

P R E S S R E L E A S E
**State Park Advocates Cut Ribbon for Newly Renovated
Sherwood Island Pavilion In Westport**

Connecticut State Park System Received \$60 Million in Recent Years for Upgrades

Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and Department of Construction Services (DCS) joined with local officials and state park advocates at Sherwood Island State Park, Westport, for a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the renovation and modernization of the well-known pavilion at the historic park. The celebration highlights the importance of maintaining Connecticut's state park system, which has received \$60 million in recent years for improvements and upgrades.



DEEP Deputy Commissioner Susan Whalen and DAS Division of Construction Services Deputy Commissioner Pasquale "Bud" Salemi give opening remarks.

"Re-opening Sherwood Island's pavilion and providing a state-of-the-art updated facility for all visitors to enjoy provides an opportunity to showcase Sherwood Island State Park and promote improvements being made at other Connecticut state parks," said DEEP Commissioner Robert Klee. "DEEP wants to thank Governor Malloy and the state legislature for funding this project and recognizing the value of important investments here at Sherwood Island and throughout the entire state park system."

DAS Commissioner Melody A. Currey said, "The Department of Administrative Services Division of Construction Services coordinates all the contractors, engineers and architects for this project. It is truly a well-coordinated team effort and we here at DAS are proud to work with DEEP to bring this project to conclusion and give it back to the visitors of Sherwood Island – Connecticut's first state park."

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"The Friends of Sherwood Island remain committed to a strong partnership with the state of Connecticut and the DEEP to make certain this park remains a scenic, active, and vibrant location for all families looking to enjoy time in the outdoors," said Liz-Ann Koos, President, Friends of Sherwood Island State Park, Inc. "DEEP worked closely with us to help provide Sherwood Island with a state-of-the-art Nature Center that became operational in 2010 and now has efficiently completed major renovations to the pavilion, which will be greatly enjoyed and appreciated by all park visitors. The Friends have launched Project 100 Trees for One Hundred Years to raise funds to enhance not only the pavilion setting but also other areas with a few shrubs and trees to replace those lost throughout Sherwood Island in recent major storms."

The pavilion at Sherwood Island State Park was built in 1961 and was last renovated 26 years ago. This project was funded by \$3.5 million in state bonding, which the State Bond Commission approved last year. The renovations are complete and ready for the 2015 summer state park season and have contributed 56 jobs to the local economy.

Upgrades and improvements to the pavilion include:

- A new roof
- Renovation of the kitchen and concession facilities
- Replacement of seating and tables
- Improved interior design with a skylight effect that will bring more natural lighting
- Improved landscaping making access to the pavilion more scenic
- Installation of a bathroom that will be heated during the off-season

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The renovations also include renewable energy and energy efficiency features, such as:

- Installation of 6.9 kw solar photo voltaic cells capable of providing 10,000 kilowatt hours of power per year as well as hot water
- Replacement of lighting fixtures with energy efficient fluorescent and LED lighting that operates with motion activated occupancy sensors
- Replacement of older toilets and sinks with new low flow fixtures
- Provisions to accommodate electric vehicle charging stations that will be installed in the adjacent parking area in the near future

“Updates are also being made at other state parks including much-needed improvements to roads, parking areas, bathhouses, trails and nature centers as well as upgrading water, plumbing, and electrical systems at many of our 109 state parks,” added Commissioner Klee. “As we make these improvements to Sherwood Island and other state parks we are committed to the use of renewable energy and the benefits of energy efficiency. This will help reduce the cost of our park operations and also help educate and inspire residents to take similar actions at their homes and businesses.”

Connecticut’s state park system features 109 parks that offer swimming, hiking, picnicking, camping, boating, fishing, and nature programs. The parks attract more than eight million visitors each year.

Recently, DEEP has been moving forward on over \$60 million in projects to improve state parks throughout Connecticut. In addition to the pavilion renovations at Sherwood Island State Park, some other recent statewide park upgrades include:

- Construction of new camping cabins at several park camp grounds
- New group picnic shelters at several parks
- Renovating and upgrading the education and activity room at Dinosaur State Park in Rocky Hill
- Numerous projects to repair/upgrade roads, parking areas, bridges, structures, electrical, water systems at several state parks
- Major projects underway include:
 - Construction of a new nature center at Meig’s Point at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison
 - Construction of a new West Beach bath house and concession at Hammonasset Beach State Park to replace building damaged by storms.
- An upcoming project will be a build out of Silver Sands State Park in Milford to construct a bathhouse, concession stand, and improved parking area at this shoreline park.

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