

**From:** Hallas, John [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 6, 2022 2:23 PM  
**To:** Norbeck, John  
**Subject:** Big Elk and Vosberg Neck Paper with supporting documents  
**Attachments:** bigelk&Vos.docx; Big Elk Creek-Development\_Cost-Estimate\_5\_5\_22.xlsx; Copy of Wyoming-County\_State-Park-Development\_Cost-Estimate\_5\_5\_22.xlsx

**John S. Hallas** | Director  
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Bureau of State Parks  
P. O. Box 8551 | Harrisburg, PA 17105 - 8551  
Phone: [REDACTED] Fax: [REDACTED]  
[www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us)

RECEIVED

2024 JAN 18 AM 8:54

JOHN LAWRENCE  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
DISTRICT OFFICE  
OF PA

# Meeting the Commonwealth's Essential Outdoor Recreation Environmental Education, and Conservation Needs

*A Preliminary Plan for the addition, development, and operations of two new state parks for Pennsylvania: Big Elk Creek State Park, Chester County, and Vosburg Neck State Park in Wyoming County.*

## **Big Elk Creek State Park - 1713 acres**

### Site/Project Description:

After 11 years of work, Pennsylvania State Parks completed the acquisition of over 1,700 acres of land for conservation and public recreation in southern Chester County. The decade-long project was coordinated by The Conservation Fund and funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Chester County and Mt. Cuba Center, a botanical garden in Delaware. The property was acquired from George Strawbridge Jr. It is situated in Elk and Franklin Townships, Chester County, Pennsylvania. The property, which is presently designated as the Big Elk Creek section of the discontinuous White Clay Creek Preserve, are both units of the Ridley Creek State Park Complex. The Big Elk Creek section contains 2.1 miles of the Mason-Dixon line along the Pennsylvania/Maryland state border and adjoins the 5,300-acre Fair Hill Natural Resource Management Area in Maryland. The property contains 3.5 miles of Big Elk Creek, a tributary of the Elk River and the Chesapeake Bay, and more than 690 different plant species, 15 of which are endangered, rare, threatened or vulnerable (including three varieties of orchids).

As impacts from development, climate change, and other threats pose unprecedented risks for biodiversity, this property supports the local flora and fauna, conserving important open space and the habitats it comprises. The Strawbridge property extends an important wildlife corridor and provides refuge for a wide array of rare and threatened species.

The property contains Elk Township's Spring Lawn Trail as well as other park trails. Current visitors today enjoy passive recreational activities, including trail hiking, bird watching, fishing, and hunting.

The site is currently undergoing a master planning process. With all major components of the land acquisitions complete, advancing an official state park designation is now warranted given the important attributes, potential, and critical values the site affords.

Administratively, the plan is for Big Elk Creek State Park to remain within the Ridley Creek State Park Complex and continue to be operationally tied to White Clay Creek Preserve, with enhanced staffing, dedicated/extended support, and new services and recreational amenities provided. The below elements examine the proposed needs to fully achieve this newly establish State Park in Chester County.

RECEIVED

2024 JAN 18 AM 9:54

**Recreational Opportunities and Resource Management:**

Future development for this site will help to better support the recreational activities that are already taking place with improvements to trails and connectivity to adjacent trail systems. Visitor amenities such as improved access, parking areas, information kiosks, and restroom facilities will support these activities. The need to develop necessary utilities and connections for water, wastewater and electricity will also be part of these upgrades.

**Staffing:**

Additional staffing will be utilized to assist with these opportunities to include a park manager, a fulltime administrative staff person, maintenance team of four for facility maintenance and natural and cultural resource work, six resource and law enforcement rangers for customer service, public safety and emergency response, and a fulltime educator for interpretation and programmatic elements both on and off-site.

2024 JAN 28 AM 11:54  
JOHN J. COVATTA  
ADMINISTRATIVE

RECEIVED

	Start-up	Annual
Salaried Complement (6)	\$ 503,395.00	\$ 503,395.00
Wage Complement (7)	\$ 205,662.00	\$ 205,662.00
Operations	\$ 1,378,121.00	\$ 128,500.00
Vehicles and Motorized Equipment	\$ 312,000.00	
Totals	\$ 2,399,178.00	\$ 837,557.00

**Future Development, Site/Resource Improvements: Estimated cost - \$12,034,000**

Future development of designated day-use and overnight areas will help bring in and better connect our visitors to the resource. A picnic area with tables, grills, a playground and picnic pavilion can help enhance the experience during the day while a modern family campground with our full spectrum of site types, and camping cottage colony, would make this park a destination for those coming from a farther distance. To complete the visitor experience would be the establishment of a visitor center and park office as the central contact point for visitors to the park.

