Trail Information:

1. Start Trail at Lewes Public Beach - Parking is metered during the peak summer tourist season. Traveling bicyclists, during the fall, winter, and early spring, experience a significant drop in traffic over the Rehoboth Canal Bridge and take a right on Front Street. 

Continue your right you will see the 1812 Memorial Park - This was a defense battery during the War of 1812 and the site is marked by a granite monument placed by the National Society, U.S. Daughters of 1812. It was restored by The Lewes Historical Society and dedicated in 1981. There are many interesting tombstones in the churchyard, including those of two Delaware governors, Colonel David Hall and Ebe W. Tunnell. Continue east on Second Street to the:  

2. Cannonball House - Erected prior to 1797, the building is sheathed with cypress shingles and was the residence of John Jesse Covington and his family. It is a well-preserved example of the coastal Cape Henlopen type of dwelling because it was struck by a cannonball in the War of 1812. The house has been restored by The Lewes Historical Society and dedicated in 1981. There are many interesting tombstones in the churchyard, including those of two Delaware governors, Colonel David Hall and Ebe W. Tunnell. Continue east on Second Street to the:  

3. On your right you will see a lush green field of the school. Turn left onto School Lane, then cross Savannah Road on University Road, the University of Delaware. School Lane, then cross Savannah Road. Continue west on Pilottown Road.  

4. Turn left onto University Road, the University of Delaware. College of Marine studies complex will be on your right. Continue on University Road, turn right on New Road and then left on Forester Lane. 

5. The Old Courthouse and the Old Courthouse Pond - In 1681, the government erected a fort at the mouth of the Mullica River at Lewes. It was the site of the first Courthouse in Delaware and the site is maintained by the Delaware Historical Society. The Old Courthouse Pond is a good spot to watch for ducks and other waterfowl. Continue north on Kings Highway to the:  

6. The Lewes Historical Society Complex on Ship Carpenter Street, cross and follow Second Street east to:  

7. Ryes House - This dignified shingled house is believed to be the oldest house in the state. It is known to have been standing on its present site in 1685 and has recently been evaluated to have been dated at 1650 through the analysis of borings taken from the wood used in the structure. Once a colonial inn, this is the house to which Ryes Holt came in 1721 when he arrived at "Port Lewes." Holt (1696-1763) served as the Naval Officer of the Port and was also many times High Sheriff of Sussex County. With other appointments and offices to his credit, he was made the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the Three Lower Counties on the Delaware in 1745 and served in this capacity until his death. Commodore Jacob Jones also lived in the house. Following the death of his mother, his father married a daughter of Ryes Holt. Commodore Jones won acclaim when his ship Wasp captured the more heavily armed British warship Frolic during the war of 1812. Continue east on Second Street to the:  

8. Zwaanendael Museum - Built in 1952, this adaptation of the old Zwaanendael Museum is the first house opened for permanent and changing displays and exhibits, including a timeline of Lewes history, and the material culture of the surrounding area. Commodore Jacob Jones also lived in the house. Following the death of his mother, his father married a daughter of Ryes Holt. Commodore Jones won acclaim when his ship Wasp captured the more heavily armed British warship Frolic during the war of 1812. Continue east on Second Street to the:  

9. SAINT PETER’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - The present building was consecrated in 1858 and restored to its original beauty in 1948. It was preceded by prior structures that had been burned down by the Indians. The churchyard is an especially beautiful spot for a stroll. 

10. Cannonball House - Erected prior to 1797, the building is sheathed with cypress shingles and was the residence of John Jesse Covington and his family. It is a well-preserved example of the coastal Cape Henlopen type of dwelling because it was struck by a cannonball in the War of 1812. The house has been restored by The Lewes Historical Society and dedicated in 1981. There are many interesting tombstones in the churchyard, including those of two Delaware governors, Colonel David Hall and Ebe W. Tunnell. Continue east on Second Street to the:  

11. The Lewes Presbyterian Church was founded in 1732 and is one of the oldest churches in Delaware. It is located on University Road, the University of Delaware.  

12. Life-Saving Station - This station, dating back to the late eighteenth century, boasts doors, chair rail, window and door trim, mantle and paneling that are all original and intact. It contains antique lifesaving equipment and a pictorial collage of rescues at sea. Continue west on Front Street until it turns into Piltowntown Road.  

