

WiST Heat Watch 2023



The University of Delaware and DNREC are measuring extreme heat this summer, and you can help!

The Urban Heat Island Effect

Have you ever stepped on asphalt barefoot on a hot summer day? Concrete, asphalt, and brick in buildings and roads absorb and retain heat from the sun. Trees and green spaces provide shade to help keep things cool. Urban areas, with lots of roads and buildings and few trees and green spaces, are hotter than other areas during the day, and don't cool down as well at night. This extra heat can worsen stress and health issues, especially for young children, the elderly, and people with chronic illnesses like asthma and heart disease. It is also dangerous to people who work outdoors for long periods of time, or don't have access to cooling at home.

Measuring Heat

The University of Delaware, DNREC, DHSS, area hospitals and community groups have received a grant to map extreme heat in Wilmington and surrounding towns (highlighted orange on the map). Volunteers, in driver-navigator pairs, will drive with car-mounted temperature sensors along specific routes in the morning, midday, and evening over the course of one campaign day, to capture a detailed "snapshot" of how our region experiences heat on summer days.

Why do we need the data?

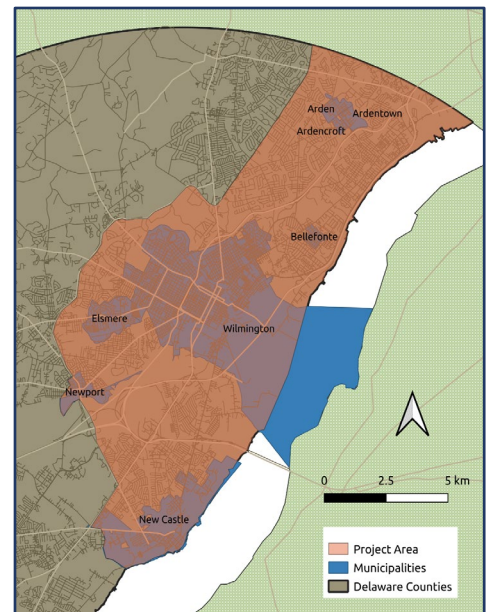
A detailed map of neighborhood temperatures will help community groups and policy makers to direct programs and funding to areas in urgent need of cooling. Knowing exactly where the heat is worst will make better-informed decisions such as where to plant trees or use white roofs or take other measures to assist residents during heat extremes.

How can you help?

We provide the sensor, training and setup, but we need drivers and navigators from the community willing to help us collect the data. Anyone with access to a car can be a driver or navigator. We will also need volunteers to help support the teams. You can learn more or sign up on [our campaign website](https://www.climatechangehub.org/our-campaign-website) (sites.udel.edu/climatechangehub/events/wist-heat-watch-2023).

The fine print

For the past five years, the National Integrated Heat Health Information System (NIHHIS) has provided funding to cities across the US to help map and study urban heat. Many of our Mid-Atlantic neighbors – including Baltimore, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Brooklyn – have already taken advantage of this opportunity. The 2023 Wilmington area heat campaign will be held in the first two weeks of July - dates are being finalized now! If you are interested in learning more about this project, or in being a volunteer, please fill out [this online form](#) (also on our website) or email ClimateChangeHub@udel.edu. Dr. Veron from the Climate Change Hub will contact you.



Above: WiST project area. Below: A temperature sensor rolls up in the window.

