The James Farm Master Plan provides a path forward to accommodate increased visitation to the James Farm Ecological Preserve while protecting ecosystems and enhancing education opportunities.

Background
The James Farm Ecological Preserve is a 150-acre tract of land located in Sussex County Delaware on the Indian River Bay north of the town of Ocean View. It is open everyday from sunrise to sunset and is free to all visitors. The Preserve consists of upland fields, freshwater wetlands, a mixed hardwood forest, tidal salt marsh, a sandy bay beach, a saltwater cove, and walking trails throughout.

In 1992, the property was donated to Sussex County by Mary Lighthipe, a descendant of the James family, to be preserved for education and recreation. It has been managed by the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays since 1998.

Project Objective
The James Farm Ecological Preserve is a beloved oasis for thousands of walkers, beachcombers, birdwatchers and nature lovers who visit each year.

As its popularity has soared and programs offered there have expanded, the need to plan for growth to protect the Preserve became evident. The CIB invited the community to participate in the development of a Master Plan; to give input on the needs of visitors, and to collectively envision a future for James Farm that enhances opportunities for education and recreation.

In developing the Plan, the consultant addressed the physical restoration, improvement, and management of the property and considered emerging issues such as sea level rise. Cost projections for implementing the Plan in phases were provided.

HOW YOU CAN HELP!
The James Farm Ecological Preserve belongs to all of us, and it will take the support of those who value this oasis of open space to successfully implement the Master Plan. To learn how you can contribute to this important work contact development@inlandbays.org
Gateway Concept

- The driveway and parking provide additional parking and a bus drop off area.
- An event lawn is proposed adjacent to the parking circle.
- The entry area will include the existing information kiosk.
- Continued development of native plantings are proposed along the existing driveway.
- The Education area will include the existing pavilion, an amphitheater and pavilion, a composting toilet and new education shed.
- A maintenance shed and storage for equipment is also proposed.

Outreach and Education

Objective 2. Educate stakeholders in the watershed about their impacts on water quality in the Bays and how they can help.

A. Develop and deliver watershed education programs for children.

1. Programs for school age children are offered at the James Farm Ecological Preserve.

Outputs and Outcomes

- A Master Plan Document that includes site planning concepts to accommodate increased visitation while protecting natural resources and enhancing education opportunities at the Farm.
- Estimated costs for implementation of the Plan in phases.
- Educational media on the resources of the farm and the planning process including press releases, news article, and social media posts.

The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a non-profit organization established in 1994 to preserve, protect and restore Delaware’s Inland Bays—the water that flows into them, and the watershed around them. With its many partners, the CIB conducts public outreach and education, develops and implements restoration projects, encourages scientific inquiry and sponsors research.

To learn how you can get on board with the bays go to inlandbays.org.