13. The Lewes Chamber of Commerce information center is located in the house. Continue east on Second Street to the:  

14. The Old Courthouse - In 1681, the government erected a fort at the mouth of the Mullica River at Lewes. It was the site of the first Courthouse in Delaware and the site is maintained by the Delaware Historical Society. The Old Courthouse Pond is a good spot to watch for ducks and other waterfowl. Continue north on Kings Highway to the:  

15. RABBIT’S FERRY HOUSE - Built in Thompsonville, this charming gambrel-roofed house was moved from the country at Cool Spring in 1880 as part of the move that numbered 1791, the oldest house in the first U.S. settlement on Delaware soil. Just when it was built and by whom is uncertain. The tract at Cool Spring was owned in 1659 by Thomas Fisher, a wealthy merchant, and was later purchased by Joshua who became famous for charting the Delaware Bay. It was sold in 1736 to Rev. James Martin, a minister of Cool Spring, Indian River, and Lewes Presbyterian churches. It stayed in the Martin family for over two hundred years. The Lewes Chamber of Commerce information center is located in the house. Continue east on Second Street to the:  

16. Delaware Historical Society Complex - Steps 14 - 17 are located within the complex.  

17. Thompson Country Store - Built in Thompsonville, Delaware, about 1800, this store was operated continuously by the Thompson family. The house to Colonel Samuel Bower Davis who is credited with founding the Delaware Historical Society by Harvey Thompson. It was moved, repaired and opened by the Society in 1963. The store has many of its original appointments and has remained essentially the same as when it was served its original purpose on a full-time basis. The Ellogg House (behind the Country Store) contains a gift shop with souvenirs and hand-crafted, country-type items, which are sold to benefit The Lewes Historical Society. Trail Maps can be purchased at the store.  

18. THE DOCTOR’S OFFICE - This handsome Greek Revival structure was built about 1850 by Dr. David Hall on Savanah Road across from Second Street. Dr. Hall practiced medicine until just before 1900 when he sold the building to Dr. W Orr, Jr., who moved it to the Northeast side of Second Street and used it until 1904. The next occupant was Joseph Shek who operated his tailor shop there. In 1945 it became Clifton’s Newstand and survived the Lewes Fire of 1971. The Clifton’s donated the building to The Lewes Historical Society, which maintains it and showing a doctor’s office at the turn of the century. Exit the complex on Ship Carpenter Street, cross and follow Second Street east to:  

19. Lewes Public Beach - Parking is metered during the peak summer tourist season. Traveling bicyclists, during the fall, winter, and early spring, experience a significant drop in traffic over the Rehoboth Canal Bridge and take a right on Front Street. 

Continue your right you will see the 1812 Memorial Park - This was a defense battery during the War of 1812 and the site is marked by a granite monument placed by the National Society, U.S. Daughters of 1812. It was restored by The Lewes Historical Society and dedicated in 1981. There are many interesting tombstones in the churchyard, including those of two Delaware governors, Colonel David Hall and Ebe W. Tunnell. Continue east on Second Street to the:  

20. Saint Peter’s Episcopal Church - The present building was consecrated in 1858 and restored to its original beauty in 1948. It was preceded by prior structures that had been burned down by the Indians. The churchyard is an especially beautiful spot for a stroll.  

21. Early Plain House - This small building, originally located on the north back of the property (opposite the tide) and served its original purpose on a full-time basis. The Ellogg House (behind the Country Store) contains a gift shop with souvenirs and hand-crafted, country-type items, which are sold to benefit The Lewes Historical Society. Trail Maps can be purchased at the store.
The War of 1812 was fought between the United States and Great Britain from 1812 until 1815. The war had several causes. During the late 1700s and the early 1800s, England was at war with France. England began to face a shortage of skilled sailors. To acquire more men for its navy, Great Britain began to stop American and other ships and impress (take by force) sailors from them. England also tried to prevent the United States from trading with the French. Finally, English soldiers continued to occupy territory belonging to the United States, despite Great Britain's promise to remove those soldiers in the Treaty of Paris (1783) at the end of the American Revolution. Most of the soldiers were located along the Great Lakes, providing Indians, like the Shawnee leader Tecumseh, with support in their struggle against American settlers. In 1812, President James Madison asked the United States Congress to declare war.