

## **James Pond Preserve 2024**

### **Overall Summary**

Summer property attending began at James Pond Preserve on June 3, 2024. In the 103 days of attending, summer rangers working at the trailhead recorded a total of 4,736 visitors. Per the terms of the James Pond Preserve management plan, two rangers were stationed on the Preserve, one in the lot and one on the beach.

This summer's opening of James Pond Preserve is significant for many reasons. First, it provides public access to Lambert's Cove Beach. Before this summer, access to Lambert's Cove Beach was limited to those with town stickers or passes for visitors coming to the beach between 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Additionally, James Pond Preserve offers a universal access trail to a viewing platform overlooking James Pond with views of the Vineyard Sound and pond access for non-motorized boating.

August was the busiest month with an average of 55 visitors per day, followed by July with an average of 49 daily visitors, September with an average of 41 daily visitors, and June with an average of 34 daily visitors. Importantly, the maximum of 110 total people permitted on the Preserve at any given time was never reached. The highest number of daily visitors was 81 on August 22, 2024.

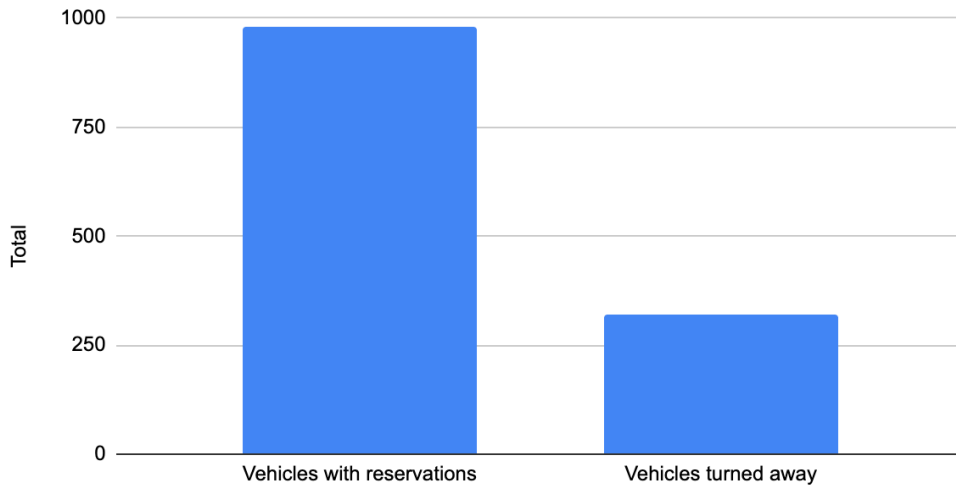
The process of asking visitors in vehicles to reserve online a parking space before parking took some getting used to. To mitigate any confusion how to obtain reservations, the land bank website gave step-by-step directions for how and when vehicle reservations could be made. In addition, posted a large sandwich board sign with "Parking by Reservation Only" written on it at the entrance of the James Pond Preserve trailhead.

Along with other land bank beaches, wind turbine debris washed up on James Pond Preserve on August 14, 2024.