**Vosburg Neck State Park - 669 acres**

**Site/Project Description:**

Located in the Endless Mountains region of northeastern Pennsylvania, the Howland Preserve is the primary acquisition objective needed to create a new state park in Wyoming County (one of three counties in the Endless Mountains Heritage Region without a state park and is the only county in the three county region situated on a natural oxbow in the North Branch of the

RECEIVED

2011 JUN 18 AM 10:54

Susquehanna River, which is known locally as "The Vosburg Neck." The North Branch Land Trust (NBLT) took ownership of the Howland Property because of a generous bequest from the estate of Ernest E. Howland. Mr. Howland left his family's Riverside Farm to NBLT, which took possession of the property on June 29, 2007. Although the property is currently mostly wooded, that has not always been the case on the Vosburg Neck. As a farm, the property was mostly open fields. Some of these fields were planted with apple orchards, which produced significant apple crops until the early 1960s. As part of the Glaciated Low Plateau of Pennsylvania, the property is known for its rounded hills and valleys with low to moderate relief. Most of the land borders Camp Lackawanna to the west, and the boundaries between the Howland property and the camp are clearly marked. The North Branch of the Susquehanna River is the eastern boundary for almost two miles. Only one road leads motorists down the neck from the Howland property to the camp, so the northern and southern boundaries are also clearly defined. The Howland Preserve property contains three historic buildings from the 1700 and 1800s, a remnant of the Pennsylvania Canal, an abandoned rail bed, an historic graveyard, stone walls, non-motorized boat access, picnic areas, and a plethora of trails that traverse open fields and forested areas. The Vosburg Neck is mainly comprised of two large properties: 1) the Howland Preserve (669 acres); and 2) the privately held Camp Lackawanna property (288 acres). This oxbow presents a unique recreational resource; the land along the river is paralleled by the historical remnants of the "North Branch Division of the Pennsylvania Canal" and railroad grade that was constructed shortly after the canal was built. The railroad grade was later abandoned when the railroad blasted a mile-long tunnel across the narrow point of the Vosburg Neck. In totality, this location presents opportunities for scenic hiking, picnicking, and significant public access to recreational opportunities on the river.

Moving forward with formal acquisition and official state park designation, as a new state park addition in our portfolio for the commonwealth, has tremendous merit given the important attributes, potential, and critical values the site affords.

Administratively, the plan is for Vosberg Neck State Park to be an independent day-use park operation with full staffing dedicated to the stewardship and visitor services this site will offer. The below elements examine the proposed needs to fully achieve and establish a State Park in Wyoming County.

**Recreational Opportunities and Resource Management:**

Future development for this site will help to better support the recreational activities that are already taking place with improvements to river and trail access. Visitor amenities such as parking areas, trail improvements, information kiosks, and restroom facilities will support these activities. The need to develop necessary utilities and connections for water, wastewater and electricity will also be part of these upgrades as well as rehabilitation of the existing structures on the property.

**Staffing:**

As this property has not been acquired by the Department, a full staffing deployment will be necessary. Staffing will include a park manager, a fulltime and seasonal administrative staff person, a maintenance team of five for facility maintenance and natural and cultural resource work, three rangers for customer service, public safety and emergency response, and a fulltime educator for interpretation and programmatic elements both on and off-site.

	Start-up	Annual
Salaried Complement (7)	\$ 533,895.00	\$ 533,895.00
Wage Complement (5)	\$ 144,662.00	\$ 144,662.00
Operations	\$ 1,378,121.00	\$ 128,500.00
Vehicles and Motorized Equipment	\$ 312,000.00	
Totals	\$ 2,368,678.00	\$ 807,057.00

**Acquisition and Site/Resource Improvements/Future development: Estimated cost - \$1,750,000 (acquisition) + \$8,601,000: total cost estimated at \$10,336,000.**

2024 JAN 18 AM 8:55  
JIM LAWRENCE  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
DISTRICT OFFICE  
MEPA

RECEIVED

## Big Elk Creek - Preliminary Startup and Annual Operating Cost Estimate for a new State Park

**Cost Estimate** - based on an initial assumptions without the benefit of a public study and the development of a park master plan.

