

Washington Crossing Historic Park



Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan

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Executive Summary

Introduction

“When the illustrious part your Excellency has borne in this long and arduous context becomes a matter of history, fame will gather your brightest laurels rather from the banks of the Delaware than from those of the Chesapeake.”

Lord General Charles Cornwallis’s toast to General Washington after Cornwallis’s surrender at Yorktown, October 1781.

Cornwallis knew that Washington’s decision to cross the Delaware had changed the entire course of the war. But the impact of the decision was not just on the colonists.

“It may be doubted whether so small a number of men ever employed so short a space of time with greater and more lasting effects upon the history of the world.”

Sir George Trevelyan, British historian and statesman, describing the crossing of the Delaware and the Battle of Trenton, 1899.

The victory by the colonists in the War for Independence ushered in a radically different foundation for nations of the world, one that was based on the idea of liberty and equality for all. This is a world class story; what is needed at Washington Crossing Historic Park (WASH) is world class storytelling, not just during the Re-Enactment, but throughout the year.

This Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan is a blueprint for an array of interconnected interpretive opportunities that together, tell this captivating story. It is also a blueprint for an orientation and wayfinding network to facilitate visitor experiences to the park.

Background

This plan was developed by an internal planning team guided by an interpretive specialist, with input from the rest of the park staff and from members of the Friends Group. The process began by developing the ‘Gauntlet.’ The ‘Gauntlet’ consists of the following questions that can be asked of any idea:

- Does it help meet our Goals and Objectives
- Will it be effective with at least one of our target audiences?
- Can it be created and maintained under our parameters?
- Does it take advantage of our opportunities?
- Is it consistent with our themes (messaging)?

If the answer is ‘yes’ to all those questions, the idea was seriously considered for inclusion in the network of interpretive opportunities. That is the method used to evaluate the myriad of ideas put forth by the planning team and stakeholders during the planning process.

Developing the ‘Gauntlet’ required:

- Deriving and developing interpretive goals and objectives consistent with management goals;
- Identifying and profiling target audiences to determine what type of interpretive opportunities would they be willing and able to engage with;
- Identifying parameters and their implications;

- Inventorying key features, objects and other sensory input that could be used to help tell stories;
- Developing the hierarchy of themes, including supporting stories, that dictated the information to be communicated.

During the process of gathering and evaluating the information to create the 'Gauntlet,' the planning team also gathered ideas from themselves, staff not involved in the process, and members of the Friends Group.

Key Factors associated with the 'Gauntlet'

The following factors had significant impact on final decisions regarding stories to tell and how to tell them:

- With the exception of McConkey's Inn, no cultural features exist in the landscape in the lower park that were there at the time of the crossing. Although McConkey's Inn survived through the years, the actual structure was modified many times so the structure on site is not the same as the one that would have been there.
- The most dominant natural feature associated with the story is the river, which functioned as both a barrier and transportation corridor at the time of the crossing.
- The Park consists of multiple non-contiguous parcels, with the lower and upper park separated by a few miles. Wayfinding is reported to be an issue. Also, access typically involves getting back in a vehicle and traveling to other attractions in the park.
- The historic structures in the park do not all belong to the same historic period. This is especially problematic at the site of the crossing due to the numerous historic structures associated with the town of Taylorsville, which was not there when Washington crossed the Delaware.
- As with McConkey's Inn, the Thompson-Neeley House in the upper section was here during the Encampment preceding the crossing of the Delaware, but it has been altered since that time.
- This part of the United States has numerous houses dating to that time period, many of which are used to tell the story of lifestyles in the past. What is significant about the house and surrounding farmstead was that it was part of the Encampment.
- The lower section has a visitor center with an auditorium and exhibit areas.
- WASH puts on a very popular dress rehearsal of Washington Crossing the Delaware early in December, and again on December 25th, the day the crossing took place.
- Washington crossing the Delaware is a part of a larger story that includes Washington Crossing State Park in New Jersey and the city of Trenton. Many of the sites focus on telling the story of the 10 Crucial Days during which time the 3 battles were fought and won by the Colonial Army.
- The Encampment story includes both sections of the park.
- Bowman's Hill Tower is not from the time period and not associated with the crossing other than it was built to commemorate that crossing.
- The park has a very active Friends Group who are willing to take on projects.

Key Recommendations

All ideas were evaluated using the 'Gauntlet.' The following constitute the key recommendations:

1. Focus on telling the story of Washington Crossing the Delaware, with associated stories about what led up to the event, and stories that support the fact that the odds were very much against success. Such stories include the condition of his men, the weather, the lack of supplies and other hardships. This is the story unique to this site, and has the distinction of being The Decision Point that had impact on the entire world. Although this was a part of the '10 Crucial

Days' story, multiple sites are already telling that story, and that story is not what is unique about this site.

2. Develop a Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail, in the lower section of the park between the Visitor Center and the Inn, with interpretive strategies focused on telling the story of the Encampment and Crossing.
3. Modify existing guided tours to reflect the themes identified in this plan, and train tour guides through a formal training program.
4. Re-develop the museum in the Visitor Center, and adopt accession and deaccession policies that focus on telling the story of the Crossing and Encampment, and communicating the themes identified for the interpretive network.
5. Develop exhibits in the Riverview Room that do not interfere with the use of that room for other functions, but that take advantage of the view out the windows.
6. Improve the safety of visitors by re-developing the parking areas associated with the Visitor Center, and improving the safety of the crosswalks between the parking area and visitor center.
7. Instead of being another site telling the story of lifestyle of colonists in the 18th century, the interpretation at the Thompson-Neeley house should focus on the story of the Encampment, highlighting the condition of men in the army, and the impact on colonists living in the war zone.
8. Modify the layout of the upper section of the park so the parking (with the possible exception of handicapped parking), is moved downslope, away from the house.
9. In addition to a focus on the workings of a grist mill of that time period, use the grist mill to focus on the story of Washington seizing mills and grain from uncooperative farmers (they were compensated) to feed his army.
10. Use Bowman's Hill Tower to focus on the importance of elevated positions in military strategy (and therefore the likelihood that Washington would have posted lookouts on the hill), and on the natural history of the area.
11. Orientation and wayfinding are needs; interpretation is an option. Consequently, key orientation and wayfinding strategies have a higher priority than interpretive strategies. With that in mind, develop and implement a Sign Plan.
12. Have the Friends Group begin construction of elements that they are interested in, such as the stand for the Durham boat to be placed outside the boathouse, and a working ferry, a project in which they have expressed interest.

What Comes Next

An Action Plan is included in the plan, providing a blueprint of how to move forward. Phase 1 focuses on upgrading visitor safety, upgrading the orientation and wayfinding network, and upgrading the visitor interpretive opportunities currently available, such as the Re-enactment. It also involves having volunteers and staff trained as tour guides and modifying all tours to reflect the new messaging.

Phase 2 focuses more on the Interpretive Network, beginning with developing the interpretive opportunities that provide thematic overview before moving on to detail. Those include the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail and the Interpretive Panel cluster at the Thompson-Neeley house.

Definition

Visitor Interpretive Experience Plans

Up until very recently, an 'Interpretive Plan' was the document that was typically produced to guide development of an Interpretive Program, which includes all the exhibits, interpretive panels, publications and similar interpretive opportunities for a site or facility. While such plans can identify opportunities that communicate desired messages to target audiences, they often fail because they do not take into consideration the experiential context in which they must function.

