

Editorial: Parks are good

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Parks are so good, according to Gov. Terry McAuliffe, that he has made it a point during his administration to visit every one of them in the state park system.

Parks are so good, according to the National Park Service, that the national parks in Virginia alone attracted 27 million visitors who spent more than \$1 billion here in 2016.

In fact, Virginia has 37 state parks and 17 national parks, all sites of priceless historic and natural heritage.

If our government agencies would move a little faster, Gloucester County could add one park to each of these lists.

Gloucester has been the designated location, for much more than a decade, of the Middle Peninsula State Park. Nothing much is happening there, although this summer it will be the site of nature lessons. It is not, however, open to the public, and its potential is like an unplanted seed waiting for spring. It's winter, you look at the seed, you dream about planting it and cultivating it, and harvesting all the benefits it will bring.

But winter lasts and lasts, and that seed never gets planted. We have no timeline for developing and opening the park. It is dormant.

Will the time ever be right?

Not so long in the dreaming stage is the Werowocomoco National Park site, not far up the York River from the state park site. This is the promised land for students of Native American culture, the place where the English settlers first encountered Chief Powhatan.

So far, it is but a promise, and in today's political climate where funds to clean up Chesapeake Bay are the subject of debate (restored for now, but eliminated in the proposed new federal budget), we have scant hope that the promise will be realized in the near future.

Yes, parks are good. We want them. We want ours to open! Soon! But is anyone listening, thinking or planning for this to happen?

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