### **Data Summary**

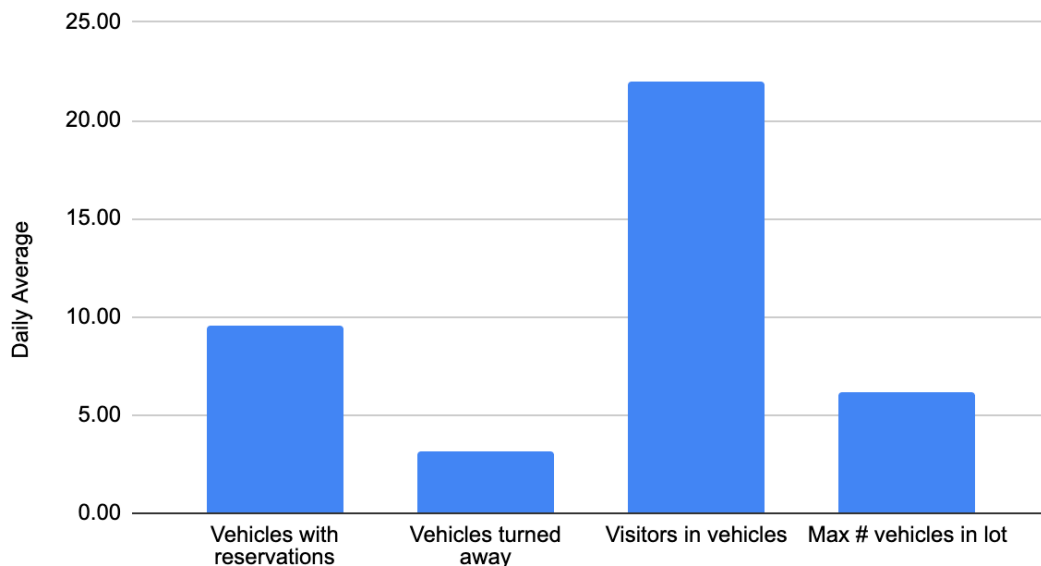
Unlike other attended land bank properties, a reservation system was in effect for trailhead parking between June 3- September 15. Using an online reservation system ensured orderly use of the preserve by visitors and was accessible at no charge. In addition to the reservation system, visitor capacity was monitored by lot and rangers. Summer rangers were provided with two-way radios to communicate about visitor counts and other relevant information. In total, 982 vehicles with reservations were parked at James Pond Preserve lot and 321 vehicles were turned away because they did not have a reservation (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Total Vehicles With Reservations vs. Vehicles Turned Away**



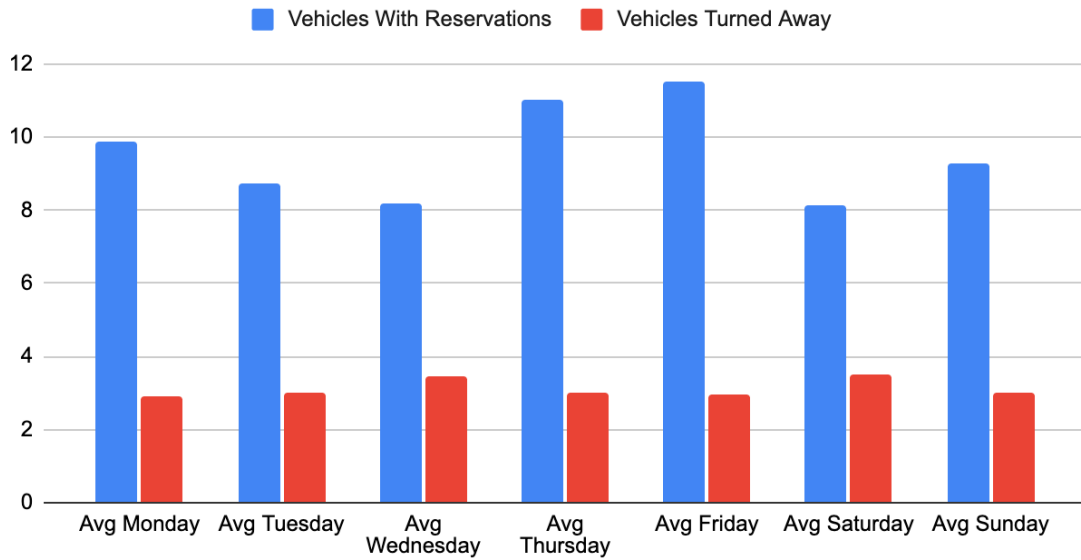
Throughout the summer, public familiarity with the reservation system became more consistent and the rangers in the trailhead saw a decline in the daily average number of vehicles turned away (those without reservations) between June and July. In June 2024, an average of 4.5 cars were turned away daily compared to an average of 2.8 vehicles turned away daily in July. In August, an average of 3 vehicles were turned away each day, while September had the lowest daily average of the summer with 1.5 vehicles turned away. On average, there were 2-3 visitors in every vehicle with a reservation parked at James Pond Preserve each day (Figure 2A).

