Open spaces are key to protecting our water, wellness, and way of life, whether that’s enjoying walks in Cape Henlopen State Park, fishing at the Indian River Inlet, or drinking tap water without worrying what else is in it.

Protecting open spaces by creating public parks or wildlife areas has long been a priority in Delaware to increase flood protection, enhance habitats and biodiversity, improve water quality, and offer recreational opportunities.

Since 1990, the state has preserved over 60,000 acres from development in all three counties through the Open Space Program. Places like Cape Henlopen and Trap Pond State Parks would not exist as they are today without Delaware’s Open Space Program.

By law, the program is to receive $10 million in funding annually. But from 2010 to 2020, that required funding level was met only four times.

More open spaces offer more opportunities to exercise in the outdoors, and studies have shown that spending just two hours a week in nature can positively enhance a person’s mental well-being. A study from the University of Wisconsin has found time spent outdoors can also decrease the risk of chronic illnesses.

Studies also show that open space investments can equal hundreds of millions of dollars in increased property values and a stronger tourism economy, on top of the environmental and public health benefits.

Protecting open space is also critical to maintaining biodiversity, as habitat losses are already leading to the decline of migratory songbirds and native bees that we rely on to pollinate the food sources we all need to feed our families.
Ensuring funding for Delaware's Open Space Program is also a way to protect Delaware's water. Keeping pollution out of the water must start on the land. As Delaware's population grows toward one million residents, the need to protect remaining open spaces is more important than ever.

To protect the health and well-being of residents and visitors, the state’s tourism economy, and the wild places and animals that make the First State so special, that minimum $10 million in funding for the Open Space Program needs to be supported each and every year.

Your support has never been more important. Contact your local legislator TODAY to voice your support for Delaware’s Open Space Program and the Clean Water for Delaware Act.

To find your state lawmaker and their contact information, go to inlandbays.org/clean-water-campaign.

The Clean Water Campaign is a statewide effort to secure funding to safeguard Delaware’s water. Protecting open spaces can protect Delaware's waterways, which already face significant challenges.

1 ACRE of tidal wetlands are collectively being lost in the Delaware region every day.

90% of Delaware's waterways are impacted by pollution.

$100 MILLION is the annual shortage Delaware faces for clean water funding.

To learn more and to take action, go to cleanwaterdelaware.org.