SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

OF

WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK

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The crossing of the Delaware on December 26, 1776 was, according to most historians, the begiming of a series of events that led to the psychological turning point of the American Revolution. Washington and his troops had crossed the Delaware on that famous Christmas evening and they were to cross it again several times. The crossing of over

The crossing of over 2500 men and equipment could be considered an achievement in itself, moreso since other attempts made by seperate contingeants down stream failed. The fact is that that the Crossing of the Delaware on Christmas night 1776 led to the defeat of the Hessian troops at Trenton, without it this successful operation, the revolution might well have become a lost cause to the continentals The Battles during the next 10 days following the Crossing of the Delaware are significant to our American history and the further development of this country. The two Battles of P ~~[illegible]~~ Trenton and the one at Princeton also ~~brought the~~ helped to bring the cause of this revolution into the attention of world leaders.

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A visit .....

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK

The crossing of the Delaware on December 26, 1776 was, according to most historians, the beginning of a series of events that led to the psychological turning point of the American Revolution. Washington and his troops had crossed the Delaware before that famous Christmas evening and they were to cross it again several times during the war. The crossing of over 2500 men and equipment could be considered an achievement in itself, but the fact is that this crossing led to the surprise and the defeat of the Hessian troops that had demoralized the American soldiers in all previous battles.

The ten days which followed the Crossing are significant to our history and to the development of other nations as well. If not for the victories during this period, the British and Hessian armies would have decimated the Continentals by January of 1777. As it was the successes of the battles after the Crossing, the two Battles of Trenton and one at Princeton, brought the cause of the young nation to the attention of world leaders.

For this reason Visitors come to the Park seeking interpretation of the historic events associated with the Crossing. A visit to this landmark should be a complete experience culminating in a great awareness of what the founders intended this republic to be. The method of interpreting these historic events should incorporate the full range of reasons tangible and intangible.

Visitors should be helped to see the site as it might have been, to examine artifacts and to experience some of the events as well. The former can be created through reconstruction and preservation; the latter requires reenactment of this episode of American History. Specific plans for interpretation are included in a latter part of this report.

The educational value of this project is unquestionable and it should find wide acclaim and all-out support, particularly with the National Bicentennial approaching. Money spent on such a project will pay off not only to commemorate the events but to help the American public to fully understand the hardships of the early settlers and what they did to establish government for and by the people. The Park program will further aid in showing the role the residents of New Jersey played in the revolution - by exploring some of the reasons Jerseyites reacted the way they did.

Such an investment will pay financially both for the Park and for the State's tourist industry. The proposed development of the Park will require the employment of additional workers at all stages of operations.

HISTORIC AREA AND PARK RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The planning of a park area where such historic interpretation and recreational facilities will exist simultaneously shall provide that in the case of Washington Crossing Park, the historic area in existance will be treated as such and not be cluttered with recreational facilities. It seems to be desireable and possible to separate the uses. Where structures exist such as the traffic arteries along the River area, a compromise will have to be sought that will be practical and will compensate for some of the disturbing factors such as the highway, canal and railroad.

The separation of the Delaware shore historical area from the recreational part of the Park can also warrant a separate operation for the collecting of fees which would control accessibility. In order to control use, and to prevent abuse of the area, a central check point will become necessary, no matter what type of charge policy is established. Since visitation to the historic area will be emphasized and will undoubtedly increase, it seems desirable to control this entire area separately while providing access to this area from the recreational areas in the Park, Traffic exclusively for the recreational areas should be separated from the historic area to avoid traffic congestion. To allow direct recreation area traffic access through the historic area would be undesirable especially since the acreage here is insufficient to support all of it.

For a long range and impressive interpretation program, geared towards the expected visitation by the Bicentannial year and after, no half-way measures can be taken so that sufficient room is allotted. Educational facilities can be established along with the development of the landmark.

LAND AQUISITIONS

Certain land acquisitions are needed to formulate a complete plan. First of all it appears essential that the entire frontage on Rt. # 29 between the Washington Crossing Bridge approach on Rt. 29 and the Titusville firehouse will become State Property so that this would be included in the historical interpretation. The acquisition of the St. George Church and the Huber property will be a deciding factor in such development. To the benefit of the church the land could 1. be traded or purchased outright or 2. the State could acquire title to the land and lease it to the church until it finds another suitable site. In the meantime the land adjacent to the parking lot could be developed as planned with a visitor's center.

The Huber business could profit greatly by relocation if so desired since the increased Park visitation would naturally increase business for an eating establishment of its kind. A proposed gas station on this property and the present concrete septic tank business are visual intrusions on the historic area. A better suited acreage certainly can be found for their relocation. The Huber property can become essential in the Park development as it is pointed out below. Time to acquire this property will become essential very soon.

The present restaurant stand, the

Presuming then that the entire frontage on Rt. #29 becomes Park property, the following is proposed for the Historic Area development:

~~PARKING FACILITIES~~ Traffic control Historic area.

For reasons of interpretation all traffic shall be left out of the area with the exception of Rt. #29 which cannot be diverted. The area will be kept for foot traffic so as not to have 20th century interruptions on a section retained for leisurely enjoyment and meditation. ~~A parking lot divided with saved trees can be projected East of this walk in Historic area near the present state church property boundary line as this shown on the enclosed map.~~

~~TRAFFIC CONTROL~~

~~To leave the historic area for foot traffic only the traffic would have to approach the area from one site and stay~~ East of the designated acreage. The entrance to the Historic Area should then be at the intersection of Rt. # 29 and 546. A toll gate strudture be placed just above the present Sullivan Dr. above the Flag Barn. A new road would be constructed crossing Continental Lane on the edge of the Douglass fir plantation to a parking lot located North East of the present St. George Church parking lot.

This parking lot would give access to a new Reception Center and restaurant overlooking the present church parking lot and river area. The present church parking lot to be enhanced by landscaping while the church building itself could be used directly or at a later date for additional interpretation and display.

All the traffic would have to approach the historic area from S.E of the designated ~~xxxx~~ acreage The entrance for this part should then be at the intersection of Rt 29 and 546, where traffic improvements should be made , with one lane leading into the Park. To avoid backup on the highways, a tollgate structure would be located just above the present Flag museum on Sullivan Drive ~~xxxx~~ the opposite the nursery boundary line. A new Road , crossing continental lane and closing Greene Drive would be constructed along the edge of the Douglas fir plantation, in the direction of the present Church property ~~xxx~~, reception area. ~~Where~~ A tree lined and divided parking lot to be constructed East of the ~~present~~ property This parking lot would give access to to a new reception center and restaurant , overlooking the present Church parking area and River front. The entire "walk in area" to be ~~xxx~~ closed off by appropriate landscaping from Rt 29 and other Park entrances. Visitors would proceed through this landscaped area to visit The Mc Konkey Barn and McKonkey Ferry house display areas following Continental lane along to a point , ~~following continental lane near~~ where this foot lane would underpass ~~the~~ Route 29, a bridge over the canal and a railroad overpass, would replace the present ~~traffic~~ dangerous traffic crossing near the Washington Crossing bridge approach Due to the considerable drop in elevation, between ~~the~~ Rt 29 and the River front a bridge would be out of place and could interfere with the colonial landscape.. The railroad overpass would give access to the River meditation area, which would have to be filled at that site, sloping down to the general River shore , in order to create with the appropriate landscaping a reproduction of the former site of the landing. Along with which certain improvements to the general area and the Nelson House will be in ~~xxxx~~ keeping

The River Drive along the Delaware to ~~[illegible]~~ on traffic serve only as a walking boulevard, with appropriate overlook areas at designated points of interest.

This River area should then be fenced in at the Northern and S. boundary lines between the RailRoad and the River. leaving access to service traffic only.

Interpretation.

In order to avoid traffic on River Drive, the Park drive along the river should be discontinued and serve as a service road for Park personnel and walking boulevards which would give the public free view of the Delaware River where the crossing took place. That means the road would be closed at the northern and southern borders.

Parking in the area would be discontinued and the area landscaped appropriately but including easy access. There would be no entrance of any traffic passing from Rt. 29 to the Historic Area other than by entrance A.