2024 JAN 13 AM 8:55

RECEIVED

**Park Development:**

<b>Administrative Buildings</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Price (each)</b>	<b>Start Up Cost</b>	<b>Annual</b>
Park office / visitor center (site development, parking, exhibits, solar array, etc.)	1	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$5,000
Manager Residence (existing historic structure) - will need L&I occupancy permit	1	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$5,000
Maintenance facility (three-bay building)	1	\$240,000	\$240,000	\$2,000
White Clay Office Rehab	1	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$2,000
White Clay Sexton House Rehab	1	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$1,000
White Clay Meeting House Rehab	1	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$1,000
White Clay Maintenance Barn Rehab to include paving and electrified gas pump	1	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$1,000
			<b>\$3,540,000</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>

<b>Operational and Resources Management Needs</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Price (each)</b>	<b>Start Up Cost</b>	<b>Annual</b>
Boundary survey, marking and maintenance	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0
Pit latrines (CXT-type pit latrine) and adjacent parking areas	2	\$125,000	\$250,000	\$500
Pit latrines (CXT-type pit latrine) and adjacent parking areas at White Clay	2	\$125,000	\$250,000	\$500
120 Site Full Service Campground with up to 10 roofed overnight	1	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$10,000
Playground(s)	1	\$64,000	\$64,000	\$500
Day use area (parking lot and landscaping)	1	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$5,000
Picnic pavilion(s)	1	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$500
Waste water treatment facility (on-lot septic)	1	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$2,000
Public drinking water facility (groundwater - design, permitting, construction)	1	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$5,000
Law Enforcement Equipment	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$1,000
Picnic Tables/Grills/Charcoal Pits, Etc.	1	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$1,000
Resource Management Funding (invasive suppression, forest management)	1	\$1,700,000	\$1,700,000	\$335,000
Trail development and maintenance (multi-use with necessary bridges)	1	\$210,000	\$210,000	\$35,000
Trail rehabilitation from Ida storm damage at White Clay	1	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500
Martin Property Bridge for access	1	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$500
Stabilized Turf Parking Area (park visitor parking for main day-use area)	1	\$165,000	\$165,000	\$1,000
			<b>\$8,494,000</b>	<b>\$398,000</b>

<b>Environmental Education and Public Information</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Price (each)</b>	<b>Start Up Cost</b>	<b>Annual</b>
Park Interpretive Guide / Map and publications	1	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$13,000
Informational signage, park entrance signage, highway signage, signage in park.	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$500
Informational kiosk(s)	2	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$0
Interpretive wayside displays	3	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$0
Education amphitheater	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$500
Interpretive plan development and implementation	1	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$0
			<b>\$205,000</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>

<b>Vehicles and motorized equipment (2016 rates)</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Price (each)</b>	<b>Start Up Cost</b>	<b>Annual</b>
Maintenance vehicle	2	\$29,000	\$58,000	\$0
Dump Truck w/ Plow	1	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$0
Manager's vehicle	1	\$29,000	\$29,000	\$0
Educator vehicle	1	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$0
Law enforcement vehicle	1	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$0
ATV	1	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$0
Mower	1	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$0
Tractor	1	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$0
Misc. power tools, grass trimmers, chain saws, etc.	1	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$5,800
			<b>\$314,000</b>	<b>\$5,800</b>

<b>Staff Support</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Price (each)</b>	<b>Start Up Cost</b>	<b>Annual</b>
Park Manager (PM2) - salaried	1	\$91,960	\$91,960	\$91,960
Clerical Assistant 2 - salaried	1	\$80,355	\$80,355	\$80,355
Clerical Assistant or Park Resource Ranger - seasonal	3	\$30,500	\$91,500	\$91,500
Environmental Education Specialist - salaried	1	\$87,879	\$87,879	\$87,879
Park Maintenance Supervisor1 - salaried	1	\$68,210	\$68,210	\$68,210
Maintenance repairman - salaried	1	\$75,687	\$75,687	\$75,687
Semi skilled laborer - seasonal	2	\$30,500	\$61,000	\$61,000
DCNR Ranger - salaried	1	\$99,304	\$99,304	\$99,304
DCNR Ranger - seasonal	2	\$26,581	\$53,162	\$53,162
			<b>\$709,057</b>	<b>\$709,057</b>

