



**KIPTOPEKE  
STATE PARK  
3540 KIPTOPEKE DRIVE  
CAPE CHARLES, VA 23310**

# Kiptopeke State Park MASTER PLAN

## 2001 Executive Summary And 2009 Amendment



Department of Conservation & Recreation

CONSERVING VIRGINIA'S NATURAL & RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

**Kiptopeke State Park**  
**2009 Master Plan Amendment**

*(Amendment adopted June 10, 2009. This Master Plan is scheduled for updating in October 2014 and at that time cost estimates for phased development and staffing/operations will be revised.)*

The master plan for Kiptopeke State Park was adopted on March 6, 2001, by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director David G. Brickley. Since the adoption of the master plan, some items have been completed, while some additions and changes to the plan are recommended.

Projects that have been completed are:

- Construction of three 6-bedroom lodges.
- Construction of 3.4 miles of trail.

After operating within the existing master plan for seven years, it became apparent that some changes could be made that would enhance the operations of the park and better meet public expectations and needs. It is recommended that the following items be addressed in the amended master plan:

- Due to the characteristics of litoral drift along the shoreline, the boat launch facility is being silted in. It is anticipated that a re-engineering of the beach breakwater could help to reduce sand retention at the boat launch.
- The concrete ships which form the protected harbor for the Kiptopeke landing are slowly eroding and sinking into the sea floor. DCR needs to find a way to work with others to stabilize and reinforce the off-shore concrete ship breakwater.
- Four housing units for staff should be constructed.
- The park entrance should be redesigned (in conjunction with VDOT) for improved safety and ease of access.
- In the original master plan, six 6-bedroom lodges were proposed. Staff recommends dropping three of these lodges and replacing them with six 2 or 3-bedroom cabins.
- Campground 2 should be upgraded and additional yurts acquired.
- The bathhouse in Campground 1 should be renovated.
- A storage facility should be constructed in the current maintenance area.
- The scope of the Bird Observatory should be enhanced and the project developed.
- Playground equipment should be installed in the day-use area.
- Northampton County is developing a bicycle and pedestrian trail on the abandoned rail line across the road from the park. A safe crossing of Route 13 needs to be secured to connect the park with the Northampton Bike Trail.

On March 23, 2009, a public input meeting was held at the Kiptopeke Elementary School to inform the public about proposed changes to the master plan and to solicit public input. The meeting was well attended, and the proposed changes were supported as presented.

The Board of Conservation and Recreation recommended adoption of these amendments at their meeting on April 28, 2009. Based on the requirements of §10.1-200.1 et seq., these proposed amendments are approved and made part of the Master Plan for Kiptopeke State Park.

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June 10, 2009

**KIPTOPEKE STATE PARK**  
**MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
*(Adopted March 6, 2001 by DCR Director David G. Brickley)*

Kiptopeke State Park consists of some 540 acres and is located in Northampton County, which occupies the southern half of the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The park is located between the Chesapeake Bay and U.S. Route 13, approximately 2 miles north of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and 7 miles south of the town of Cape Charles. The park is easily accessible via State Route 704 approximately one-half mile from U.S. Route 13. The park can also be accessed by boat from the Chesapeake Bay. The area surrounding the park can be characterized primarily as rural farmland.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation purchased approximately 375 acres in 1992 from John A. Maddox, who operated Kiptopeke Beach Family Resort on the property. In 1999, an adjacent 165 acres, known as the Parson tract was acquired. The first year the park was opened (1992) the attendance was 49,083. In 1999 the attendance at Kiptopeke State Park was 122,515.

The area is locally known as Kiptopeke Beach. Its history can be traced to the early 1600s when the first English settlers arrived and established relations with the Accawack Indians who inhabited the Eastern Shore. Descendants of the Indians and early settlers still live there today.