INTERPRETATION

Visitors naturally come to the river area to see the landing site. It is planned that interpretation should begin at a reception center located away from the river. This center would include an information desk and sales counter, an interpretive area, and an auditorium. In general New Jersey's role in the Revolution would be explained through audio visual materials. Particular focus would be given to the events during the ten days which followed the Crossing. **The new center would also be suggested for the site of the Park's main office.**

Adjacent to the reception center would be restaurant facilities ideally located to afford an overlook of the River area. Sanitary facilities would be included nearby.

Together the reception center and the existing church would serve the public with rooms for historical conferences, lecture and meeting rooms for educators, space for special displays and exhibits such as the antique gun collection which has been ~~promised~~ ~~the Park~~, ~~and much needed offices~~. formerly

Additional interpretive facilities would be housed in the Johnson Ferry House Tavern and the Johnson Barn. In that area colonial landscaping and outdoor displays would add to interpretation.

A landscaped river area would serve mainly as a meditation area portraying the shores of the Delaware River where an exact reproduction of a ferry used during the 18th century would be docked. The Nelson House would then serve as a Ferry waiting house appropriately restored where visitors can pause to view an open air display of colonial means of river and road transportation such as the Durham Boat, rafts, ferry boat and wagons and carriages.

HISTORICAL FOLK OPERA

Meaningful and significant interpretation of historic events and sites must do more than show artifacts and places as they are today. The goal of interpretation is to show places and things as they were but also to create a mood and atmosphere which will interpret the emotional and psychological and physical aspect of an event or place. Viewing the empty chamber where Patrick Henry gave his famous fiery speech is a placid experience compared to sitting in the gallery listening, watching and perhaps participating in a recreation of this event. One means of interpreting and recapturing such events is through an historical drama or folk opera. Through such a production a community or state can preserve and commemorate the inward spirit of its people and the events of its heritage. The drama is a means of bringing historic sites, landmarks, monuments and battlefields to life. It is a way of reliving and of preserving the emotions and the motivations which engendered the historic event. Such experiences cannot be preserved on a tablet or in a book; they must be lived. That is the function of the drama.

Such an historical presentation is being planned for Washington Crossing State Park by a non-profit organization, the New Jersey Historical Drama Foundation. This interpretation of the 10 days of the Revolution which followed the Crossing will be on the scale of annual historical dramas presented in other states such as "The Lost Colony", "The Cross and the Sword" and "Horn in the West" and others.

The present Open Air Theatre operated by civic groups is inadequate for this type of production and the Foundation has requested that a new outdoor theater be built at a location which could support this type of large scale historical drama. This would include audience staging and parking facilities and additional buildings as necessary. The best location surveyed by the Foundation so far is on the former Phillips farm acquisition which would provide for ~~all production and also part of the area reserved for show grounds.~~ sufficient space

To leave the theatre area as remote as possible a new access road would be built enclosing an ~~area~~ wooded area, which can be developed into an arboretum ~~and~~ appropriately landscaped entrance and parking areas.

NATURE EDUCATION

The Nature Education Center is best maintained in the present area where additional display room for the nature museum should be added. Facilities should be built to create additional room for an instructional program with emphasis on environmental education for the public - especially for school groups so that future generations will be provided with knowledge to deal with the problems of environmental control.

The Nature Education Center is located in an ideal area of the Park for the study of all aspects of conservation. For this reason also the Phillip's Farm natural wooded area would be left in its present state as much as possible with added walking trails and with a small area to accommodate visitors the the theater.

Much of

CAMPING

The former Wolfe tract would be a good centrally located area for family camp sites. State family camping is needed in the area for transient persons who plan to visit sites in the Trenton - Lambertville - Princeton areas in addition to those in the Park. It is apparent t at tourism will grow considerably in the coming years. Therefore, about 75-100 campsites would be appropriate. The Wolfe Tract provides for several open spaces as well as wooded and scrub-type vegetation. Moreover, it would be centrally located in relation to recreational and educational facilities in the Park.

The present Cedar Bliss area owned by Mercer County Recreation Commission, should be acquired in the meantime so that this section could be used for recreation and a contact and communication center for the family camping area.

To separate group camping from family use it is advised that group camping be allowed on parts of the former Harbourt farm. From this area access to the Nature Education Center would also be available.

