Origin of the Problem
In January 2022 DNREC initiated an RFP for restaurant services at Cape Henlopen State Park in Lewes. In April 2022, LA Vida Hospitality LLC was awarded a one year contract to manage the Cape Henlopen main beach area concession and to conduct due diligence evaluations for permitting with the option to negotiate a twenty-four year amendment with updated terms and conditions for a proposed beach restaurant. In February, 2022, the Cape Gazette published a story, Is a restaurant in Cape Henlopen State Parks future?

In June 2022, DNREC presented a Welcome to Cape Henlopen State Park - Park Improvement Update 2022. The last three pages of the presentation provide a glimpse as to La Vida's plans for the restaurant modeled after their Big Chill Beach Club near the Indian River Bridge. DNREC also performed an online survey requesting public input to all the proposed park improvements.

The RFP, selection of La Vida, Cape Gazette articles and DNREC's June 2022 Park Improvement Update mostly escaped the general publics attention. In September 2022 the public virulently became engaged when the Cape Gazette published the LTE Lewes residents oppose the restaurant in Cape state park.

DNREC is scheduled to make a decision about the twenty-four year amendment by January 1, 2023.

Where is the opposition going?
Shortly after the September Gazette article the public became energetically engaged in opposition to the restaurant at the Park and a grassroots group, Preserve Our Park Coalition was formed to stop the construction. More news articles and many LTE's were published and continue through to present. Opposition is growing. State and local politicians are receiving letters. Environmental groups oppose the project, although their participation is handicapped by their DNREC relationships. The Coalition has retained a lawyer to review legal aspects of the project. Read this Delaware Online article for information about the Warner Grant Trust Lands and legal issues. There other Coalition concerns about the application of federal regulations involving infrastructure funding and 6F protected boundaries as well as deviation from DNREC's Mission. More letters and donations are needed to carry the energy and process through to conclusion.

Preserve Our Park Coalition plans a March to the Park, Sunday, November 13th at 11am to bring about greater public attention and participation.

There are 17 state parks in Delaware, but only one with the unspoiled historic and natural ocean coastline extending from the Cape Henlopen Point to Gordon's Pond.