



# FORT DUPONT COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



SHAPED BY HISTORY & ANCHORED IN NATURE

JUNE 2021

## PARK IMPROVEMENTS

# SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

### FAMILY FUN

Final designs for the park and recreation amenities are underway and plans are being made to start sitework later this year with an anticipated opening next summer. The park amenities will be constructed and maintained by Fort DuPont, and will remain open to the public. Located near the "point" along the Delaware River where the historic military marina was once located, the park will have a natural theme and include tennis courts, pickle ball courts and basketball courts. The children's playground will be an "all-inclusive" playground, constructed to include equipment for children with disabilities, according to ADA guidelines. (The closest such playground is about 25 miles away).

Because our dogs are so much a part of our everyday life (see page 3), there will be a dog park with obstacle and agility features.

Of course, public seating areas, picnic tables, restrooms and sheltered areas are a big part of the park, especially exciting because of the great views of the river. We are also making use of a historic building adjacent to the playground that was previously retrofitted into stalls for animals and



SEE PAGE 3 FOR PARK PLANS

will be reused for goats and miniature donkeys, which the kids will love.



walk through Fort Dupont's history as you explore the military structures/batteries from the 1800s which are now in the process of being restored.

*Looking for more information about our history and preservation efforts? Visit [FortDuPont.org](http://FortDuPont.org) for information and updates.*

### FOR THE NATURE LOVERS

There will be convenient trailhead parking at the entrance to our park lands, which includes great natural hiking trails. An elevated bike path is also on the drawing board and will run along the waterfront, connecting to the 12+ mile Michael Castle Trail - a bicyclist's dream. Not only will the bike path provide stunning views of the water and property, it actually provides some storm water protection.

### HISTORY ONCE LOST IN THE WOODS

There are so many things that will set our recreation area apart from others. But perhaps the most interesting feature is actually the history. You can literally

## INSIDE

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
VOICES FROM THE PAST  
**FULL STEAM AHEAD**  
NEW PARK REVEALED

**HELLOS + HIGHFIVES**  
HEY NEIGHBOR!

**CONSTRUCTION** -  
THE LATEST UPDATES

...MORE

## DID YOU KNOW?

# VOICES FROM THE PAST

by Laura Lee

In the early 19th century, the Army planned to fortify the mainland of Delaware City in addition to Fort Delaware. The first formal military installation was the 250-foot 1864 Ten Gun Battery. It was to have six 10-inch guns and four 15-inch guns (some with the capability to fire a 300-pound projectile over two miles). By 1870, the Army had abandoned this plan in favor of a 20-gun emplacement, but those plans never saw completion.

A few of the cast of characters involved took the time to write things down. Sgt. Bishop Crumrine of the Pittsburgh Heavy Artillery wrote home that he did "not want to wear government shoes" and preferred "pants made of dark blue" which "will not get dirty as quick." He oversaw the weaponry installation. "I have been working hard all day hauling gun carriages and chassis from Delaware City to the Fort. I just swing them under large wheels, and then 25 or 30 men can easily haul them up." He added that "the guns we mounted on them weighed from 7 to 25 tons so you can nearly imagine how busy I have been."

In December 1864, Private Alexander Hamilton also commented in his own



diary, "Went to Delaware City and did my shopping. John (Lorentz) came over, took 2 or 3 drinks, went out to the battery, and then we came back to town and filled ourselves with whiskey." Lorentz was assigned to the water battery while Hamilton was stationed at Fort Delaware. Clearly a mainland gig had its benefits.

Crumrine's comments in May of 1865 included, "The battery is a nice place now, all the 10-inch guns are mounted and the 15-inch are on the Wharf. The grass is long and green, and I keep it trimmed as nice as a posy bed. The government property is now all fenced in, and I am now thinking I can get lime to whitewash the fence. Our garden is flourishing - peas a foot high, onions, and potatoes in abundance. Crumrine's command ended in November of 1864 however. General Schoepf sent a lieutenant over to take command. Not because I had not done my duty properly, but because he said I had too much to do for the pay I got, and that there was too much responsibility resting

on the shoulders of a sergeant. I am very well pleased as he is one of our lieutenants and one of the best we have too, but he might as well have come and helped me do the work at first."

The words of those who lived and worked at Fort DuPont help to bring the site alive and remind us all that this was a living, breathing community once before, and thankfully, is again.

## ABOUT LAURA LEE

Laura Lee is the former park interpreter at Fort Delaware and Fort DuPont State Parks, and is currently on the board of the FDRPC and serves as chair of the historic preservation committee. She is passionate about history and the fort, as she was also a resident for four years.

Have a history question Fort DuPont? Send it our way and she will endeavor to answer it.

## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

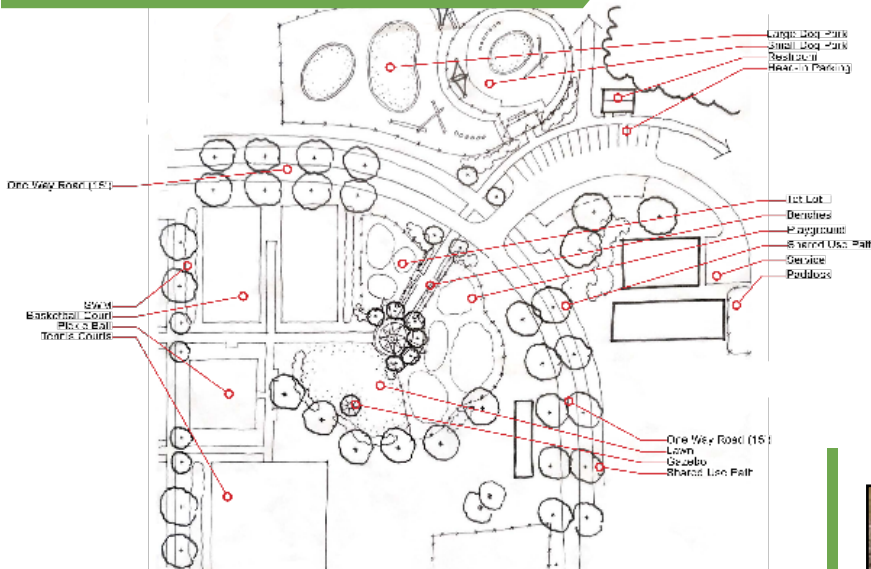
The Battery Elder reconstruction is underway and restoration of two of the duplexes on Old Battery Lane starts next month.



# CAMPING AMENITIES COMING SOON!



## PARK PLANS! SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!



## PETS, PLANTS & PEOPLE OF FORT DUPONT

Meet Hadleigh. Hadleigh lives with her humans, Henry and Michelle who are well trained and housebroken. She is a full time resident of Officers Row, and a part time sheepdog. She received her AKC Canine Good Citizen certification in 2017 and successfully completed her first ATBA Herding Trial in 2019. She also enjoys chasing balls and playing with the water hose.



Want to share with your neighbors? Residents should forward their info, pet info or plant tips to [cpini@fortdupont.org](mailto:cpini@fortdupont.org).



## GET THAT GREEN THUMB GOING!

Have you seen the Fort DuPont Community Garden? We have four garden boxes left if you'd like to try your hand. Boxes are 4' x 10' and come filled with soil. Water and hoses are provided, but gardeners must supply their own tools which can be stored in the locked shed.

Email: [FortDuPontGardenCommittee1@gmail.com](mailto:FortDuPontGardenCommittee1@gmail.com) for more info.



This isn't the first time Fort DuPont has had a newsletter. During WWII, when this was an active military base, the newsletter, "Flashes," was published by the Special Service Office and the Military Training Division, keeping people informed of the goings on at the fort, the war effort and even testimonials from some of the German POWs. Kurt Henckle was a German POW here and credits his capture and treatment here as saving him from the war. Promotions, officer profiles, tall tales and lots of humor kept the soldiers entertained.



# COME EXPLORE

A HISTORIC WATERFRONT COMMUNITY  
IN DELAWARE CITY, DE

[FORTDUPONT.ORG](http://FORTDUPONT.ORG)