Most good interpretive planning models used today reflect the need to take target audiences, goals and objectives, constraints, opportunities, and themes into account when selecting information delivery strategies and content. However, they still treat the array of strategies – the Interpretive Program as a whole – as the focal point of the plan. Although any interpretive planning effort should result in identifying the array of interpretive opportunities to develop, the approach of the planning effort should be to first identify the ideal *visitor experiences* (ones that by their nature would benefit from effective interpretive opportunities) from the perspective of those developing the interpretive program, and then use those experiences to determine what interpretive and other information to offer. Such experiences also have to be ones that the target audience are willing to buy with their time, which requires knowing your target audiences beyond basic demographic information. Using the visitor experience approach ensures that you develop a plan, labeled a 'Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan (VIEP),' for a complete information network that begins with reaching your target audiences where they are – physically, emotionally and intellectually – and taking them where you want them to go by using a linked combination of trip planning information, orientation, wayfinding and interpretive opportunities. It also ensures that you identify and address barriers to the desired experiences, such as facilities that aren't fully accessible, so you can address those barriers within the context of developing your interpretive program.

In sum, people today buy *experiences*. Consequently, the desired product to guide development of an interpretive program is a Visitor Interpretive *Experience* Plan (VIEP), which uses desired audience experiences as the frameworks for determining the interpretive, outreach, orientation, wayfinding, and trip planning information to develop and actions to take to facilitate experiences that will attract, hold and communicate effectively with target audiences, whether on or off-site.

Vision / Goal Hierarchy

Introduction

Interpretive Program goals are derived from Management Goals by asking how an Interpretive Program will help achieve those goals. The Management Goals, in turn, are based on the future desired condition (vision) for the park and its natural and cultural resources. The following section contains the vision, Management Goals, Interpretive Goals and Interpretive Objectives.

Future Desired Condition

Background

During the initial work session the planning team spent time answering the question, “*What do you want the park to look like in 20 years?*” The question covered both the physical and social environments of the park with the purpose of providing a starting point for crafting a vision. The answers included changes to the infrastructure, features and other physical attributes, and also included *who* is visiting, how often, what they do while they are here, and what they do that affects the park when they aren’t here. The resulting vision functioned as a tool for evaluating potential visitor interpretive experiences, and to assess the recommendations in the 2012 Master Plan to ensure that the resulting infrastructure and physical environment is consistent with the experiences to be provided. The vision will also be used as a tool to evaluate future suggestions regarding the park.

WASH Vision

WASH enjoys a steady stream of first time and repeat visitors throughout the year because it offers world class experiences year-round. The array of potential visitor experiences is outstanding. In addition to high quality interpretive opportunities, visitors have an extensive array of recreational opportunities to choose from, such as kayaking, taking a ride on a Durham boat, renting a bicycle to explore the park on paved bike paths, hiking on the well-maintained tow path along the historic Delaware canal, and attending any or all of a myriad of events throughout the year, culminating in the reenactment of Washington Crossing the Delaware on Christmas Day. The reenactment has grown in popularity and has overflow crowds every year, in no small part due to the status of the park as a world class attraction, the addition of risers that significantly increase the number of people with a clear view of the reenactment, the heated tents that provide comfort in inclement weather, and the opportunity to watch the event on a Jumbo Tron in the Riverview Room.

Christmas is not the only day visitors can experience living history. A cadre of trained interpretive staff in costume make history come alive at both the upper and lower section of the park, interpreting the Crossing and the Encampment. Other interpreters lead walks, bicycle tours and tours by van/bus, with the latter encompassing all the key sites during the 10 Crucial Days.

The Friends group, a critical partner in shaping and managing visitor opportunities, is thriving. The increased membership, donations, number of corporate donors, and volunteers allow them to support a wide array of programs and events.

The international impact of Washington's decision to cross the Delaware, the amenities – food, hot coffee, park shuttle and clean restrooms – the support system for visitor experiences that includes an effective orientation and wayfinding system to get to and around the park, and the high quality of the living history and other interpretive and recreational opportunities attract visitors from around the world. Washington Crossing Historic Park has become one of the 50 places in the world you should visit during your lifetime.

Management Goals

The 2014 Master Plan contained Guiding Principles and specific recommended actions in the immediate (short term), mid-range and long-term years to create a sustainable park from both a financial perspective and a resource perspective, while encouraging visitation from around the United States and the world, as befits one of the National Historic Landmarks in the U.S. The following Management Goals for WASH are consistent with that vision.

