

Spotlight on St. Mary's County – Greenwell State Park

By Katherine O. Rizzo

In 1971, John Phillip Greenwell, Jr., and his sister, Mary Wallace Greenwell, donated their 166.6-acre farm in Hollywood to the State of Maryland for use as a public park. The state soon afterwards purchased the adjacent 430-acre Bond property to create Greenwell State Park, a 596-acre park located in St. Mary's County alongside the Patuxent River. Greenwell State Park offers ten miles of multi-use trails that are open to the public year-round.

DNR manages the park in partnership with the Greenwell Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (and Maryland Horse Council member) dedicated to providing outdoor accessible and inclusive recreational programs, services, and facilities for all community members, with or without disabilities. The Greenwell Foundation offers therapeutic and recreational riding lessons, a summer camp and nature camps as well as kayaking and camp site rentals. The horses stabled on the park property are only for use by the Foundation's programs, however, and they are not available for the general public as trail riding rentals.

A focal point of the property for those visiting on foot is the Rosedale Manor House, built circa 1880, along the Patuxent River shoreline, which features Victorian-style rose gardens, a family chapel, and spectacular river views.

The land around Rosedale Manor is part of the original 1650 land grant of 4,000 acres from Lord Leonard Calvert to Thomas Cornwallis. Cornwallis had come to Maryland with Lord Calvert in 1634 as one of the proprietorship's original commissioners. He was among the Europeans who went to war against the Nanticookes on the Pocomoke River, and he was one of the first Europeans in Maryland to purchase enslaved Africans.

Before the Europeans arrived, the land around Greenwell State Park had been inhabited primarily by the Wicomico, who gave the land and farm plots around what is now St. Mary's City to the English Catholics who arrived in 1634. The Wicomico and the neighboring Patuxent were both part of the Piscataway nation in what is now Southern Maryland.

Parking at Greenwell State Park is available at three locations: near the end of Rosedale Manor Lane; off of Steer Horn Neck Road; and at the end of a service road on the Brown Trail. There is a per vehicle parking fee of \$3 for Maryland tagged vehicles and \$5 for out of state vehicles. Parking fees benefit the Greenwell Foundation's efforts to manage the park.

In addition to trails, Greenwell State Park has several fishing piers, beach areas for swimming, a pavilion, paddle-in campsites, and restrooms. There is also waterfowl hunting, by permit only, during certain seasons.

To reach the park, take Route 235 towards Hollywood and then turn on Route 245 (Sotterly Road) and go 2.5 miles. Make a right onto Steerhorn Neck Road. The park entrance is the second driveway on the left, approximately 8/10 of a mile from the turn onto Steerhorn Neck Road.

As always, please check the park website for current trail closure notices and park hours.

Photos from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources

