



Construction Underway for Watergate Wetlands Restoration Project

By Kathleen Sandt

BUSHKILL, PA- Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area has begun construction work for the Watergate Wetlands Restoration Project. The project will restore wetlands, floodplains, and a stream at the Watergate Recreation Site in Hardwick Township, Warren County, New Jersey by removing man-made dams and ponds, creating a wetland meadow complex in their place, and re-establishing the connection between Van Campens Brook and its floodplain. The project will restore the natural function of surface water and groundwater, improve stream quality, create high-functioning wetlands, and restore native vegetation. After the project is complete, the quality of cold-water angling and birdwatching are expected to greatly improve.

Effective immediately, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area has closed the active construction zone to all visitors, including the following areas:

Watergate Recreation Site and the surrounding area (shown on map, attached)
200' on either side of Van Campens Brook, and Van Campens Brook itself, from the south end of Millbrook Village (Garis House) to the Upper Glen trailhead.

Old Mine Road from Millbrook Village to Lower Van Campens Glen Trailhead

That section Old Mine Road is likely to be reopened to visitors by July 2021. The other closures will remain in effect for the duration of the project, which is expected to be completed in January 2022.

Construction of the wetland restoration project began in late January with clearing of trees and brush that are in the areas where wetlands, stream, and floodplain restoration will take place. Erosion and sedimentation controls are also being installed to prevent silt from excavation work from getting into Van Campens Brook. Removal of the low, earthen dams and ponds will begin in May, followed by removal of the mowed lawn at Watergate, to create the wetlands. Work will also occur in Van Campens Brook to stabilize the streambanks and reconnect the stream to its floodplain. Invasive plants will be removed throughout the project area, and replanted with native trees, shrubs, grasses, and forbs.

"After years of planning, studies, and design, we are thrilled that construction is underway," said Kristy Boscheinen, project manager at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. "Restoration of natural conditions at this site will have long-term benefits to native plants and animals, including improving the wild trout fishery in Van Campens Brook."

The Watergate Wetlands Restoration Project is a required compensation for the adverse environmental effects due to construction of the nearby Susquehanna-Roseland Transmission Line in 2013 and 2014. Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) and PPL Electric Utilities (PPL) have fully funded this restoration project.

For more information on the project, please visit: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/WatergateWetlandsRestoration>

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.

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