## Big Elk Creek - Preliminary Startup and Annual Operating Cost Estimate for a new State Park

Operating Costs	Units	Price (each)	Start Up Cost	Annual
Maintenance materials and non-motorized supplies	1	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$42,000
Motorized equipment repairs and rentals	1	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Contracted Services	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Radio Base Unit/Tower	1	\$8,789	\$8,789	\$0
Radios Mobile	6	\$28,400	\$170,400	\$0
Radios LE Portable	4	\$24,808	\$99,232	\$0
Radios Portable	10	\$62,020	\$620,200	\$500
Utilities - electricity, water, phones, heating, garbage/recycling	1	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Motorized Fuel/Gasoline	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Office supplies and office furnishings	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$2,500
Telecommunications / internet	1	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Computers and phones	1	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$2,000
Technology (Internet, routers, etc)	1	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$2,000
Regulatory permits	1	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$0
Administrative (travel, trainings, required certifications, etc.)	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Annual vehicle maintenance and fuel (see below)	6	\$5,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
			<b>\$1,378,121</b>	<b>\$128,500</b>
<b>Totals</b>			<b>Start Up Cost \$14,640,178</b>	<b>Annual \$1,272,357</b>

**Annual Operating Budgets of Similar State Parks (2016/2017) - operating under significantly reduced staffing and budgetary conditions:**

Nolde Forest	\$613,300
Shikellamy	\$653,673
Tyler	\$750,500
Sinnemahoning	\$820,770
Delaware Canal	\$1,634,000

**Staffing levels at nearby state parks (salaried positions - 2017)**

	Allocated positions	Filled positions
Frances Slocum	6	5
Ricketts Glen	10	10
Lackawanna	9	8

**Truck annual operating expenses**

inspection / emission	\$ 60.00
oil change	\$ 200.00
fuel - 20K @ 13mpg @ \$2.50/gal	\$ 3,846.15
	\$ 4,106.15

**Patrol Vehicle annual operating expenses**

Inspection / emission	\$ 60.00
oil change	\$ 200.00
fuel - 27K @ 13mpg @ \$2.50/gal	\$ 5,400.00
	\$ 5,660.00

**Average annual vehicle maintenance**

\$ 5,000.00

RECEIVED  
 2024 JAN 18 AM 8:55  
 STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
 LAWRENCE  
 OFFICE

## Wyoming County - Preliminary Startup and Annual Operating Cost Estimate for a new State Park

**Cost Estimate** - based on an initial assumptions without the benefit of a public study and the development of a park master plan.

Acquisition	Purchase price
Yellow book appraisal (Acquisition for highest and best use)	\$1,735,000

**Park Development:**

Administrative Buildings	Units	Price (each)	Start Up Cost	Annual
Park office / visitor center (site development, parking, exhibits, etc.)	1	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$5,000
Manager Residence (red historic structure) - will need L&I occupancy permit	1	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$5,000
Friends Building (yellow historic structure) - will need L&I occupancy permit	1	\$300,000	\$250,000	\$5,000
Maintenance facility (four-bay building with office, break room, storage rooms, fence, fuel tanks, etc.)	1	\$1,700,000	\$1,700,000	\$2,000
Barn (relatively in good shape. Annual maintenance part of park budget)	1	\$0	\$0	\$0
			<b>\$5,600,000</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>

Operational and Resources Management Needs	Units	Price (each)	Start Up Cost	Annual
Boundary survey, marking and maintenance	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	
Pit latrines (CXT-type pit latrine)	3	\$125,000	\$375,000	\$500
Playground(s)	1	\$64,000	\$64,000	\$500
Day use area (parking lot and landscaping)	1	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$5,000
Boat launch facility (launch, parking lot and landscaping)	1	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$30,000
Picnic pavilion(s)	1	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$500
Waste water treatment facility (on-lot septic)	1	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$2,000
Public drinking water facility (groundwater - design, permitting, construction)	1	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$5,000
Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment	1	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$0
Park Master Plan (and associated Park management plan and Resource management plan)	1	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$50,000
Cultural resource management plan development	1	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$0
Law Enforcement Equipment	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$1,000
Picnic Tables/Grills/Charcoal Pits, Etc.	1	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$1,000
Resource Management Funding (invasive suppression, forest management)	1	\$1,700,000	\$1,700,000	\$335,000
Trail development and maintenance (convert rail grade to trail, maintain current trails)	1	\$210,000	\$210,000	\$35,000
Stabilized Turf Parking Area (park visitor parking for main day-use area)	1	\$165,000	\$165,000	\$0
			<b>\$4,261,000</b>	<b>\$465,500</b>

