Once an opulent symbol of du Pont wealth, time has been unkind to the indoor tennis center at Bellevue State Park. The giant green building built in the 1930s by William du Pont Jr. once housed basketball, badminton courts, a bowling alley, a swimming pool and a large indoor clay tennis court. But the once vibrant recreation center is now home to overgrown weeds, crumbling walls and lurking vultures. Thick vines now cover the red clay court floors and the swimming pool, which ironically had been converted to a greenhouse when the property was purchased by the state in the 1970s. The building has decayed so much since it was shuttered in the 1990s, that it now has to come down.

“It’s too much of a hazard,” Michael Wilson, a Bellevue State Park naturalist, said. “It was originally just a poor skylight design that put the building at risk,” Wilson said. Snow piled up on the skylight and water leaked through it. The building also has suffered vandalism and is laced with asbestos. Of late, its condition has attracted park visitors as sort of a terrarium exhibit.

“We take our kids over there and look through the windows sometimes, and we see fox and raccoons and turkey vultures that fledge there every spring,” Wilson said. “It’s really become a little habitat, a little ecosystem all by itself.”

**FLORA, FAUNA RULE THE COURTS**

PHOTOS AND STORY BY KYLE GRANTHAM

The indoor tennis center has attracted visitors to Bellevue State Park as a sort of terrarium exhibit.

A lawnmower sits completely overgrown in the indoor clay tennis courts of William du Pont Jr.'s former estate that is now Bellevue State Park.

Turkey vultures rest in the broken skylights of the indoor tennis center. Wildlife and greenery have taken over the building.