

[From Winter 1999]

Mountains to Sea

Is your family pondering where to spend the next vacation? Somebody wants to go to the mountains, while the rest of you prefer to visit the beach. You can do both at once, at the same location. Where? Right here, on the Delmarva Peninsula. Yes, the terrain is flat with hardly a hill in sight. However, when you stroll along the beach you are walking on tiny grains of mighty mountains that have weathered away and washed ashore.

These worn and ragged mountains still exist today. You may have hiked a winding trail to a craggy peak in the Blue Ridge Mountains and looked towards the Piedmont and distant coast. According to geologists, this mountain range is older than the Rocky Mountains and might have been taller. Wind and rain constantly erode summits and hillsides. Small pieces of quartz find their way into streams. Eventually, they become grains of sand deposited in the mouths of rivers. Offshore currents sweep away sand particles to the coast. As long as there are mountains, rocks and erosion, beaches will continue to form, change and replenish themselves, one grain at a time.

Whenever you sink your toes into a beach, remember how the sand got there. Today's quartz particles were solid rock long ago, far away from the sea. Enjoy the beach and the mountains together, at the same time and place. You really can!

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