RECREATION AREA

The area near Church and Brickyard Roads would serve the demand for athletic facilities such as swimming, skating, running and tennis. This could also include a golf practice course and the expansion of the present pond for skating and swimming.

OPEN AIR THEATRE

The present theater at the entrance of the Wolfe Tract at Steel Run would be maintained for dramatic productions by civic organizations and would also serve as a small amphitheater for other events. Limited necessary improvements are to be made so as to protect the natural setting. Sufficient parking and access roads should also be provided.

PICNIC FACILITIES

The present picnic areas in Sullivan Grove and Chestnut Grove would be maintained but connected by roads and adequately enlarged. A number of additional picnic sites could be established near the historic area parking lot north of the present Church property in the plantations to compensate for the lost picnic areas at the River. They would also serve the visitors to the historic area.

An adequate solution should be sought to eliminate traffic on the road between picnic sites and the ballfields since this creates hazardous conditions. Installation of a new parking area serving Sullivan Grove should be considered on part of the present State Nursery land.

FIRE MUSEUM

This proposed Museum would house a collection of fire engines dating from 1750 to the early 1900's thus conforming with the historical period of the River area. Such a museum would also add to the attractions in the general river area and will bring additional visitors to this section of the Park.

The road from the Historic Area Parking lot should be extended to Huber's property. The embankment would be graded to enable fill for passage over Steel Run. The museum area would be screened from the highway by landscaping and all access will be from the Park.

TRAILS

In addition to existing nature trails, hiking-walking trails will be provided. There is a great demand for equestrian trails and they, too should be provided to the public.

Access to Recreational and Historic Drama Theatre.

As pointed out above, access for all traffic near the Historic area would be undesirable, but recreational traffic still should have access to this historic area, to visit.

It is therefore proposed , that such an entrance be constructed at the intersection of Brick Yard Road and Greene Drive, and Closing off Sullivan Drive at exit on Rt 546, but returning this drive to join Greene Drive back through the Park, just before the New Park entrance.

Due to its senic value Greene Drive entrance near Bear Tavern would serve as an alternate entrance, leading to a controll center, where it would join with a widened section of present Brick Yard Road., just above Greene Drive. This section which is on a steep incline can be filled to conform better with the general contour.

This solution would provide for sufficient space to accomodate " back up" traffic while small parking facilities would be provided near the information booth. The remainder of Brick Yard Road would be closed and a new Road be build encircling the wooded natural area between this information booth, the site of the present incinerator and the Nature center. This Road would also give access to the proposed Camp area and Open Air Theatre site, turning back to Greene Drive and in the other direction, encircle the area previously described as to be landscaped in the fashion of an arboretum, then leading around to the edge of Phillips woods and forked off to the Nature center area, parking facilities would be provided for the Historic Drama area as well as the Nature center. The road would continue further along the present access of Brick Yard Road to the additional facilities located ahead. right away

This would make it possible to avoid, traffic to and from the historic drama theatre over the Harbourton Road. However an additional exit can be considered , for easier traffic flow after performances.

The more or less encircling access road to the Historic Drama site and the Nature center would give visitors a different feeling being in a sort of beutifull remote area, where an appropriate landscaped approach to the site would create a desirable better mood for such a planned visit, than being guided in along side a housing development and pasture land.

This type of development would keep new roads to be constructed to a minimum, using the existing roads which lead through a beautifull section of the park in tact, with the possibility that existing roads can only be closed off, and free traveling through could be reinstalled ,if desired,during the winter season.

The historic area to be connected with this road system at Greene Drive above the Flag Museum and a return road between the proposed Historic area parking and Chestnust Grove area. existing access road.

Service area.

It will be to the advantage of efficient park maintenance thet the service area be located near one of the highways and at the same time be located in an area where protection against vandalism is at a maximum.

It is therefore suggested that the present location is best maintaining the entrance only for personnel and living quarters. This should also be the most economical

solution, without doing physical harm to other Park property.
In addition Garages and additional maintenance Buildings can be located in the former Parking areaxxxxx adjacent to the present equipment building as needed, and be screened off from the highway by landscaping.