



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Accomack

Program Title: Sawmill Park

Program Category: Parks & Recreation

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Jessica Taylor Hargis

Title: Executive Assistant

Department: County Administration


Telephone: (757) 787-5704 Website: www.co.accomack.va.us

Email: jessicahargis@co.accomack.va.us

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Michael T. Mason, CPA

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 



COUNTY OF ACCOMACK

2019 VACo Achievement Awards Nomination Accomack County, Virginia Sawmill Park Project

Sawmill Park is Accomack County's first "true" recreational park. It is the first public park in the County located off of public school property and the first to contain multiple recreational opportunities. It was completed in 2018 and has been open to the public since its unveiling on June 30, 2018. The park was constructed on a parcel of land that previously served as an industrial-sized sawmill for over 70 years but ceased operation in 2007. By the time that the County purchased the property, the site had become overgrown and had fallen into a state of disrepair. Transforming a derelict industrial site into a recreation park was no easy task and proved to be very ambitious. The pre-developed site contained many safety hazards that required mitigation. Industrial sized machinery had to be broken down and removed, concrete slabs had to be pulverized, abandoned structures had to be demolished and dozens of enormous piles of waste by-products left by a sawmill in operation for seven decades had to be properly disposed of. Preparing the property for use by the general public proved to be very taxing from the sheer labor required to the financial demands of rehabilitating a 35 acre site.

The irony of the story of Sawmill Park is that the catalyst that led to its creation was not related to recreation. In 1976, over 31 acres of land was gifted to the County by the Federal Government under the Federal Lands to Park Program. The land gifted was located over 20 miles away from the current location of Sawmill Park, lying just outside the NASA Wallops Flight Facility. For years this property set essentially dormant, but in 2013 the County and its development partners decided that

it was the perfect place to build a research park for the purpose of catering primarily to the needs of the aerospace industry for which it bordered. The problem with this idea was that with the gift of this property from the Federal Government came restrictions. The property's deed from 1976 required that the property only be used for recreational purposes. In order to use the property for a research park, the National Park Service stipulated that the County had to agree to develop a similar sized "exchange" parcel somewhere else in the County in exchange for removing the recreation requirement from the donated land. The property chosen as the exchange parcel is the current home to Sawmill Park.

The vision of Sawmill Park is an all-inclusive one for the County residents. The current build-out of the park includes a baseball/softball field with dugouts and bleachers, a concession stand, a playground, picnic tables, butterfly habitat and a 1,300-foot walking trail, restroom building, and solar panels. Sawmill Park was designed with handicap access to avoid limitations on the access to the park.

On June 30, 2018, the County's vision came alive as it hosted the Grand Opening of Sawmill Park. The official park opening ceremony included live entertainment, carnival games, lunch and more. Speeches were given by Accomack County Parks and Recreation Manager, Mr. Wayne Burton and County Administrator, Mr. Michael T. Mason.

On any given day, approximately 30 children visit the park. Weekly lunches are hosted at the park by the local community service board and other small groups. You may be greeted by multiple play groups from 5pm to dusk each evening. The park has become an asset to the community as it

provides an outdoor location for lunch and play dates, community gatherings, and encourages exercise. The grounds are used for events such as the annual Easter egg hunt, Juneteenth festival, adult soccer and softball leagues, along with family and community gatherings.

The 1,300-foot walking trail includes educational signage, designed in both English and Spanish to fit Accomack County's diverse culture, noting the individual native trees, shrubs and grasses on the site.

The park includes numerous environmental friendly or "green" initiatives to make the park as socially responsible as possible. These initiatives include:

- Soil fill from within the park, reducing site impacts and trucking, keeping as much of the excavated material on site as possible. Once construction was complete, the excavated areas were converted into bio retention ponds, shallow depressions designed to mimic forested ecosystems that are effective in pollutant removal. This dual use lessened the environmental impact of the project as the fill extracted from the ground for the ponds was later used as fill for the ball field.
- All roads and parking lots are constructed out of permeable surfaces.
- Electricity demands of park amenities are offset by a 38,400 watt solar array, which generates enough energy (50,000 kilowatt hours a year) to cover not only the park, but the neighboring public office buildings. The solar panels were placed at no cost to the County from project proffers.

The location of Sawmill Park makes it cost effective from a maintenance perspective. The County's Public Work's Office, which houses all parks and recreation staff and equipment, is located adjacent to the park. County staff is easily able to make daily visits to the park to open, close and monitor activities and having all maintenance equipment essentially on-site eliminates most logistical issues.

A bio retention basin was constructed to treat stormwater that drains from the parking area. The basin slows down runoff, which helps to trap sediment and hold water for plants. The plants transfer substances through a process called biological uptake, removing harmful nutrients, such as phosphorus. If the plants do not use all of the runoff, then the remaining volume filters into the ground where microbes found on the roots and in the soil help remove pollutants. The park also includes an overall stormwater management system designed to slow down and treat runoff from other impervious surfaces storms.

Funding assistance for the playground was provided by a \$35,000 state grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund., managed by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). This agreement provided for a 50/50 cost share match between DCR and the County of Accomack up to a total maximum project cost of \$70,000. The total cost of the project was approximately one million dollars.

The future build-out of Sawmill Park, as funding becomes available, will include a volleyball court, dog park, placement of a covered pavilion, and tennis courts.



Jun 30, 2018



Accomack County's Sawmill Park located at 24387 Joynes Neck Road grand opening celebration and family day will be held Saturday, June 30th, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. The public is invited to attend this free event. Bring your family, your lawn chairs and enjoy free hotdogs, non-alcoholic beverages, sno cones, popcorn, carnival type games, face painting, door prizes, 50 and over softball game, ESG Dancers. Do you have a talent you want to show case, live music by Black Elvis beginning at 1:00 pm and more.

The first twenty-five persons who register to participate in "Walking For Good Health" and colorful sneaker contest will be presented a t-shirt and receive bragging rights as the first to walk on the Sawmill Park Walking Trail. Don't miss it sign-up today by visiting or calling the Parks and Recreation office at 787-3900, or 824-0314.

[Buy Photo](#)

(Photo: Staff photo by Carol Vaughn)

[CONNECT](#) [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#)

Accomack County officials and residents celebrated the opening of a new county park on Saturday.

Sawmill Park, at 24387 Joynes Neck Road in the town of Accomac, has been years in the making.

"We have achieved a goal today ... a beautiful park for the community to enjoy," said Wayne Burton,

Accomack County Parks and Recreation Manager.

"This was accomplished by the forward thinking of past and present Board of Supervisors members, former county administrators, to our present county administrator, Mr. Michael Mason, our advisory commission members, past and present, and the citizens that we serve," Burton said.

[Buy Photo](#)

Michael Mason, Accomack County administrator, speaks during the dedication of Sawmill Park in Accomac, Virginia on Saturday, June 30, 2018. (Photo: Staff photo by Carol Vaughn)

Check out this video on The Daily Times:

<https://www.delmarvanow.com/videos/news/2018/07/02/watch-accomack-dedicates-new-park/751068002/>

