

# Upgrades Coming To Busch Gardens And Water Country USA Ahead Of New Season

By [Brandy Centolanza](#), Peninsula Chronicle

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*Photo courtesy of Busch Gardens Williamsburg's Facebook page.*

JAMES CITY-As Busch Gardens Williamsburg and Water Country USA prepare for the upcoming summer tourist season, park officials are working behind the scenes on upgrades and improvements to both parks.

Kevin Lembke, president of both parks, outlined his plans in an email to members on February 8.

“We know there are opportunities to improve parts of our overall guest experience, especially when it comes to wait times and food and beverage availability,” Lembke stated in his letter. “Staffing challenges impacted our operation at times during the [last] year and improving that issue is one of our top priorities. We continue to evaluate our in-park offerings to better suit your needs and we remain focused on delivering the best experience possible during your visits.”

Lembke said that one of the goals in 2023 is to provide an improved dining experience at Busch Gardens. Enhancements to the park’s food and beverage offerings have already begun with renovations ongoing at the park’s popular candy shop, M. Sweets Confectionary, in the England section.

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“We look forward to sharing more on other park renovations in the coming months,” Lembke said.

Busch Gardens Williamsburg is also busy gearing up for the opening of its tenth roller coaster, DarKoaster, which is slated to open later this year.

Guests can also expect upgrades to Water Country USA when it reopens for the new season later this spring.

“We are excited to share that our park entrance is currently undergoing a renovation, as well as the fan-favorite Surfer’s Bay wave pool,” Lembke said. “Virginia’s largest wave pool will offer new shade structures and lounge furniture to make your visits more comfortable than ever before.”

Water Country USA will also open a new attraction later this year, Riptide Race.

Riptide Race is described as an “adrenaline-pumping water slide [that] pits teams against each other as riders take their mark atop a 54-foot tower before racing through 520 feet of slide, with low walls to keep an eye on the competition. It’s a dash to the splash in this side-by-side race through high-speed tunnels and twists on a two-person raft.”

For more information about Busch Gardens or Water Country USA, visit its [website](#).