1. Maintain/conserves/restore the natural and cultural resources of the park and manage visitation so the resources are sustained.
2. Significantly increase visitation and repeat visitation, particularly from local areas in Pennsylvania, through eliminating negative aspects of a visitor experience and enriching the positive aspects to create world class memorable visitor experiences.
3. Increase visitation by underrepresented groups so the diversity of PA visitors to WASH more closely reflects the diversity of Pennsylvania's population, especially the population in the surrounding area (in Pennsylvania).
4. Help other entities maintain/conserves/restore and interpret natural and cultural resources related to the resources of the park, especially the historic resources associated with the 10 Crucial Days. (A network of high-quality interpretive experiences encompassing an array of sites telling different parts of a story that shaped world history can be a world class experience as a whole even if the individual sites do not attain that status themselves.)
5. Increase visitation by people who live outside of Pennsylvania. (This helps the economy of the area, which improves the quality of life of people living here.)
6. Increase support (through the Friends Group and partners), revenue and contributions to a level that allows the park to sustain the array and high quality of visitor experiences. This includes addressing the amenities, information network, trained staff and interpreters, cleanliness, cutting edge information delivery strategies and the resources that form the core of those experiences.
7. Attain a high level of visitation throughout the year.

Interpretive Program Goals

Introduction

Interpretation is a tool to cause impact on visitors. Although most people assume that is an impact on knowledge, in reality the desired impact is typically on behavior. Consider any agency tasked with conserving cultural and/or natural resources. A major goal in trying to protect cultural and/or natural resources is to increase the level of stewardship of resources practiced by visitors. It's not enough for them to simply value the resources; they need to take actions to help restore and protect the resources, and/or to support the efforts of the DCNR and Friends Group. Motivating people to take action of this kind generally requires caring about whatever they are restoring or protecting to the point that the personal benefit they derive from their actions is worth the time and effort they expend. In this case the key is for visitors to care about Washington Crossing Historic Park, and all the cultural and natural resources that contribute to the high-quality visitor experiences available in the park, to the extent that they consider it a part of their quality of life.

Interpretation can help that effort by creating strong positive emotional, intellectual and physical connections with the resources. The interpretation in those cases often focuses on the importance of those resources to the target audience, combined with a plea for helping to conserve them. Those efforts are not aimed at simply affecting a visitor's knowledge or attitude. They are focused on motivating people to become active stewards of those resources through donating, volunteering, and practicing stewardship in their lives, all of which are behaviors.

Although interpretation can be a key tool in helping create conservation minded visitors, it will not, *by itself* achieve significant progress on that front. As noted in the book, *Fostering Sustainable Behavior* by Douglas McKenzie-Mohr, numerous studies show that education alone has little or no effect on sustainable behavior. In other words, the interpretive and environmental education programs are important tools to achieve the desired outcomes, but by themselves are unlikely to cause a significant shift in the level of conservation behaviors practiced by visitors unless barriers that increase the difficulty of engaging in the desired behaviors are reduced or eliminated. That requires a different set of actions. A classic example that has occurred and continues to occur in cities around the United States is the increase in recycling when curbside recycling programs are instituted. The significant rise in recycling that occurs in every case is not due to a change in knowledge or attitude regarding recycling, but rather that the barrier to engage in recycling behavior was minimized.

With that in mind, this plan must address not only the information that needs to be communicated to motivate visitors to take desired actions, but also the barriers to those actions. Those are not always significant barriers. If you want visitors not to throw trash on the ground, put garbage cans throughout the site, especially at locations where visitors are likely to have trash, such as at places they buy food, picnic areas and parking lots.

Interpretive Goals

Note: Although interpretation will rarely, by itself, achieve desired impacts on behavior, it is important to note the desired ultimate impact on behavior in the goal statements to help identify key messages that will have the desired impact on knowledge and attitude that leads to people taking action.

Interpretive Program Goal 1: Increase the attraction power of interpretive opportunities to help motivate people from all over the state, the country and the world to visit throughout the year.

