

**Shades Beach Park
Harborcreek Township
Erie County, PA**

Project Description:

In 1983 when Harborcreek Township took control of Shades Beach Park, formerly owned by Erie County, it was rundown. There wasn't easy access to Lake Erie. There were few pavilions. The roads were gravel.

Since then, cooperative efforts between the township, department, community planners, chamber of commerce and the Commonwealth have transformed the park. One improvement to the 27 acre grounds is the addition of Shades Beach Park Playground.

Two separate play structures cater to both older and younger children. The bright orange and purple equipment for those ages five and up, includes a bridge, tunnel, slides, monkey bars and ladders. A smaller play structure shaped like a boat offers younger children a place to play.

"The new state of the art playground offers a 'safe haven' for all of the kids. Parents can enjoy the serene environment while their kids play. I have seen parents and grandparents even playing on the playground with their children [and] grandchildren. It's a playground that everyone can enjoy," said Connie Cruz, Parks Project Coordinator for Harborcreek Township.

Harborcreek Township received \$25,000 of Growing Greener grant funding in 2003 from DCNR.

Quote: Connie Cruz, Harborcreek Township Parks Project Coordinator

"Residents have called the Township to say, 'I haven't been to Shades Beach Park since I was a child, there wasn't really anything there, and now look at it – it's a great place to take the family.' A lot of family reunions are held at Shades Beach Park and they come back every year!"



That money went not only toward building the playground but also toward installing ADA accessibility measures and safety.

The playground is not the only project funded by DCNR in Shades Beach Park, though. In 2000, DCNR funded \$40,000 for the building of pavilion facilities. The department also granted \$700,000 worth of funding for \$2.5 million boat launch facilities, better connecting the park's resources with Lake Erie in 2005. The park also includes other pavilions, a restored beach area and open spaces.

"It's a popular place for everything from family reunions to graduation parties," said Mark Corey, Harborcreek Township Engineer.

"It's one of those few places along the Lake Erie shoreline that has convenient public access. It's secluded by the topography and wooded surroundings. But, it's still not a far drive away from amenities."



Amount of Growing Greener funding awarded, year and matching sources:

- 2000: \$40,000 Key
- 2002: \$25,000 Growing Greener
- 2005: \$700,000 Key
- 2015: \$67,000 Key