

WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK

LOCATION

Washington Crossing State Park is located in Hopewell Township, Mercer County. The park is located on the shore of and extends inland from the Delaware River, some seven miles above Trenton. Acquisition was begun in 1912 when the initial 100 acres were set aside to commemorate the site at which the Continental Army commanded by General Washington crossed the river on the eve of Christmas 1776. Between 1912 and 1941 three hundred and sixty five acres were added. Additional acreage acquired under the Green Acres Program has raised the current total to 840.6 acres of which 100 acres are designated as a Natural Area.

Administrative sub-units of the park are the Trenton Battle Monument, Princeton Battle Monument, Rockingham, Wallace House, The Old Dutch Parsonage, The Old Airport Property (120 acres) and the Marshall House.

PARK PURPOSE

Washington Crossing State Park was established to clearly project the historical significance of the site where the Continental Army crossed, through maintaining and/or developing for public access the authenticity of the site and related spaces.

A secondary purpose of the park has been to provide recreational uses compatible within the basic resources of the park. Future management of Washington Crossing State Park will be based on these original purposes.

VISITOR SERVICE AREA

Approximately 60% of the visitors to Washington Crossing State Park come from within a 25 mile radius of the park. This includes the metro areas of Trenton, Northeast Philadelphia and New Brunswick. 20% are from outside the 50-mile radius zone including the other states and several foreign countries.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

The park is located in a region characterized by rounded hills and broad valleys. Vegetative cover varies from mowed lawns and highly landscaped areas to a mature oak-hickory forest. Reforestation of farmland within the park has occurred, the primary species being red and white pine.

The Delaware River runs along the western boundary of the park for approximately 2,100 feet. The Delaware and Raritan Canal runs for approximately 2,800 feet between Route 29 and the Delaware River. There is a man-made pond of $\frac{1}{2}$ acre in size at the northern end of the park.

The park contains 8.2 miles of paved roads. Parking lot capacity is for 500 cars. There are no rights-of-way within the park.

PREVIOUS PLANNING

1. Development Planning

Washington Crossing State Park was included in the 1967 New Jersey Open Space Recreation Plan in which various conceptual schemes and proposals were listed for the park. In addition, a more specific document - the "Master Plan Report - Washington Crossing State Park" was prepared in 1973 also outlining a management/development rationale. Following are the highlights of these previous planning efforts and their present day status:

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Viable</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Fire Engine Museum	No	Now proposed for Allaire State Park
Nine-hole Golf Course	No	Incompatible use, park is on the National Historic Register
Historic Waterfront Park and Monument on the banks of the Delaware River	No	Against floodplain regulations
Demolition of the Washington Crossing Bridge across the Delaware to be replaced with a pedestrian ferry	No	Bridge is now a significant transportation link between Pennsylvania and New Jersey.
New Nature Center	Yes	
Paved Open Air Theater Parking Lot	Yes	To be constructed in conjunction with the development of nature center
Construction of a Liberty Village	No	A Liberty Village is already in existence in Flemington NJ. No intention to compete with this existing village.
Visitor Center	Done	Constructed in 1976.
Elimination of access roads	Yes	To achieve better control and aesthetic enhancement

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Viable</u>	<u>Comments</u>
New Park Entrance	Done	Constructed in 1976
Restroom Renovations	Yes	Ongoing since 1977, will be completed in near future
Individual Campsites	Yes	(Are not in demand at present or in near future)

2. Resource Planning

100 acres of Washington Crossing State Park has been designated as a Natural Area under the Natural Areas Act of 1978. A management plan for this area will be prepared by the Division of Parks and Forestry.

The site was listed on the State and National Register for Historic Sites in 1960.

Originally, the entire park was designated as a National Historic Landmark. The National Park Service is proposing a change to include only the area along Continental Lane as the new National Historic Landmark boundary.

OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

Outside influences which affect management include:

1. Washington Crossing Association
2. Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park
3. Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission
4. I-95 which lies 3 miles south of the park

RECREATIONAL TRENDS AND DEMANDS

Washington Crossing State Park is presently providing opportunity for six (6) of the S.C.O.R.P. projected deficit-recreational activities for Mercer County: hiking, bicycling, baseball/softball, soccer/football, picnicking, and horseback riding. According to park use data, there is an increase in winter activities, especially cross-county skiing. Use of snowmobiles has decreased.

There is strong demand for additional field sports areas, specifically softball and soccer. Proposed development will address these needs. Regarding other demanded activities and facilities, lack of suitable resources preclude provisions for swimming and downhill skiing, while hunting and golf are incompatible with the purposes of this park. Ice skating occurs when temperatures permit safe ice levels at the pond.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT RATIONALE

The improvements and/or development outlined below belong to one of two categories:

- A) Bond Issue Development
- B) Major Maintenance Projects

First 5 Years

A. Bond Issue Development includes:

1. A new nature center to be built in the area known as Cedar Bliss. This new structure, planned for several years, will replace the present structure which is in poor condition. A nature center at Washington Crossing has proven to be very popular in the past, particularly with school groups, and is most compatible with the goals and purposes of the park. This new location will allow use of parking facilities at the Open-air Theater (an evening operation), and will allow a tie-in with the existing trail system/Natural Area.
2. A new park office to be built in the vicinity of the park entrance/contact station. The present facility used as the park office is located outside of the park proper, across County Route 579. When the new office is in place, the old site will be sold as surplus property.

B. Major Maintenance Projects include:

1. Landscaping - of removed road sections and inperipheral areas to serve as a visual/noise buffer.
2. Elimination of old entrance roads near Route 29; elimination of road adjacent to Visitor Center and parking lot near Route 546; construction of a walkway from the Visitor Center parking lot to the Visitor Center. Presently, visitors either use the roadway or walk across the lawn, when dry, to gain access; construction of a loop connector and subsequent removal of confusing intersection.
3. Green Grove Improvements - expansion of parking and picnicking facilities; construction of a road segment to "tie-in" area with park traffic flow.
4. ✓ Replacement of bulk gasoline storage tank, to provide adequate storage.
5. Painting of various structures. (7 year interval)

Second Five Years

- A. Bond Issue Development: None
- B. Major Maintenance Projects include:
 - 1. Phillips Farm Field Expansion - The Phillips Farm area should be further developed to support field sports. The existing soccer field is very popular; however, additional fields, an access road and parking facilities should be provided. Presently, the area is separate from other park activities and the entrance intersection is somewhat hazardous. A destination-type parking lot and road will tie in with the overall internal park circulation system, eliminating further fragmentation of the park. When both this project and the new nature center are completed, a major section of Brickyard Road will be closed.
 - 2. Painting of various structures. (7 year interval)

MAJOR MAINTENANCE

NUMBERS REPRESENT
DOLLARS IN THOUSANDS

PREVIOUS
EXPENDITURE

PROJECT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11/6	r
Landscaping ✓			120 d/c									
✓ Road, Paving Lot Removal Construct Walkway to V.C. Construct Loop Connector			150 d/c					10c				
Greene Grove Improvements ✓					150 d/c			10c				
Painting of Various Structures												
Replace Tanks ✓												
Phillips Farm Improvements ✓										200c		

15 28 270 150 35 210

APPENDIX #1

Jogging	Bird Watching
Cross County Skiing	Kite Flying
Picnicking	Dog Training
Baseball	Meditation
Sledding	Nature Walks
Horseback Riding	Weddings
Roller Skating	Star Observation
Dog Walking	Camping
Encounter Groups	Attending Concerts
Sightseeing	Fishing
Model Airplane Flying	Attending Plays
Playground Activities	Canoeing
Hot Air Balloon Landings	Nature Film Viewing
Historic Tours	Sunbathing
Softball	Tubing
Hiking	Nature Photography
Snowmobiles	Orienteering
Bicycling	Easter Egg Hunts
Soccer	Craft Shows
Ice Skating	

APPENDIX #2

Leases

1. Amateur Astronomers Association: ground is leased on which an observatory has been built near the existing Nature Center. There are currently no management or operational problems with this lease. If the organization folds, it is recommended that the structure be demolished with no lease renewal.
2. Fire House Lease: one acre is leased to Volunteer Fire Company. Terms of lease should be changed from present \$25 a year charge to \$1 every five years. No management or operational problems with this lease.
3. Niederer Farm Lease: No management or operational problems with this lease; reduces the amount of mowing and acts as a barrier to the park's natural area. If lease is ever terminated, a reforestation plan/program will be undertaken.
4. Marshall House Lease: The Marshall House lease is presently leased to the Lambertville Historical Society. The lease should be revised so that the lessee has sole responsibility for the maintenance of the structure. The present lease agreement states that the lessor will be responsible for repairs over \$300. This revision will be a benefit to the State in reducing costs.

APPENDIX #3

Recommended Demolition

1. Observatory - demolish if organization dissolves.
2. Ranch House - demolish. Residents will move into the Harbourt House.
3. Pole Barn
4. Old Nature Center - when new one is in place.
5. Philips Farm Structures - all but the block building. (Corn crib, bull barn, red tin shed)
6. Greene Grove - old rest room
7. Washington Grove Old Stone Restroom - partial demolition, lease part as shelter/pavillion
8. Niederer Barns unless (and Corn Crib) leased to a farmer.
9. Stewart House

SURPLUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Block 29, Lot 13 in Hopewell Township, the site of the present park office, should be declared surplus after the office is relocated to a more central park location. This site (9 acres) is outside of the park proper. Other than this parcel, there are no surplus lands recommended for disposal at Washington Crossing State Park.

No additional acquisition is recommended at Washington Crossing State Park.

JM/js

CURRENT PARK COSTS/REVENUE/VISITOR DATA

(in chart form)

Washington Crossing State Park

	Attendance				Revenues			
	Day Use	Overnight	Other	Total	Day Use	Overnight	Other	Total
1981	166,027	821		166,848	\$5,771.75	\$1,176.50	\$ 556.00	\$7,504.25
1982	189,003	2,758		191,761	5,769.25	1,597.50	1,001.00	8,367.75
1983	225,281	1,372		226,653	7,097.00	1,133.25	1,492.00	9,722.25

	No. of Permanent Positions	Permanent Positions Yearly Salaries	No. of Seasonal Positions	Seasonal Positions Yearly Salaries	Total Salaries	Maint. & Operating Costs Per Year	Total Area Costs, Salar. & Maint. & Operating Costs
1981	25	\$252,225.00	18	\$60,000.00	\$312,225.00	\$ 91,375.00	\$403,600.00
1982	22	237,913.00	22	66,000.00	303,913.00	81,899.00	385,812.00
1983	24	237,634.56	17	64,000.00	301,634.56	83,755.66	385,390.22