

Delco Woods

community in nature



Park Master Plan

Marple Township, Delaware County, PA

In 2021, Delaware County Council seized on the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to acquire the former Archdiocese Don Guanella school property for a new county park through Eminent Domain. The preservation of Delco Woods, Delaware County's last large forest, marked an historic milestone in Delaware County's commitment to protecting its natural and cultural heritage. The County hired the consultant team of Toole Recreation Planning, Natural Lands and Johnson, Mirmiram & Thompson to complete the park master plan.

The design was led by the consultant team and a steering committee and incorporated over 24,000 "touch points" where county residents commented on needs, desires and draft plans for the site. The resulting design centers on the concept of Community in Nature, a destination park, a landscape of forests and streams, interspersed with trails and gathering places as well as serving as a savvy ecological model for making the landscape more resilient to storms and climate change.

The Park Features Three Key Elements:

- conserving the forest and streams
- improving a network of trails
- creating a community hub anchored by a CelebrationPavilion, an iconic structure for gatherings, programs and a rest stop with restrooms, seating, tables, and water.

The County has initiated a Woodland Trail, to undergo construction in 2026, and designed to provide an immediate connection to nature. This trail invites both longtime advocates for the site and those discovering Delco Woods for the first time.



PROJECT SNAPSHOT

services: site analysis, stewardship assessment, extensive community outreach, park master plan, cost estimates and schedules

client: Delaware County

key partner: Toole Recreation Planning, JMT