Environmental Education and Public Information	Units	Price (each)	Start Up Cost	Annual
Park Interpretive Guide / Map and publications	1	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$13,000
Informational signage, park entrance signage, highway signage, signage in park.	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$500
Informational kiosk(s)	2	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$0
Interpretive wayside displays	3	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$0
Education amphitheater	1	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$500
Interpretive plan development and implementation	1	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$0
			<b>\$205,000</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>

Vehicles and motorized equipment (2016 rates)	Units	Price (each)	Start Up Cost	Annual
Maintenance vehicle	2	\$29,000	\$58,000	\$0
Dump Truck w/ Plow	1	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$0
Manager's vehicle	1	\$29,000	\$29,000	\$0
Educator vehicle	1	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$0
Law enforcement vehicle	1	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$0
ATV	1	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$0
Mower	1	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$0
Tractor	1	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$0
Misc. power tools, grass trimmers, chain saws, etc.	1	\$28,000	\$28,000	\$5,800
			<b>\$312,000</b>	<b>\$5,800</b>

Staff Support	Units	Price (each)	Start Up Cost	Annual
Park Manager - salaried	1	\$91,960	\$91,960	\$91,960
Administrative Assistant - salaried	1	\$80,355	\$80,355	\$80,355
Clerical clerk - seasonal	1	\$30,500	\$30,500	\$17,448
Environmental Education Specialist - salaried	1	\$87,879	\$87,879	\$87,879
Park Maintenance Supervisor - salaried	1	\$66,210	\$66,210	\$66,210
Maintenance repairman - salaried	1	\$75,687	\$75,687	\$75,687
Semi skilled laborer - salaried	0	\$0	\$0	\$0

RECEIVED  
 2014 JUN 18 AM 8:55  
 WYOMING COUNTY



## Wyoming County - Preliminary Startup and Annual Operating Cost Estimate for a new State Park

Semi skilled laborer - seasonal	3	\$30,500	\$91,500	\$91,500
DCNR Ranger - salaried	1	\$99,304	\$99,304	\$99,304
DCNR Ranger - seasonal	2	\$26,581	\$53,162	\$53,162
	12		\$678,557	\$665,505

Operating Costs	Units	Price (each)	Start Up Cost	Annual
Maintenance materials and non-motorized supplies	1	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$42,000
Motorized equipment repairs and rentals	1	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Contracted Services	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Radio Base Unit/Tower	1	\$8,789	\$8,789	\$0
Radios Mobile	6	\$28,400	\$170,400	\$0
Radios LE Portable	4	\$24,808	\$99,232	\$0
Radios Portable	10	\$62,020	\$620,200	\$500
Utilities - electricity, water, phones, heating, garbage/recycling	1	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Motorized Fuel/Gasoline	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Office supplies and office furnishings	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$2,500
Telecommunications / internet	1	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Computers and phones	1	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$2,000
Technology (Internet, routers, etc)	1	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$2,000
Regulatory permits	1	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$0
Administrative (travel, trainings, required certifications, etc.)	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Annual vehicle maintenance and fuel (see below)	6	\$5,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
			\$1,378,121	\$128,500

**Totals**  
**Start Up Cost** \$14,169,678  
**Annual** \$1,296,305

**Annual Operating Budgets of Similar State Parks (2016/2017) - operating under significantly reduced staffing and budgetary conditions:**

Nolde Forest	\$613,300
Shikellamy	\$653,673
Tyler	\$750,500
Sinnemahoning	\$820,770
Delaware Canal	\$1,634,000

Staffing levels at nearby state parks (salaried positions - 2017)	Allocated positions	Filled positions
Frances Slocum	6	5
Ricketts Glen	10	10
Lackawanna	9	8

**Truck annual operating expenses**

inspection / emission	\$ 60.00
oil change	\$ 200.00
fuel - 20K @ 13mpg @ \$2.50/gal	\$ 3,846.15
	<u>\$ 4,106.15</u>

**Patrol Vehicle annual operating expenses**

Inspection / emission	\$ 60.00
oil change	\$ 200.00
fuel - 27K @ 13mpg @ \$2.50/gal	\$ 5,400.00
	<u>\$ 5,660.00</u>

**Average annual vehicle maintenance** \$ 5,000.00

JIM L. LAWRENCE  
 STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
 DISTRICT OFFICE  
 1001 W. STATE ST.  
 HARRISBURG, PA

2024 JAN 18 AM 8:55

RECEIVED