

# Delaware State Parks to Expand Tobacco Free Areas

NEWARK – Tobacco free areas in certain sections of Delaware's state parks will be expanded beginning July 1, 2012. Areas newly affected will include designated swim beaches and trails, boardwalks and bath houses, fishing piers, general picnic areas and youth camps, and other areas.

Delaware Governor Jack Markell announced the expansion at the National Board Meeting of the American Lung Association, which was held in Delaware for the first time. "By making more areas of the state smoke-free, we are creating a healthier environment and a higher quality of life," said Governor Markell. "While people are enjoying the natural beauty of our state parks, we want them engaging in activities that contribute to their well-being. Tobacco-free parks are part of a larger plan for more tobacco-free state properties, as we work to improve the health of state employees and all Delawareans."

"The research is irrefutable when it comes to the dangers of exposure to second hand smoke, especially for children," said DNREC Secretary Collin O'Mara. "According to the U.S. Surgeon General, we have clear evidence that only completely smoke-free environments can eliminate secondhand smoke exposure and its related health risks. Delaware State Parks strongly supports the health and well-being of all parks visitors."

"We are pleased that Delaware State Parks is extending its tobacco free areas because the condition of the outdoor air affects each of us," said Deborah Brown, CEO of the American Lung Association of the Mid-Atlantic States. "Secondhand smoke causes an estimated 50,000 deaths each year mostly from lung cancer and coronary heart disease and any exposure is harmful to the health."

Tobacco free areas within Delaware's state parks were first instituted in February of 2008. These initial tobacco free areas included bandshells, amphitheaters, athletic stadiums and fields, swimming pools, and playgrounds.

"Along with mitigating health concerns, our goal is also to reduce tobacco litter," said Division of Parks and Recreation Director Charles Salkin. "There are numerous environmental and sanitation issues related to tobacco use, including the prevalence of cigarette butts on our beaches and other public parks areas, that can be reduced significantly with this new policy."

In addition to the areas listed above, new areas soon to be off limits for tobacco products are concession areas, restrooms, the Brandywine Zoo and Fort Delaware State Park, including Pea Patch Island. Other areas include Cape Henlopen State Park's residential youth camp facilities and all designated primitive youth group camping areas in state parks including special events/temporary sites (camporees) or other locations used for that purpose.

Also, the use of any lit tobacco or similar products will be prohibited during a burning ban designated by the State Fire Marshall in all areas and facilities covered by the ban.

In support of the policy change, Delaware State Parks will educate staff on managing compliance, avoiding confrontations and arrests through one-on-one education. "Enforcement staff will use a common sense approach to seek initial compliance," noted Salkin.

Posters will be displayed in prominent locations near park entrances. Restricted areas will also be signed. Regulatory signs will also be on display.