**Figure 2A: Average Daily Parking Data**



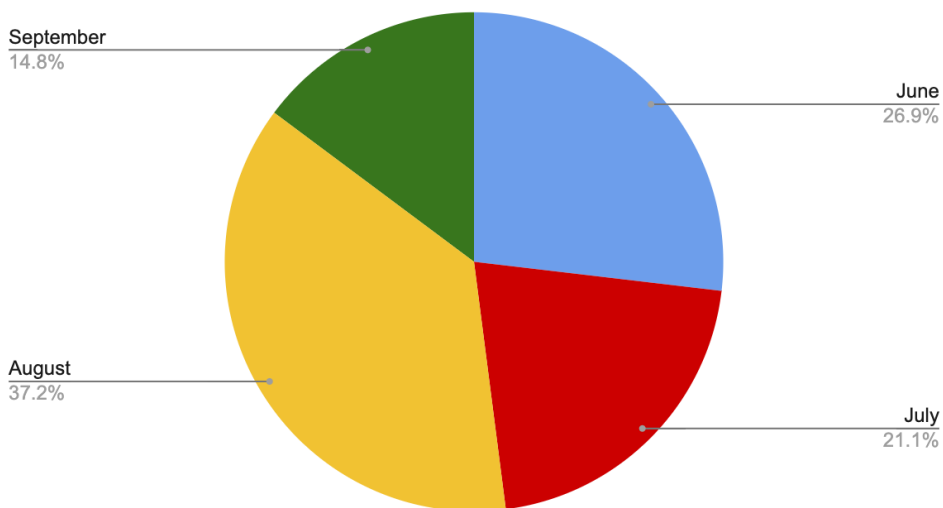
Notably, Wednesdays and Saturdays had the highest average number of vehicles turned away during the week (Figure 2B), both with an average of 3.5 vehicles turned away. Monday, Thursday, and Friday showed the highest average number of vehicles with reservations parking at the Preserve.

**Figure 2B: Vehicles With Reservations and Vehicles Turned Away**



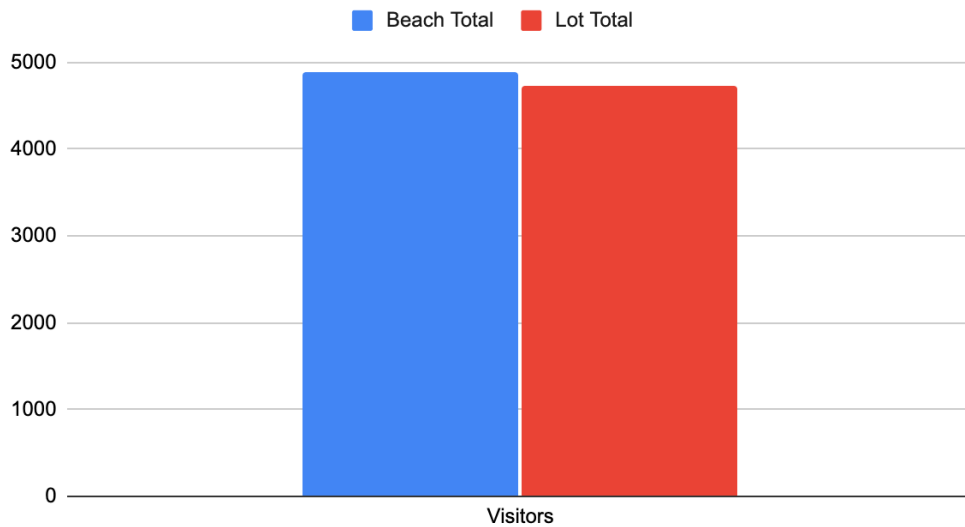
Of the total 2,256 walk-on visitors who used the trailhead entrance to James Pond Preserve, nearly 40% walked on in the month of August (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Total Walk-On Visitors**



