

New public beach in St. Mary's County

Posted by [Joy Shrum-Reporter](#) On 07/26/2017

Hollywood, MD- We're surrounded by water in Southern Maryland but there aren't many public beaches to enjoy on a hot summer day. That just changed in St. Mary's County.

On Saturday, July 22, the St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks opened a new park and beach in Hollywood. It's called Snow Hill Park and it's 163 acres, including hundreds of feet of sandy beach.

The former farm was acquired by the county in March for \$1.8 million with funds from both the county and the Navy. Arthur Shepherd, the new director of the St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, said no county tax money was used in the acquisition. "We used \$1.5 million from the state's Department of Natural Resources money and we received \$300,000 from the United States Navy." Shepherd said the Navy was involved in the acquisition to make sure there is no encroachment on the no-fly zone. "By investing in the property, the Navy can be sure how the property is being utilized."

Currently, there is limited access to the park but you can enjoy the beach along the Patuxent River and launch kayaks in the water. There are a few portable restroom facilities and picnic tables for use. "There are plans in place to add additional amenities for residents but right now we just want people to know the park is open." Shepherd explained.

During opening weekend, the park had about a hundred visitors. "It was a hot weekend and many people probably weren't aware the beach is here," Shepherd noted.

Master plans are still being debated but the first change St. Mary's County residents can expect to see is a new boat ramp. "People are delighted about the new property and they're excited about the future use. Most people want to know when water access will be added," Shepherd said.

While the county hammers out the details of the master plan, Shepherd said you might see multiple purpose athletic fields, trails and maybe even an equestrian center and wedding venue in the future. "The master plan needs to be laid out and then we have to identify costs. Once we have a plan in place, the changes will be made in several phases."

St. Mary's County residents will have a say in how they would like to see the land used. Shepherd said there will be focus group committees and the county will host community input meetings where residents can share their thoughts and ideas.

Snow Hill Park joins Myrtle Point and Elms Beach as the three public beaches in St. Mary's County. Snow Hill Park is only open on Saturdays and Sundays right now, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. It will be open weekends until Oct. 1. It will also be open Labor Day.

Admission is \$5 per car for county residents; \$10 per car for non-county residents. Season passes are also available for purchase and will allow you admission to any of the county parks. The passes are \$20 for county residents; \$40 for non-county residents.

Snow Hill Park is located at 26590 South Sandgates Road.

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