

## **Explore James Farm Ecological Preserve**

Delaware is known for its beautiful beaches and wide variety of wildlife. Very few places display the vast number of habitats in Delaware like James Farm Ecological Preserve. James Farm, located on Cedar Neck Road in Ocean View, is overseen by The Delaware Center for Inland Bays. Throughout the year, it hosts numerous school groups and scout troops, and educates them about the ecosystems present in the area.

The 150-acre tract of land was given to Sussex County by Mary Lighthipe, a descendent of the James family who had farmed the land for generations. The gift was in memory of her son, Harold, who died in an automobile accident. Her only request was that the property had to be used for environmental education and recreation.

The preserve now contains more than three miles of hiking trails, three observation platforms, a boardwalk beach crossing, wildflower gardens, an amphitheater, an informational kiosk, rest areas and more than 4,000 trees, purchased and planted in a USFWS Partners in Wildlife reforestation effort.

The Center for Inland Bays hosts several events at James Farm throughout the year, including an annual barbecue in October and the Gardening for the Bays Native Plant Sales in May. School visits take place during the spring and fall.

The park offers a long list of activities, including hiking, birdwatching, kayaking, photography, and more. The public is invited to James Farm any day from sunrise to sundown, free of charge. Visitors are asked to carry out their trash. Pets are permitted but must be leashed so that wildlife in the Preserve isn't disturbed.