

Neshaminy State Park

by Kelly Houghton



Photo-courtesy of DCNR

If searching for a unique state park with countless activities, travel no farther than Neshaminy State Park, located in lower Bucks County. Separated from New Jersey by the Delaware River, the 330-acre state park is a perfect day use recreational area.

The state park is relatively young in relation to other parks in the state, having been in operation for only 52 years. Neshaminy State Park was the former estate of Robert Logan. A descendant of James Logan, colonial secretary to founder William Penn, Mr. Logan's property was a gift to the Commonwealth upon his death in 1956.

Robert Logan's estate has now flourished into the gem of the Delaware River, offering a variety of recreational opportunities that are exceedingly popular. "During the summer, picnicking and swimming are our most popular activities, and during the spring, winter, and fall, trail use is our most popular activity," said state park Manager Josh Swartley.

Since Neshaminy lacks a beach and swimming from shore isn't permitted, visitors cool off during the summer months in the park's large swimming pool and children's spray pool. A food concession, bathhouse,

playground, and restrooms are all located close to the pools, which are open from the Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. The swimming fee for the pool is \$7 per person. If with a group of 15 or more during the week, the rate is \$5.00 per person. For additional family fun, picnic shelters are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Two pavilions are also available and may be reserved for a fee. The PlayMasters Theatre Workshop, on State Road, also offers year-round entertainment.

Hikers, walkers and joggers are also attracted by the park's 4 miles of trails.

(article continued on page 34)

NESHAMINY STATE PARK



Map courtesy of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



NOTE: Roads not to scale. For access information only.

- Park Office
- Lifeguard Station
- Picnic Area
- Restrooms
- Picnic Pavilion
- Public Phone
- Showerhouse/Restrooms
- Food Concession
- Swimming Pool
- Boat Launch
- Blue Symbols Mean Accessible
- Accessible Parking
- Trails
- Accessible Trail No Motor Vehicles
- Unpaved Road
- State Park No Hunting
- Tidal Marshes Natural Area

TO I-95

DUNKS FERRY ROAD

DELAWARE DRIVE

400' 0 400' FEET

DELAWARE RIVER

NO SWIMMING

NO WAKE ZONE

NO WAKE ZONE

NO WAKE ZONE

WINKS LANE

STATE ROAD

Gate

Playmasters Theater Parking

PLAYMASTERS THEATER

Logan

River Walk Trailhead

Playground

POOL

EAST WALK

WEST WALK

DELaware DRIVE

WALK

Walk

Walk

Pine Plantation

River

Walk

NESHAMINY CREEK

NO SWIMMING

Fishing Area

NOTE: River Walk Trail Brochure Available at the Park Office (Estuary Facts)

VISTA

HAUNTED LANE

TO CEDAR AVE

4TH AVE

2ND AVE

CEDAR AVE

NO BOAT TRAILERS

NO BOAT TRAILERS

5TH AVE

4TH AVE EXTENSION

RIVER ROAD

ENTRANCE ONLY

EXIT ONLY

2ND AVE EXTENSION

NESHAMINY MARINA DRIVE

WEST BASIN DRIVE

EAST BASIN DRIVE

Pier 6
Pier 5
Pier 4
Pier 3
Pier 2
Pier 1

BOAT TRAILER PARKING

CAR PARKING

BOAT TRAILER PARKING

Shore Fishing Only

Fishing Area

The Logan Walk, which was once the original drive to the former Robert Logan Home, is a paved, tree-lined trail. At the beginning and ending of the Logan Walk, you can pick up the trailheads for the River Walk Trail. The River Walk's outside loop is a shoreline adventure, providing hikers with great views of the river, boating traffic and tidal marsh area. If interested in discovering the park's plant and animal life, the inner loop is ideal.

If interested in a unique outdoor experience, visit the tidal marsh and estuary. The Tidal Marsh Natural Area makes up 71 acres of the state park and contains wetlands, in addition to unique plants and animals. The park's estuary is also a distinctive feature. Even though the Delaware River flows another 116 miles before it meets the ocean, when the tide comes in at a New Jersey beach, the water also rises at Neshaminy State Park. Because tides affect this part of the river, it's known as an estuary.

