf course as a service project. That Scout later pursued a career in parks in Delaware. Today, a dedicated team of volunteers keeps the course in great shape, making improvements and hosting events that bring the community together.

"Tuckahoe played a huge part of my life as a kid, I would fish there several times a week during the summer and winter months, I used the fitness trail in preparation for the academy, and spent many days hiking and camping as a scout. When the opportunity came up to complete an Eagle Scout project, Tuckahoe was the place I wanted to do it."

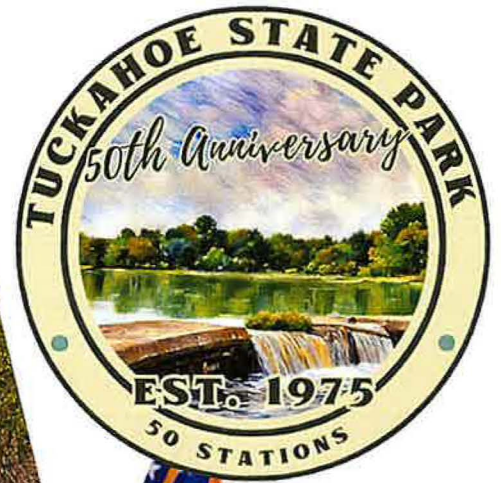
Sgt. David Redgraves
Delaware Natural Resources Police - Parks



*Eagle Scouts
in 2006*



*Current Disc Golf
Volunteers*



Sgt. David Redgraves

Try a toss at Disc Golf!
Loaner discs are available at
the Park Office or Camp
Store.

From Acorn to Icon

In 1973, a towering Swamp White Oak brought big plans for a 300+ acre lake to a halt. Why? It had been named a National Champion Tree—the largest of its kind in the country—and protecting it became a priority.

But the story didn't end there. Years later, samples of the tree's acorns, leaves, and twigs were sent to the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., where experts made a surprising discovery: the tree had been misidentified. It wasn't a Swamp White Oak at all, but a much rarer Overcup Oak—still a

National Champion, and even more exceptional. With a massive circumference of 21 feet 5 inches, a height of 116 feet, and a spread of 118 feet, this remarkable tree earned its place in history. Although it died in the 1990s, its legacy still stands tall as a symbol of how one tree can reshape the future of an entire landscape.

Today there is a plaque marking the location of the massive tree.



Swamp
White Oak



Overcup
Oak



Dark Skies, Bright Stars



These photos were taken at
Tuckahoe by Mike Missler.



A Dark Sky Park is more than just a great place to see the stars—it's a protected area where artificial light is carefully limited to preserve the natural beauty and function of the night sky.

By reducing light pollution, we create clearer skies for stargazing, support astronomical research, and help protect nocturnal wildlife that rely on natural darkness to feed, migrate, and rest. Dark skies also benefit people, improving sleep patterns and reconnecting us with the rhythms of nature.

Want to experience the stars like never before? After-hours stargazing permits are available at the park office. Just look up—you'll see why it matters.

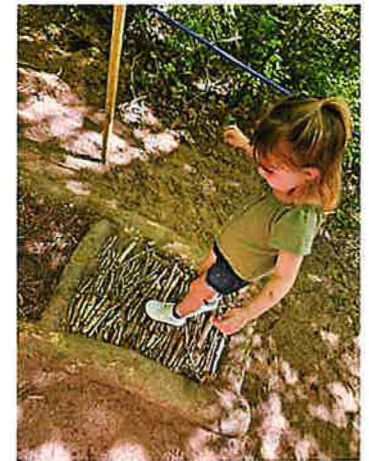


Awaken Your Senses

This short loop trail—just under half a mile—is a fun and safe way to explore the world around you using all your senses. Along the way, you'll discover hands-on stations where you can see, touch, and hear nature in new and surprising ways.

Feel textured walls, walk across bumpy surfaces, and try out other cool sensory activities designed to spark curiosity for all ages. To get started, turn left and use the rope on your right as a guide.

As you explore, please leave everything just as you found it—so the next adventurer can enjoy the trail just like you did!