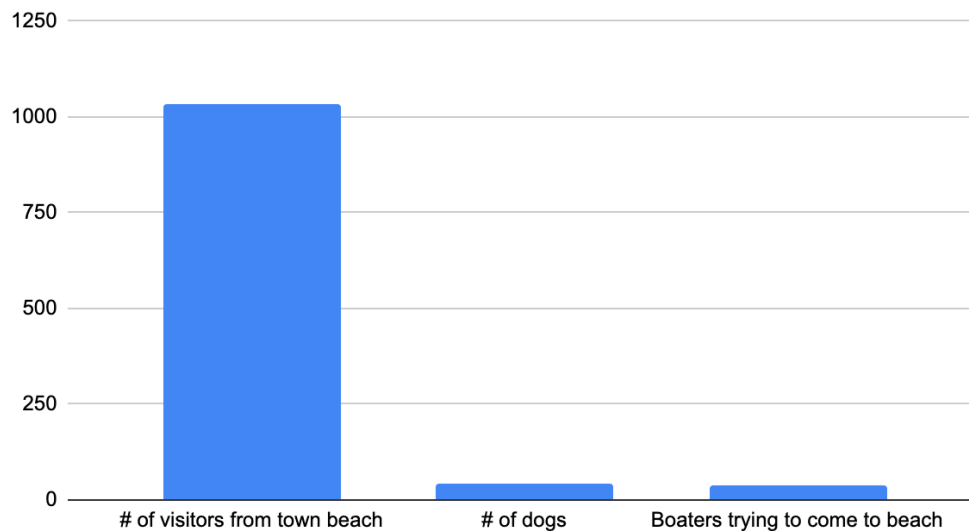
The ranger stationed on the beach collected data on the number of visitors entering the beach via the land bank trail, via the town beach, via the beach (swim-ons), plus the number of dogs. There is a slight discrepancy in the total number of visitors recorded on the beach data sheets compared to the lot data sheets (Figure 4A). The beach rangers recorded a total of 4,894 visitors while the trailhead rangers recorded a total of 4,736 visitors.

**Figure 4A: Total Visitors**



The total beach data (Figure 4B) shows the total number of visitors from the town beach was 1,034, the total number of dogs (including those turned away) was 44, and the total number of boaters trying to come to the beach (swim-ons) was 38.

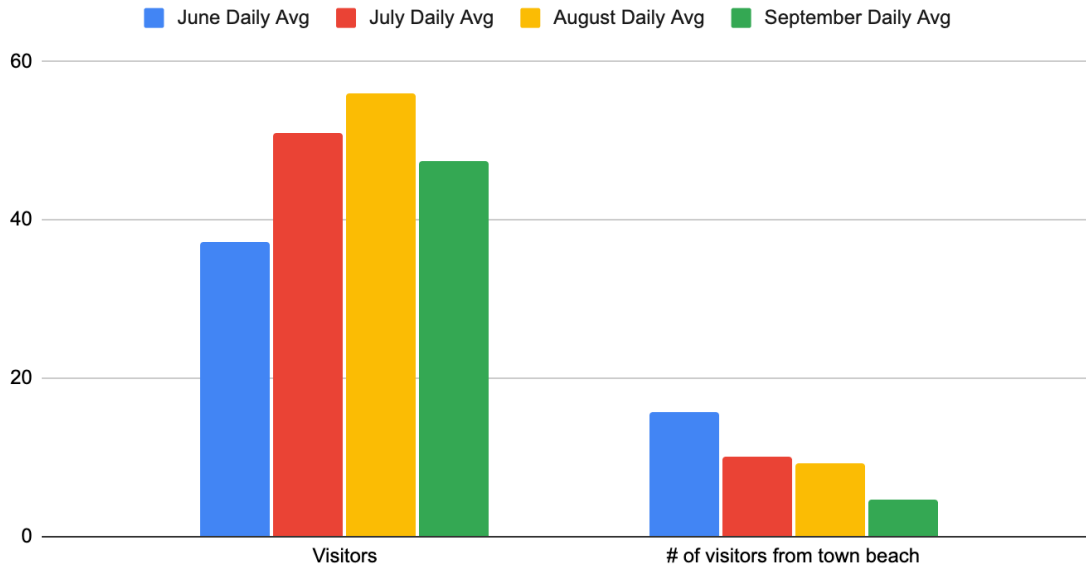
**Figure 4B: Total Beach Data**



Importantly, as the summer progressed, the number of visitors from the town beach decreased (Figure 5). Likely attributable to consistent enforcement of property rules, clear