Just as the American Indians were successful in using the rise and fall of tides to trap fish, anglers today are continuing to find success in the Delaware River and Neshaminy Creek. The most popular warmwater fish species to cast a line for are largemouth bass, catfish, and panfish, which are catchable in any month.

During the spring season, fishermen regularly visit the park for striped bass. The striped bass is the largest member of the true bass family and can live in both freshwater and saltwater environments. Beginning in the spring, striped bass may travel up to 100 miles inland to spawn and feed predominantly on members of the herring family such as gizzard shad and threadfin shad. According to Swartley, live herring or cut herring, live shiners, and artificial lures all work well for bass.

Concerning where to locate stripers, shores, bays, and estuaries are its most common habitats. At Neshaminy, striped bass are most commonly caught along the jetty at the marina and at the mouth of Neshaminy Creek.

Neshaminy Creek separates the marina from the majority of the park's acreage and is a popular stretch of water to fish. Striped bass are also frequently caught along and coves or slack water areas along the bank of the river.

Another popular spring and early summer fish is shad. Shad have recently made a considerable comeback and offer good sport fishing in the Delaware River. Freshwater fishing for American shad begins when these fish move from the ocean into the Delaware River to spawn. American shad aren't typically interested in food when moving upriver to spawn. However, this won't keep them from readily hitting small lures and flies. April, May, and June are the best months to target shad on the Delaware. Although a nice-size fish, reaching up to 30 inches in length, most anglers prefer to smoke the meat because of bones.

When the weather heats up, largemouth bass and catfish are the popular summer species. Several bass tournaments are held each summer at the park marina. The winter season draws anglers who are fans of pan-fishing, while the fall presents opportunities for muskies. Although musky fishermen are sparse, the possibility of pulling in a musky still exists. "I have heard stories of some monster muskies being caught by the marina," said Manager Swartley.

The state park also offers excitement for more than just anglers. Canoeing and kayaking are popular with park visitors who prefer calmer waters and scenic views of the shoreline, tidal marsh areas, and estuary. However, if you crave a fast-paced excursion and boating is your passion, Neshaminy State Park is your answer. Unlimited horsepower motors, which are permitted on park water and on the Delaware River, attract boaters, water skiers, jet skiers, and other water sport enthusiasts who love the thrill of speed.

The park's boating popularity is evident from its busy, 370-slip marina. The marina's slips are high in demand and typically you must put

your name on a waiting list to get a seasonal slip. Transient slips may be available on a first come first serve basis for shorter periods. Private boats may be launched at one of the state park's two launching areas. One launch is located within the protected waters of the state park's marina. The other is located on state park grounds, adjacent to the marina, and launches directly into the Delaware River. A daily launch ramp fee of \$10 is charged. A yearly launch pass is also available for \$100. For information on the marina, slip availability or launch ramp activity, call the marina office at 215-826-1662.

The summer months attract exceptionally large crowds of boaters. For prime fishing conditions on calmer waters, dedicated anglers should avoid summer weekends and typically find greater success on weekdays. Boaters should also be aware of the high weekend boating traffic, busy launches and parking space for boat trailers. Although Neshaminy normally has enough room to accommodate everyone, they have had to turn people away on busy weekends in the past.

The busy boating waters and crowded launch ramps indicate a state park that is an extremely popular day escape and weekend retreat. "Our average yearly attendance over the last 10 years is 486,386," said Manager Swartley. Perhaps the large attendance numbers are a result of the state park being only a 22-minute drive from Philadelphia and an hour and a half drive from New York City. Or perhaps crowds visit for the notable boating, fishing, hiking, and family activities. Regardless of your reason, you certainly don't want to miss the unique, outdoor experience that Neshaminy State Park has waiting for you.

Neshaminy State Park itself can be easily reached from the PA 132 (Street Road) Exit off Interstate 95. For additional information on Neshaminy State Park, call the state park office at 215-639-4538 or access information online at www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks. ☐