

Smooth Ride Awaits Travelers on Southern Portion of Old Mine Road

By Kathleen Sandt, Public Affairs Specialist

BUSHKILL, PA- The southern portion of Old Mine Road, between Worthington State Forest and Millbrook Village, on the New Jersey side of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is set to re-open on September 20 after receiving a major upgrade with funding from the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). Van Campens Glen and Poxono Access will also re-open. Turtle Beach will remain closed for the season. This is the first of 2 segments slated to be overhauled as part of this phased project. The second phase at the northern end of the park will begin in spring 2025.

“For years, we have heard from the public and from our own employees about the poor conditions on Old Mine Road,” said Doyle Sapp, superintendent. “With funding from GAOA, we were finally able to modernize a key piece of the park’s infrastructure and enhance safety and access for those who use the road while also protecting sensitive natural and cultural resources along its route and maintaining its historic integrity. We look forward to doing the same thing at the northern end of the park next year.”

The southern section of Old Mine Road provides a key access from Interstate 80 to the NJ side of the park, including many popular recreation sites. It is also an important route for emergency services providers.

Work on this phase included subgrade repairs and resurfacing of the roadway along with drainage repairs. This road pavement treatment will extend the life of the road while also reducing emergency maintenance requirements and improving overall safety.

The next phase will continue the road pavement treatment for the park’s northern end for portions in Sandyston and Montague Townships. Work on this segment will begin in the Spring of 2025 and is expected to be completed by November 2025. Further details will be shared once construction schedules are finalized for this phase of work.

Old Mine Road is one of the oldest commercial roads in the nation and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District; historic buildings along the route contribute to its eligibility. The road also traverses the Minisink National Historic Landmark. Protection of wetlands and streams and the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River and its floodplain as well as the park’s cultural resources is a primary consideration in the planning and execution of this work.

Much of the park’s maintenance backlog is related to its 76 miles of paved roads, parking lots, roadways, and bridges. In 2023, the park hosted 4.2 million visits, making it the seventeenth most-visited national park in the country.

“Because so many people, including local residents, use these roads, this funding is not only an investment in the park, but also an investment in nearby communities,” said Sapp. “Regardless of whether visitors are passing through the park for 30 minutes on their way to work or spending a day or a week recreating in the park, the roads receive a lot of wear and tear and are our most costly infrastructure to build, maintain, and repair.”

The phased project is being financed through GAOA’s National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund. GAOA is part of a concerted effort to address the large maintenance backlog in national parks. When completed, this project is expected to eliminate approximately \$9.7 million of the maintenance backlog associated with these facilities at the park. The cost of the entire project is approximately \$11 million.

Supported by revenue from energy development, GAOA provides up to \$1.9 billion per year for five years to make significant enhancements in national parks and other public lands to ensure their preservation and provide opportunities for recreation, education, and enjoyment for current and future visitors. For more information on the Great American Outdoors and the Legacy Restoration Fund visit <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/infrastructure/gaoa.htm>.

For more information on Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, call (570) 426-2452; visit our website at www.nps.gov/dewa; or follow us on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/DelWaterGapNPS and on Instagram at www.Instagram.com/DelWaterGapNPS.



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