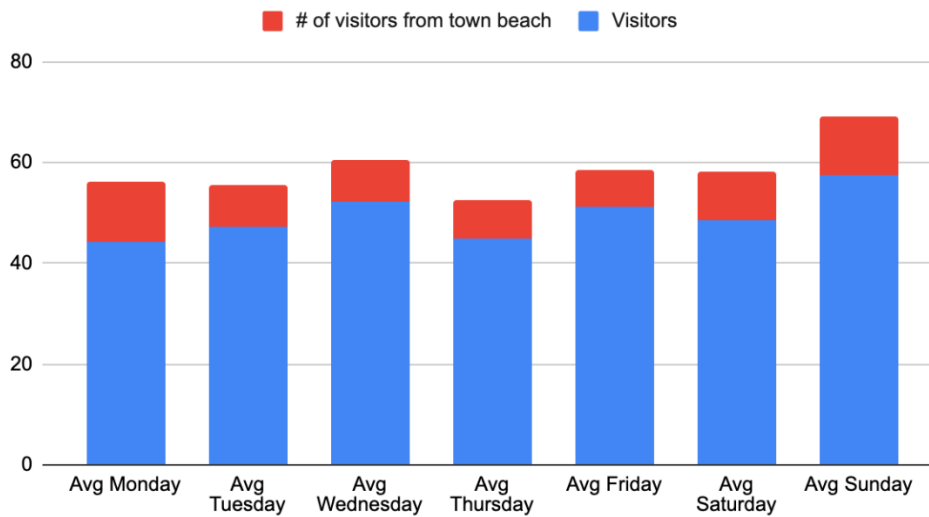
signage, installation of post-and-rope fencing, and returning visitors who became familiar with the expectations of orderly use of the property, the number of visitors from the town beach steadily declined even as the average number of visitors rose.

**Figure 5: Average Number of Daily Visitors From Land Bank Trailhead vs. Average Number of Daily Visitors From Town Beach**



Sundays and Wednesdays had the highest average number of visitors on the beach per day (Figure 6). Mondays, Sundays, and Wednesdays had the highest average number of visitors from the town beach crossing over to use the land bank beach.

**Figure 6: Average Number of Visitors by Day of the Week**



## **Actions to be Taken in Coming Season**

Since this summer marked the opening of James Pond Preserve and the institution of the parking space reservation system, the summer ranger manager collected data on several key aspects of public use of the property: user-friendly technology (Omnify Reservation System, iPad in trailhead shed for rangers) monitoring of visitors crossing property lines (town beach and swim-on visitors from boats), and public interface. The following recommendations include feedback from visitors, input from summer rangers, and the experience of land bank staff.

### **1. User-friendly Technology**

To ensure the orderly use of the property by the public and address the social and ecological constraints outlined in the James Pond Preserve management plan, the integration of technology was decidedly necessary. The reservation scheduling software was provided by Omnify. It was compatible for use on hand-held devices (cell phones and tablets) and computers. The link to Omnify's online reservation system was embedded in the James Pond Preserve property webpage. Reservations were rolled out 7 days in advance and became bookable at 10 a.m. After clicking on the link, prospective visitors would look for an available reservation (numbered 1-12, including a Universal Access spot) by date, enter information about their vehicle, and provide contact information before being able to confirm their reservation. Notably, once a visitor booked a reservation, their information would be attached to their email so the process of booking subsequent reservations was much faster. However, that meant visitors who were familiar with the Omnify scheduling process were able to secure reservations faster and with greater ease than new users. For future seasons, using software that allows for a reservation spot to be selected by only one user at a time would be beneficial. For example, if a user enters the online scheduling system at 10 a.m., selects an available date within the 7-day window, clicks on parking spot #4, and begins to enter their information; parking spot #4 should not appear available to other users at that date and time until the original user has completed their reservation process. Many booking websites will "hold" a spot for 5-10 minutes to allow for booking completion. There were multiple times throughout the summer that prospective visitors would call the land bank office to say they were in the process of making their reservation, but never received a confirmation email and when they went back to check the availability of parking spots on their desired date, the reservation was already filled.