Discussion: Although the reenactment and several other interpretive opportunities are high quality, Washington Crossing Historic Park does not have an extensive array of high-quality interpretive opportunities available year-round. Creating such a network of interpretive opportunities increases the perceived benefit for visiting the site, which should result in a significant increase in visitation throughout the year.

This goal directly supports Management Goals 2, 3, 5 and 7 because all are associated with increasing visitation. It implies that interpretation is a factor in increased visitation, which is one of the Management Goals. It suggests that the interpretive experiences throughout the year must be world class, which means state-of-the-art (which requires relatively constant upgrades), sophisticated, offered in multiple languages, and able to be understood by people with different cultural backgrounds.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data in order to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- Annual visitation will rise by 5% each year for the next 5 years.
- Visitation for low visit months will increase by 5% per year for the next 5 years.
- Annual park attendance from underrepresented audiences will increase 5% per year for the next 5 years.

Interpretive Goal 2: Increase the level of stewardship behaviors practiced by visitors in regards to cultural and natural resources both within and outside the park.

Discussion: This contributes to creating a sustainable park, which is the focus of Management Goal 1, while at the same time supporting the need to create a sustainable society, which acknowledges that it is not just the cultural and natural resources of the park that visitors need to help protect. Active involvement by visitors in helping sustain Washington Crossing Historical Park would be indicative that it has achieved the status of being linked to a visitor's quality of life. This would manifest itself in an increase in donations, volunteers for work parties, Friends Group membership, and stewardship behaviors practiced while engaging with the cultural and natural resources of the park.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data in order to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- Number of new volunteers / members of the Friends Group will increase by 10% per year for 5 years. (this is an indirect measurement of increase in stewardship behaviors).
- Volunteers for work days and projects will increase by 3% over the next 5 years.
- Donations for projects or programs will increase 5% each year for next 5 years.
- Program attendance will increase 5% each year for next 5 years.
- The amount of recycled materials collected at the park from visitors will increase by 5% a year (adjusted for increase or decrease in visitation).
- The new electric vehicle charging stations installed in 2018 will be used to capacity within 3 years.

Note: *Trying to determine an increase in stewardship behaviors to cultural and natural resources after a visitor leaves the park is probably outside the scope of evaluation by DCNR.*

Interpretive Goal 3: Motivate visitors to want to learn more about the key topics presented in the interpretive opportunities.

Discussion: This goal was included for a variety of reasons. Increased interest in the topics motivates visitors to become more knowledgeable, which in turn strengthens the intellectual and emotional connection to the park and its resources. Those connections reflect an attitude shift towards conserving those resources, and a greater likelihood of volunteering for work parties, joining the Friends Group, visiting repeatedly and bringing others along, visiting the other related sites in the area, and a myriad of other actions. It also reflects the fact that the goal of interpretation is not to cover a subject, but rather to spark an interest that motivates people to learn on their own.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data in order to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- An increase in sales of publications related to the primary story by 5% a year for 5 years.
- An increase in people wanting to take the driving tour that includes the other prominent sites in the 10 Crucial Days story by 5% a year for 5 years.
- An increase in visitation at other related sites due to the interpretive experience at the park.
- An increase in repeat visitation with the intent by returning visitors to engage with additional interpretive opportunities by 5% a year for 5 years.

Interpretive Goal 4: Significantly increase awareness of, appreciation for, and support for the work of DCNR in restoring and conserving the cultural and natural resources within and outside the park, and awareness of, appreciation for and support for the work of the Friends Group.

Discussion: Interpretive Goal 2 focuses on supporting the park through conservation and other means, but does not include the entities responsible for managing the park. This goal simply means that the interpretive opportunities have to help ensure that visitors know who is responsible for the high-quality experiences they are enjoying.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data in order to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- An increase in membership in the Friends Group by 5% per year for 5 years.
- An increase in donations by 10% a year for 5 years.
- An increase in visitors aware that the park is managed by DCNR by 15% each year following implementation of a significant interpretive opportunity.
- Volunteers for work days and projects will increase by 3% over the next 5 years.

