



VINELAND News

WILLOW OAK TRAILS DEDICATED TO MARY TREAT



Vineland's rich history is gaining a new chapter with the dedication of the Willow Oak Natural Area trail system to Mary Treat, a pioneering ecologist and one of Vineland's most influential historical residents. The Vineland Environmental Commission made the recommendation to City Council following requests from both the Vineland Historical Society and Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River. A Council resolution was passed

in November, and a special dedication ceremony is being planned for the Spring of 2026.

Her connection to Vineland dates back to the late 19th century when she conducted groundbreaking botanical research in our community. Her work not only advanced local understanding of the natural world but also contributed to broader scientific discoveries, making her a source of pride for residents and historians alike.

Mary's legacy also extends far beyond Vineland. She is renowned for her correspondence with Charles Darwin, sharing insights and findings that influenced the course of evolutionary biology. She discovered several new plant and insect species and authored multiple scientific books. Her achievements have been immortalized in literature with novelist Barbara Kingsolver highlighting Treat's life and work in her acclaimed novel "Unsheltered."

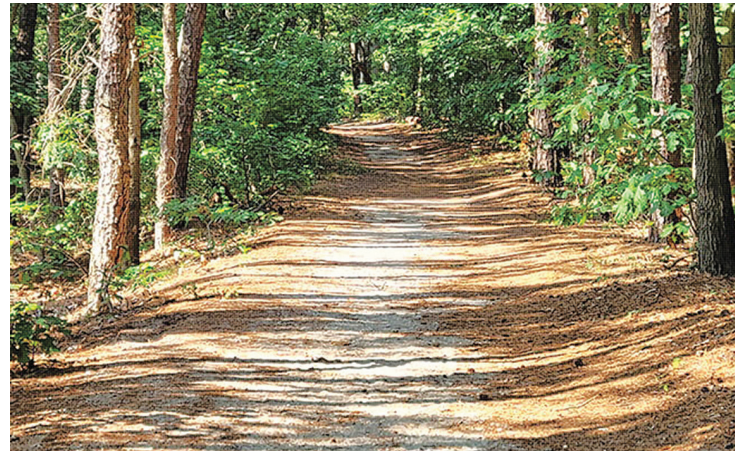
"Mary Treat's contributions to science and Vineland are a testament to the power of curiosity and perseverance," Mayor Fanucci said. "Dedicating the Willow Oak trail system in her honor is a meaningful way for the Vineland community to remember and celebrate her life's work."

VINELAND MUNICIPAL CALENDAR

The Vineland Municipal Calendar provides a central location to find activities happening in the city. Stay up-to-date on meeting dates for the City Council or various municipal boards, activities at the Convention Center, city sponsored events, children's activities, volunteer opportunities, and more. Information is updated often as new events are added, so make sure to check back regularly for the most current information. Links to the calendar can be found on the Home Page of the City website www.vinelandcity.org, and from the blue link boxes located on the right-hand side of every page. The calendar is also accessible from the [myVineland](#) mobile app.



VINELAND CONTINUES TO RECEIVE WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION



Family Destinations highlighted Vineland's park system and nature trails including Anthony Campanella, Sr. Park and the Willow Oak Natural Area.

Positive news about how Vineland is viewed by independent observers continues to roll in. Over the past year, *U.S. News and World Report* has named Vineland "One of the best places to live in New Jersey," while *Travel & Leisure Magazine* has included the city among their "Top Retirement Destinations in the Northeast," *Journo Research* recognized Vineland as "Having one of the lowest costs of living in the state," and *Business Facilities Magazine* identified the city as an important logistics hub for food distribution.

Now, in two recent special feature stories, the *Family Destinations Guide* called Vineland "69 square miles of affordability where regular people can live regular lives." Likewise, *Islands.com* explained why Vineland is "ideal for those planning their retirement years due to its small-town coziness, low cost of living, and metropolitan conveniences." Story editors agreed that the community should take great pride in these achievements, which reflect the hard work and spirit of Vineland's residents and local leaders.

"As Mayor, I am committed to doing all I can to enhance the quality of life for all Vineland residents and foster an environment that welcomes new business opportunities," Mayor Fanucci said. "Over the past nine years we have had many successes which have helped to make Vineland a dynamic, affordable, and welcoming community. I want to extend my thanks to our outstanding city staff for their focus on customer service, and our dedicated marketing team for their efforts in sharing Vineland's story. Both have played a vital role in attracting positive attention and new growth to our city."



VCC HAS SUCCESSFUL OPENING WEEKEND

The Vineland Convention Center (VCC) had a hugely successful opening weekend as big crowds turned out to enjoy the popular Garden State Comic Feast. The convention presented a full weekend of comics, cosplay, collectibles, and pop-culture excitement featuring a great lineup of celebrity guests, artists, and vendors.

“The fantastic turnout for the VCC’s opening weekend met or exceeded the organizers’ expectations, which we truly appreciate,” Mayor Fanucci said. “Seeing everyone come together to celebrate creativity and pop culture in such an energetic atmosphere was a lot of fun. This event is just the start of what we anticipate will be an exciting and promising future for the Vineland Convention Center, which benefits the entire community as well.”

City officials are in discussions with a number of different groups for events in 2026. As of this writing, we can confirm that on February 1 the Jus Nice Sneaker & Trading Card Convention will be in town, and on June 6 and 7 the Best Flipping Card Show will come to Vineland. For more information about booking an event at the Convention Center, please contact Stephanie Berge at sberge@vinelandcity.org.

CITY CONTINUES INVESTING IN RECREATION SPACES



Mayor Anthony Fanucci cuts the ribbon to officially open the refurbished basketball courts at Landis Park.

A fresh wave of improvements at local parks aimed at enhancing recreation for all ages have been completed this year. From brand-new courts to updated playgrounds, these investments reflect Vineland’s ongoing commitment to community wellness and vibrant public spaces.

Among the highlights are renovated basketball courts, batting cage fencing, and softball field backstop at Landis Park; new permanent pickleball courts at Gittone Park; new playground equipment at Pagliughi Park; renovations at West Side Park; changing stations at Carl Arthur Pool; bathrooms at Fiocchi Field were remodeled; and more are planned at various locations.

These projects are just a few examples of the city’s broader initiative to upgrade facilities in neighborhoods throughout Vineland, ensuring residents have access to clean, safe, and welcoming recreational areas.

“Our parks are the heart of our community,” Mayor Fanucci said. “These ongoing upgrades show our dedication to providing high-quality spaces where residents of all ages can connect, stay active, and create lasting memories. We are proud to invest in the wellbeing of Vineland’s families now and for the future.”

ENTER THE 2025 HOLIDAY LIGHTING CONTEST



Mark and Mac Sockwell took home the top prize in the 2024 contest.

We hope all of you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving. As we now look forward to the joys of the season, you still have time to enter the 2025 David DiGiovacchino Holiday Lighting Contest. The contest is an annual opportunity for residents to show off their creative talents with beautiful holiday displays! Participants are encouraged to be original, colorful, and imaginative with their holiday decorations. We hope to see even more members of our community enter their homes and to be part of the lighting contest tour which visitors and residents alike look forward to.

To enter, simply send an email with your name, address, and a daytime phone number to vmeu@vinelandcity.org by 4:00 pm on Monday, December 15.

Judging will take place on December 16 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, and winners will be contacted on December 17 before being announced. Special thanks to our friends at Corning for sponsoring the contest again this year. The top five winners will receive prizes ranging from \$500 for first place to \$100 for fifth place. The contest is open to Vineland residents only.