In the 1930s the Virginia Ferry Corporation was chartered to provide ferry service from Virginia Beach to the town of Cape Charles. In the 1940s the corporation relocated its northern terminus to the site, which was named Kiptopeke Beach. The corporation built the pier, terminal building, and motel, and platted part of the property for residential development. The ferry terminal was put on-line in 1950 and operated until 1964 when the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel was opened.

The location of Kiptopeke State Park offers recreational access to the Chesapeake Bay and the chance to explore a unique coastal habitat featuring a major flyway for migratory birds. Recreational opportunities offered visitors include swimming, camping, picnicking, hiking, pier fishing, boat ramp, bird banding station, and hawk observatory.

In preparation for development of the Kiptopeke Master Plan, meetings were held with the Department of Conservation (DCR) staff and a technical advisory group. Park Purpose Statement and goals and Objectives were developed and presented at a public meeting for additional input. Meetings were held to discuss issues related to the park and what direction the park should take over the next 20 years. A public meeting was held to present and obtain input on the proposed developments. The Master Plan proposes the following improvements:

- Redesign Parking at Boat Launch Area: Currently there is a shortage of parking spaces to handle vehicle and trailer parking during peak fishing periods. With the redesign, approximately 28 additional vehicle and trailer parking spaces will be provided.
- Boat Pier (Day-Use): The boat launch area does not have an area for boats to tie up for visitors to use the park facilities. To relieve congestion around the boat launch, a new boat pier for day-use is being proposed. The pier would be designed to handle approximately 10 boats at a time. Visitors will be able to launch their boat and still use the park for a picnic or other facilities such as comfort station.
- Visitor Center/Food Service/Gift Shop: A multi-level building will be constructed at the site of the old terminal building. Currently, Kiptopeke State Park does not have a visitor center. The visitor center will contain exhibits, and provide information on park facilities as well as other attractions on the Eastern Shore. Food service and gift shop facilities will also be located in the building.
- Trails: Approximately 8 miles of new trails will be constructed to connect with the existing trail system. Observation areas will be established in strategic points to observe wildlife and the Chesapeake Bay.
- Reforestation: Land that is currently in agriculture will be reforested. Consultation with experts will determine the best habitat for the wildlife.
- Environmental Education Center: The Environmental Education Center will offer a wide array of programming and environmental education opportunities. The facility will include a multi-purpose auditorium, classroom, resource library, catering kitchen, and great room. The dorm facility will be able to accommodate up to 48 overnight guest.
- Family Lodges: The family lodge will be different than the traditional state park cabin. The lodges will be for groups of 8-16 people and will consist of bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen, and great room. Eight of these lodges are being proposed.

There are three inholdings in Kiptopeke State Park. If any of these properties are offered for purchase, the Commonwealth of Virginia should make every effort possible to acquire these properties.

Based on the value of the dollar in the year 2000, the projected cost of the proposed improvements would be approximately \$12.2 million. Developments would be in phases over the next 15 years.

Presently five staff positions are responsible for the park 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Additional positions will need to be considered as facilities proposed in the master plan come on line. Staff positions that need to be considered are Chief Ranger/Interpreter, Business Manager, and an additional Park Ranger.

OPERATING AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS		
<b>STAFF:</b> <b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Future</b>
Park Manager		Park Manager
Assistant Park Manager		Assistant Park Manager
Program Support Tech.		Program Support Tech.
Chief Ranger	Chief Ranger*	Chief Ranger (2)
Park Ranger (1)	Park Ranger (3)*	Park Ranger (4)
	Business Manager*	Business Manager
<b>SALARY TOTAL:</b>		
\$185,253	\$118,820	\$304,073
<b>WAGE TOTAL:</b>		
\$68,179	\$117,988	\$186,167
<b>OTPS TOTAL:</b>		
\$102,097	\$219,636	\$321,733
<b>TOTAL BUDGET:**</b> <b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Proposed increase</b>	<b>Total needed</b>
\$355,529	\$456,444	\$811,973

\* Salaries based on 11/25/99 salary scale, step 5, with 3.25% COLA, 20% fringe.

\*\* All estimates are based on FY2000-2001 dollars.

