

Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation
OMB Presentation
11.16.2020

Following are highlights for the Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation's FY22 Budget.

1. Our current FY budget is \$8.7 million, of which the state committed \$2,250,000. Roughly 25%. The balance of 75% comes from real estate sales, rental income, Historic Tax Credits and conventional financing.
2. Our proposed budget for FY22 is \$12.5 million. An increase of almost \$4 million in new infrastructure, park and recreation amenities and historic preservation projects. Out of the \$12.5 million, we are requesting \$3.1 million, which represents 25% of our funding.
3. A breakdown of the \$3.1 million includes: \$300,000 for administration; \$350,000 for park and recreation improvements; \$300,000 for infrastructure upgrades; \$600,000 in shoreline improvements; \$750,000 in historic preservation; and \$800,000 toward the Rt. 9 Roundabout and Polktown Road improvements.
4. As a result of the revenue being generated through real estate sales, the corporation is able to contribute \$800,000, which along with the state's commitment of \$800,000 will cover the cost to construct the Rt. 9 Roundabout and Polktown Road improvements.
5. It is critical to our ongoing development that the roundabout on Rt. 9 be installed this coming year. Without the roundabout, we are limited to 50 building permits. We are closing in on 40 permits this year and will easily hit our 50 permit limitation next year. This will bring our project to a halt until such time as the roundabout is installed.

As you can see, this project is successfully moving forward with the preservation of historic buildings, creation of new and improved park lands, new infrastructure and development of residential and commercial properties. Our ask of the state is to assist in funding the historic preservation, park development and infrastructure improvements. Within 3-5 years these improvements will be completed.

As always, we are appreciative of your ongoing support.

Jeffrey Randol
Executive Director



The League of Women Voters of Delaware

Believes that DNREC must have Funding Sufficient to carry out its Mandated Role of Protecting the Health and Safety of Delawareans

Presented to the Office of Management and Budget on November 16, 2020

The League of Women Voters believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. As citizens of the world we must protect our planet from the physical, economic and public health effects of climate change while also providing pathways to economic prosperity.

Delaware continues to have serious issues with air, water and soil contamination. Northern Delaware suffers from high levels of ozone and fine particulate matter. As in other locations with air pollution, this has increased the likelihood and severity of COVID-19 infections, particularly in Environmental Justice communities. While much of the air pollution is coming from out-of-state sources, it is still vitally important to ensure that new development does not continue to increase the burden of toxic air in poor communities.

Chemical plants are another possible source of air pollutants. The numerous leaks of ethylene oxide from the Croda facility suggest that this plant requires more monitoring to prevent these incidents and the harms they cause to the surrounding communities. Appropriate monitoring will require expertise in specific areas that DNREC can't really cover at current funding levels.

Our water pollution problems remain severe, with nitrate and even bacterial contamination in too much of the drinking water in Sussex. Concern about contamination with PFAS (poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances) has grown over the past year, in part because of testing results and in part because of consternation that the Department of Defense may not fund cleaning up contaminated areas around military bases to the extent previously recommended as safe by the EPA: 70ppt. Contamination levels near air bases can be as much as one million times the EPA level. Many areas in New Castle County have also been contaminated, making it the second most contaminated county in the U.S.

In addition to all these problems, rising sea levels from global warming are already making life difficult for many residents in E.J. communities.

Contamination of our natural resources damages human health and destroys the environment that can attract both people and employers to Delaware. The League of

Women Voters of Delaware believes that properly protecting our vital resources requires funding DNREC at a level that will allow it to be more proactive. Whenever possible DNREC needs to be able to take action to prevent problems rather than attempting to remediate problems that have already occurred.



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November 16, 2020

RE: Office of Management and Budget DNREC Hearing; in support of \$10 million in funding for open space preservation

The League of Women Voters of Delaware urges the Office of Management and Budget to allocate \$10 million for open space preservation.

We've come a long way since the Forestry Commission paid \$100 for the 58 acres that began Redden State Forest. That was back in 1927, and land prices are higher nowadays. Yet the need for public open space is ever-increasing, just as the population increases and as many back yards shrink. Since the Delaware Land Protection Act was passed in 1990, 62,680 acres of open space have been permanently preserved.

The League extends its hearty thanks to DNREC for its excellent stewardship of these public lands.