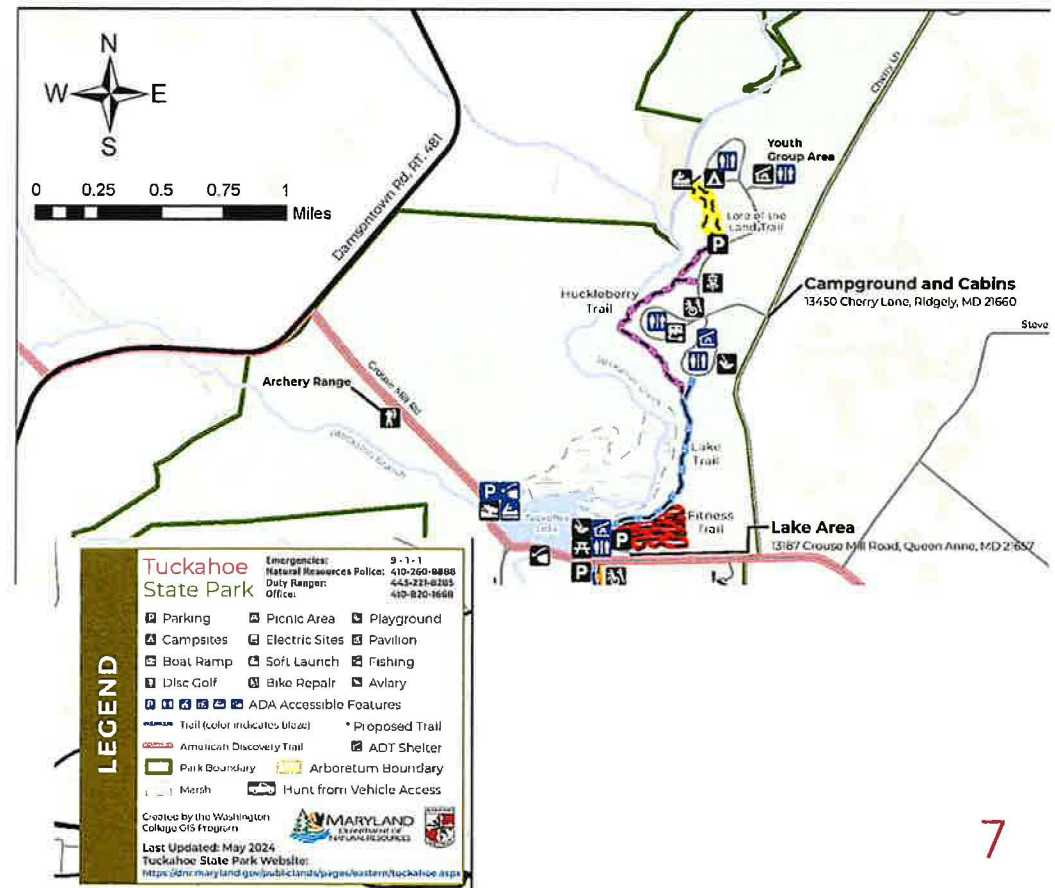
Launch Into Adventure

Tucked right between campsites 46 and 48 on the Heron Loop, you'll find a cozy soft launch perfect for canoes and kayaks. From here, hop in and let the gentle flow of the creek carry you on a peaceful 2-mile paddle straight to beautiful Tuckahoe Lake.

When you're ready to head back, simply paddle upstream or stretch your legs with a scenic hike back to your car. Adventure awaits just a paddle away!

2 Hike Routes

Lake Trail - **Huckleberry Trail** - **Lore of the Land Trail** - Soft Launch
or
Lake Trail - Campground Roads



Not the Spice You're Looking For

How can you help?

1. If you see it, pull it!
2. Clean your outdoor gear between uses to avoid spreading invasive species!

HOW TO IDENTIFY GARLIC MUSTARD

Look for it in woodlands • along waterways • disturbed areas



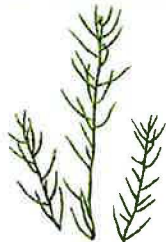
In its first year, garlic mustard grows in a "basal rosette," without flowers. Its heart-shaped, deep-veined, toothed leaves remain low to the ground.



In its second year, the plant shoots upward (or "bolts" as botanists say) to about 1-3' with alternate leaves. Leaves emit a strong garlic smell when crushed.



At the stem's top, white blooms of four rounded petals grow in clusters an inch or more across. Flowers usually appear in May and June.



Starting around June, flowers turn to fruit: thin pods up to 2" long that curve upward. (Don't spread the oblong black seeds within those pods!)



Meet garlic mustard—an uninvited guest from Europe and Asia that's taken over many North American forests. You'll recognize it by the sharp garlic smell when you crush its leaves, but don't be fooled by its aroma. This tough plant grows aggressively, crowding out native wildflowers and upsetting the balance of our local ecosystems. Though it's edible, garlic mustard's relentless spread threatens biodiversity, making it a top concern for conservationists working to protect healthy, vibrant forests.

Before This Was Ours, It Was Theirs



10,00 BC - 8,000 BC

Paleo Indians

Paleo Indians

Floodplains offered abundant food and raw materials, while nearby streams provided water for drinking, cooking, and washing. Stone from gravel beds was shaped, or "knapped," into spear points like the Clovis Point—artifacts of which have been found in this area.



8,00 BC - 1,000 BC

Archaic Indians

Archaic Indians

These seasonal hunter-gatherers hunted deer, turkey, and rabbits, and gathered plants, mussels, and oysters. They used the atlatl, a spear-throwing tool, to improve hunting success. Their homes were small, circular wood frames covered with bark. Food was cooked over campfires, often using hot rocks placed in containers to boil it.



1,00 BC - 1607 AD

Woodland Indians; The Choptank People

Woodland Indians

By 1,000 BC, an estimated 40 tribes lived in what is now Maryland. They built semi-permanent villages near streams but moved seasonally to hunt and gather. During this time, they developed pottery and the bow and arrow, and began practicing early agriculture—growing crops like corn, beans, squash, and melons. These innovations marked a shift toward more settled, community-based living.



1607

Long before Tuckahoe was a park, Indigenous peoples lived, hunted, and gathered here. Their deep connection to the land shaped its history and guides its care today.

Get Lost (On Purpose!)

Ready for an adventure? Try one of Tuckahoe's two exciting orienteering courses—perfect for all ages and skill levels!

Compass Course

Use your compass to track down white and red posts hidden throughout the woods.

Map Course

Navigate with a detailed map to find white and blue posts around the campground and Cherry Lane area.

Popular with youth groups and curious explorers alike, these courses are a fun way to build navigation skills while discovering new corners of the park.

Start your journey! Download maps and instructions from the Tuckahoe State Park webpage.

