

Delaware Awarded Three Federal Grants for Bayshore Improvement Projects

Congressional Delegation, Governor's Office and State Agencies Working Together for Coastal Enhancements

DOVER – The U.S. Federal Highway Administration, as part of its [Public Lands Highways Discretionary \(PLHD\) Program](#) and the National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP), has awarded Delaware three grants totaling \$1,720,500.00.

A \$640,000 [Public Lands Highways Discretionary Program](#) grant was awarded to the Delaware Department of Transportation for culvert construction for Prime Hook Road in Milton to reduce flooding, and to aid in the preservation of the wildlife refuge. The project will include construction of culverts along Prime Hook Road, adjacent to the Prime Hook Wildlife Refuge.

Two National Scenic Byways grants will expand ecotourism and recreational opportunities that support the local economy and help conserve the unique and beautiful natural resources of the Delaware Bayshore. The grants advance the goals of the Delaware Bayshore Initiative, part of the national vision for America's Great Outdoors. Delaware's Route 9 Coastal Heritage Scenic Byway will be improved and enhanced thanks to these two grants totaling nearly \$1.1 million. The first, the "Route 9 Coastal Heritage Scenic Byway Scenic Overlooks Project," a \$840,500 grant, will create new areas at six sites along the byway that include safely-defined overlook areas and pedestrian trails. The grant will expand wildlife viewing opportunities in state wildlife areas along Delaware's Route 9 Scenic Byway – Augustine, Woodland Beach, Little Creek, and Ted Harvey Wildlife Areas. Improvements will include

observation towers and platforms, roadway directional signs, information kiosks and interpretive signs highlighting the natural and historic qualities of the area.

The second NSBP grant, "Route 9 Coastal Heritage Byway Planning and Design of a Bicycle/Pedestrian Connector," for \$240,000, will fund planning and design of a community bike and pedestrian trail, which parallels the C&D Branch Canal in Delaware City and a new bicycle and pedestrian bridge. These Byway investments and safety improvements will enhance the quality of life for residents of local communities and visitors by providing opportunities for walking, biking, wildlife viewing and reconnecting to nature.

"Transportation projects get people to work building, help people get to work driving and, in this case, should help to get more people to visit our great state," said Governor Jack Markell. "The announcement adds important momentum to keep these projects moving."

"The grant award for culvert construction under Prime Hook Road in the Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge will have a positive impact on the Prime Hook Beach community and the visitors who enjoy the refuge all year around," said U.S. Senator Tom Carper. "I supported this funding as a way to address flooding in the area of the refuge, which has created ongoing frustration for residents and visitors. This grant will help remedy the flooding and improve the safety and accessibility through this area of Prime Hook Beach. Additionally, it will improve the water flow between the Refuge's wetland units, helping to restore the condition and health of the marsh. This is a win-win in my book that will enable Prime Hook Wildlife Refuge to continue to be a popular destination for fishing, hunting and bird watching for its nearly 85,000 visitors each year from all over the United States."

"These grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation will

help DelDOT and DNREC enhance Delaware's scenic beauty, make our roads safer and less prone to flooding, and expand trails and recreational opportunities for every Delawarean," U. S. Senator Chris Coons said. "Delawareans and visitors will be able to enjoy our coastal communities, Delaware City, and Route 9 along the coast as part of these investments. I look forward to seeing these projects come to fruition, and will continue to work to ensure that Delaware's transportation and recreational options remain top notch."

"The funding announced today are investments in infrastructure that will create jobs and make Delaware an even more beautiful place to live," said U. S. Congressman John Carney. "The improvements to both Route 9 and Prime Hook Road will allow Delawareans and visitors to more fully enjoy the beauty of that part of our state, while preserving the surrounding wildlife. I'm excited that these projects are moving ahead, and look forward to their completion."

"DelDOT is thrilled to have the ability to help implement the infrastructure these three grants will make possible for Delaware's shoreline," Delaware Transportation Secretary Shailen Bhatt said. "Our goal will be to safeguard the sensitive natural features these projects will traverse, while enhancing the public's ability to access and enjoy them."

The Congressional Delegation and Governor's Office have pledged to continue to work together to involve the federal Fish and Wildlife Office in addressing flood-prone areas of Prime Hook.

"The state and residents of Prime Hook continue to work with federal Fish & Wildlife officials on issues affecting homes. One commitment we made to the community was working with the delegation to secure funds to improve the only public access point to Prime Hook," Markell said. "While there's much work to do, this team effort hopefully will make things better and give some relief to Prime Hook residents."

“These grants will provide amenities which will help thousands of Delawareans and visitors experience the world-class wildlife of the Delaware Bayshore and create new opportunities for tourism and outdoor recreation,” said DNREC Secretary Collin P. O’Mara. “Improving the flow of water within the wetlands of Prime Hook Refuge will help protect the road and access for area residents, also potentially reducing the impacts of flooding to the community.”

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