Even though Covid 19 has stretched our state budget, it's a matter of good economics for the state to continue its support of our excellent open space preservation program.

First of all, consider health care costs in Delaware. They amount to about one-third of our state budget, and \$8,480 per capita annually.¹ The Nature Fix describes a number of studies which note the causal relationship between open space and health.² A study was done in southeastern Pennsylvania that shows that access to outdoor recreation spared the residents \$800 million in health care costs.³ In Delaware that would translate to about \$188 million spared in health care costs, if we compare just the populations of the two areas.

Secondly, the relentless growth of development gives some communities an unmerited sense of fiscal well-being. Why is it unmerited? It's because for every tax dollar paid to the government, the government spends only \$.37 for services to open space and farmland, while it pays \$1.16 for services to residential development.⁴

¹ *Health Care Costs and Spending in Delaware*, June, 2017 <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhcc/files/healthcarecosts062017.pdf>*

² Florence Williams, The Nature Fix, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2017

³ *Return on Environment: the Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania*, GreenSpace Alliance and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2010 <http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/11033B.pdf>

⁴ American Farmland Trust, *Cost of Community Services Studies* 2016 <https://conservationtools->

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And in the third place, the southeastern Pennsylvania study mentioned earlier shows an enormous economic benefit of open space in filtering water, controlling flooding, and cleaning the air. The researchers find that access to open space in the area even adds about \$10,000 to the price of every home.

All of this information on financial advantages to increased open space preservation doesn't cover the sheer joy of having outdoor places to play, or to just enjoy as we pass by in our cars or on our bikes.

The League urges the Office of Management and Budget to support a \$10 million allocation for open space preservation.



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Educate. Conserve. Advocate.

**OMB Hearing Comments
November 20, 2020**

Delaware Nature Society (DelNature) appreciates the opportunity to comment during Delaware’s Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Gubernatorial budget process. We recognize that budget planning is particularly challenging due to the economic strain of a global pandemic. We would like to express appreciation for your thoughtful work and dedication in developing an equitable and inclusive budget proposal.

DelNature is testifying in support of three items for the proposed FY 22 budget:

- 1) **\$10 million each for Open Space and Farmland Preservation:** Preserving open space and farmland are vital to protecting Delaware’s way of life, economy, and natural habitats. Both programs faced significantly reduced funding due to the pandemic, but we ask that full funding be restored. Protecting our open spaces and farmland is particularly important with the increased reliance on the outdoors for solace and recreational opportunities during these challenging times.
- 2) **\$25 million for Clean Water Funding:** Ninety percent of Delaware’s waterways are polluted with excess nutrients and toxins. Unchecked development, sea level rise, and ongoing increases in precipitation make low lying areas more susceptible to flooding. One hundred miles of our waters have fish consumption advisories for high PCBs, metals, and pesticides. We ask that the proposed budget include \$25 million in dedicated, sustainable clean water funding, including a focus on grants (not loans) to increase the accessibility of this funding for low-income and underserved communities.
 - The funding will:
 - Improve stormwater management, flood resiliency, and drainage;
 - Repair failing sewer pipes and septic systems;
 - Improve drinking water quality and expand access to safe drinking water;
 - Support stream and watershed restoration; and
 - Increase investments to low-income and underserved communities.
- 3) **Increased Funding for Climate Change Resiliency:** Climate change is the most complex and challenging environmental issue facing our society. It is no longer just a threat to future generations, but a modern-day challenge for people across the world, and right here in Delaware. We must act now and commit across our community to remediating and mitigating its impact on Delawareans and on our wildlife and lands. We are asking for urgent action on climate change, including in state FY22 budget investments and legislative proposals. And as part of the Governor’s Legislative Agenda, we are also requesting formation of a public and private statewide Climate Change Action Committee (including representatives from environmental justice communities) to move any climate change recommendations to concrete actions.

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We hope that the benefits of a clean, healthy, and accessible environment remain at the forefront of our minds as we prepare for the start of the 151st General Assembly.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Submitted by

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Founded in 1964, [Delaware Nature Society's](#) mission is to connect people with the natural world and improve our environment through education, advocacy, and conservation. We manage over 2,000 acres of land and operate four education sites: Ashland Nature Center, Abbott's Mill Nature Center, DuPont Environmental Education Center, and Coverdale Farm Preserve.