

DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin welcomes two new K-9 officers to duty for the Division of Parks & Recreation

(Left-to-right) Parks Enforcement Officer Trevor Ditmore; K9 Officer Leo; DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin; Parks Chief of Enforcement Wayne Kline; Parks Enforcement Officer John Lister; K9 Officer Vos, Division of Parks & Recreation Director Ray Bivens.

DOVER – DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin welcomed the Division of Parks & Recreation’s two new additions to their ranks, K-9s Vos and Leo. The K9 officers are officially on the job today, after graduating yesterday from the Delaware State Police Canine Program.

In August, Officers Trevor Ditmore and John Lister, of DNREC’s Natural Resources Police State Park’s Enforcement section, traveled to Vohne Liche Kennels in Indiana, selected the two dogs, and brought them back to Delaware. The kennel, a full service canine teaching facility, has trained police and military dogs for more than 5,000 enforcement and government agencies. The dogs received further training for 12 weeks at the Delaware State Police Academy, which also provided time to bond with their partners.

“We are pleased to welcome K-9 officers Vos and Leo,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. “The addition of canine teams to Delaware’s state parks adds an additional layer of safety for park guests. Their presence will deter crime and at the same time engage the community. The teams will be available

for outreach through demonstrations and programming to the community as a whole, and also to specific state park events and summer camps.”

Officer Ditmore will be stationed at Lums Pond State Park, and primarily serve northern state parks. He will be paired with Leo, a two-and-a-half-year-old German Shepherd. Corporal Lister will be stationed with Vos, a three-year-old Belgian Malinois, at Cape Henlopen State Park, and mainly serve the southern Delaware state parks.

K-9 officers Vos and Leo are now fully trained for, among other jobs, scent tracking and patrol. The two will be able to fulfill multiple tracking missions to recover lost hikers, missing children and the elderly, and suspect apprehension. In addition to these duties, each canine team will specialize in either narcotic or explosive detection.

So far, more than \$6,000 has been raised for the state parks K9 program by the Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park, the Blue Heron Agility Association of Delaware, and through private donations. The public can support the program with tax-deductible donations through the Delaware Community Foundation, P.O. Box 1636, Wilmington, DE 19899. The memo line should include Delaware State Parks K9 Fund. The public can also contribute to the Go Fund Me crowd-funding program at www.gofundme.com/support-new-de-state-park-k9039s.

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