### **2. Visitors from Crossing Property Lines**

Throughout the summer, there were a total of 1,034 visitors who came to the land bank beach via the town beach or swam to shore from boats. Visitors are permitted to walk the beach but are expected to enter through the land bank trailhead if they plan to utilize the land bank beach, i.e., set down their things and non-transiently be on land bank beach. Clear signage, installing wooden post-and-rope fencing, and reinforcement of property guidelines by summer rangers helped to consistently decrease the number of visitors crossing property lines throughout the summer. At times, summer rangers found some visitors who crossed property lines were

resistant to complying with the property rules. Providing a script of how to navigate these interactions may be useful.

### 3. Public Interface

Feedback from the public on the operation of James Pond Preserve was positive overall. In the event of a challenging interaction, providing adequate support and ensuring all land bank staff are on the same page about protocols is necessary. Some members of the public voiced suggestions about opening up last-minute vehicle reservation spots for no-shows.

### **Staff Recommends**

## Appendix

Table 1: 2024 Daily Averages and Totals

2024	Daily Average:	Total:
Vehicles with reservations	9.53	982
Vehicles turned away	3.12	321
Visitors in vehicles	22.02	2268
Walk-on visitors	21.90	2256
Visitors on bicycles/mopeds	10.37	405
Total number of visitors	45.98	4736
Max # vehicles in lot	6.12	630
Time lot full (min)	0.00	0
# of non-motorized boats	0.02	2

Table 2: June Daily Averages and Totals

June 2024	Daily Avg	Total
Total vehicles	10.8	302
Vehicles turned away	4.5	125
Visitors in vehicles	16.9	474
Walk-on visitors	20.2	606
Visitors on bicycles/mopeds	2.1	58
Total number of visitors	33.8	945
Max # vehicles in lot	5.1	144
Time lot full (minutes)	0.0	0
# of non-motorized boats	0.0	0



Table 3: July Daily Averages and Totals

July 2024	Daily Avg	Total
Total vehicles	9.7	292.0
Vehicles turned away	2.8	84.0
Visitors in vehicles	28.8	863.0
Walk-on visitors	15.9	476.0
Visitors on bicycles/mopeds	4.1	122.0
Total number of visitors	48.7	1461.0
Max # vehicles in lot	7.0	210.0
Time lot full (minutes)	0.0	0.0
# of non-motorized boats	0.1	2.0

Table 4: August Daily Averages and Totals

August 2024	Daily Avg	Total
Total vehicles	8.9	268
Vehicles turned away	3.0	89
Visitors in vehicles	23.4	703
Walk-on visitors	28.0	840
Visitors on bicycles/mopeds	5.9	177
Total number of visitors	55.5	1720
Max # vehicles in lot	6.3	189
Time lot full (minutes)	0.0	0
# of non-motorized boats	0.0	0

**Table 5: September Daily Averages and Totals**

September 2024	Daily Avg	Total
Total vehicles	8.0	120.0
Vehicles turned away	1.5	23.0
Visitors in vehicles	15.2	228.0
Walk-on visitors	22.3	334.0
Visitors on bicycles/mopeds	3.2	48.0
Total number of visitors	40.7	610.0
Max # vehicles in lot	5.8	87.0
Time lot full (minutes)	0.0	0.0
# of non-motorized boats	0.0	0.0

**Table 6: Total Number of Vehicles With Reservations and Vehicles Turned Away Without Reservations By Day of the Week**

Total	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vehicles With Reservations	138	131	123	165	173	114	138
Vehicles Turned Away	41	45	52	45	44	49	45

**Table 7: Average Beach Use by Day of the Week**

Daily Averages	Avg Monday	Avg Tuesday	Avg Wednesday	Avg Thursday	Avg Friday	Avg Saturday	Avg Sunday
Visitors	44.14	47.27	52.07	45.08	51.27	48.5	57.43
# of visitors from town beach	12	8.13	8.5	7.46	7.33	9.64	11.64
# of dogs	0.2	0.67	1.07	0.15	0.2	0.36	0.33
Boaters trying to come to beach	0.27	0	0	1.08	0.27	0.36	0.33