

# Final Phase of Restoration at George W. Childs Park Starts May 30

By Kathy Sandt

BUSHKILL, PA- The final stage of restoration at George W. Childs Park in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area starts this week and work is anticipated to continue through the fall and into early winter. The site remains closed to visitors during construction.

Once the restoration is complete, the site will tentatively re-open to the public in 2024. Park officials note that construction projects may encounter delays due to factors such as supply chain issues, unforeseen circumstances, and adverse weather conditions.

The popular site has been closed since March 2018 when winter storms caused an unprecedented amount of damage to utility lines, roads, trails, and structures, primarily due to falling trees. At Childs Park, the wind, ice, and snow uprooted trees which caused entire hillsides to slide downhill, taking the trails with them. Trees crushed trail bridges, choked Dingmans Creek and the waterfalls, and caused heavy damage to CCC-era historic buildings.

“Storm impacts at Childs Park were significant, and restoration and repair are complex processes, especially given the sensitive environment in which it is taking place,” explained Kara Deutsch who leads the park’s Resource Management and Science team. “When work is completed, Childs Park will be equally beautiful but safer and more resilient than it was before.”

Work that has already been completed in preparation for this stage of the restoration includes removal of downed trees, damaged railings and posts, and a failed section of trail on an unstable slope; completion of required natural and cultural resource studies and environmental compliance processes; and coordination of the engineering and design for trail improvements and repairs to bridges and other built structures.

On-site work during this final phase of the restoration includes:

- paving a portion of the existing trail and minimizing the slope from the parking area to the Woolen Mill sign exhibit to improve accessibility and drainage;
- installing a new accessible section of trail from the first bridge to the historic handpump shelter;
- removing an unsustainable stretch of trail between the second and third bridge on the west side of Dingmans Creek;
- repairing damage or replacing components of the trail, bridges, picnic sites, boardwalk, stairs, overlook areas, interpretive exhibits, and trail guardrails throughout the site; and
- installing a trail and stair retaining system near the fourth bridge.



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