Interpretive Goal 5: Significantly increase the use of interpretive opportunities by visitors to the park, especially by target audiences and by segments of Pennsylvania's population currently underrepresented in current visitation statistics.

Discussion: This implies that the interpretive program must play a role in trying to attract and serve *all* audiences, including those currently underrepresented at the park. It also implies that a Universal Design approach be used to ensure that all opportunities are fully accessible to the extent possible, and ensure that the information obtained in all interpretive opportunities is accessible to everyone.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data in order to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- An increase in numbers of African Americans participating in interpretive opportunities by 8% a year for 5 years.
- An increase in numbers of Latinex participating in interpretive opportunities by 5% a year for 5 years.

Interpretive Goal 6: Motivate visitors to visit sites connected to the stories presented at Washington Crossing Historic Park.

Discussion: Although this is covered to some extent in Goal 3, it was deemed important enough to highlight at the goal level because it could be significant in helping to achieve Management Goals indirectly by strengthening the relationship with other sites. A stronger relationship could result in those sites marketing a visit to Washington Crossing Historic Park, thus increasing visitation. It also helps increase the perceived benefits for visiting the area, which should help increase visitation.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data in order to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- An increase of 5% per year for 5 years in the number of visitors who heard about the park at other key sites in the story (an indication that those sites are marketing WASH.)

An increase of 5% in the number of visitors to WASH who plan to visit at least two other sites associated with the story in the year following implementation of significant interpretive opportunities that include reference to other sites connected to the story.

Messaging (Themes)

The Connection of Themes to Visuals

One of the basic rules in interpretation is to choose messages (points) that connect strongly to the visual features in the landscape because it is difficult to communicate ideas and concepts that a visitor cannot see. For example, a possible theme for interpreting the Thompson-Neely House is: *'Homesteads in 18th century rural America were much more self-sufficient than typical rural homes today.'* That point can be supported by making visitors aware of all the activities that the people of the Thompson-Neely household engaged in, including grinding grain to make flour, raising vegetables, keeping livestock for meat, eggs, cheese and other foods, and sawing wood for lumber. As a side note, the Thompson-Neely farm was located close enough to Philadelphia, and on major travel routes, that it did not have to be entirely self-sufficient because supplies and goods could be obtained relatively easily.

Choosing a single set of interconnected themes for Washington Crossing Historic Park is difficult for a number of reasons:

1. The key story is the decision by Washington to cross the Delaware and attack the Hessians at Trenton, and the decisions by his men to follow him. However, the dominant cultural visuals in that part of the park are those associated with Taylorsville, which didn't exist at the time of the crossing. (Note: I suggest changing the name of the Lower Park on your website to something other than 'The Village.' The name predisposes people who visit the site to assume that it was part of the story of Washington crossing the Delaware.)
2. Despite Washington's army using the Thompson-Neely House and surrounding grounds as part of the Encampment, no visual evidence exists to support that story. When a visitor walks onto the site, he or she does not see an Encampment, but rather a classic Farmstead of 18th century rural Pennsylvania.
3. To further add to the issue, Bowman's Tower reflects a completely different story. The tower was constructed by the Washington Crossing Parks Commission as a memorial to the crossing. Labor crews from the Work Projects Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) replanted the area and opened up vistas for the views from the top of the tower. The story of the WPA and CCC is one of the most significant in terms of the impact physically and culturally on the different parts of the United States. The crews built roads, parks, recreational areas, and dams among other things, which significantly improved the quality of life for people living in those areas. Perhaps more significant from a cultural perspective is the transfer of culture between different parts of the United States. Cross country travel was not as common as it is today, so the arrival of a group of young men from a completely different part of the country exposed residents to the culture of other parts of the U.S.

Rather than trying to create a theme hierarchy that works for all parts of the park, separate theme hierarchies were developed for each section.

Introduction

Themes (messages) and topics are not the same. A topic is a subject, such as “Washington crossing the Delaware” A theme is a *statement* or *message* about the subject, such as “Washington crossing the Delaware and the events that followed revitalized the American cause.” Themes are the core of the stories that are told in the interpretive opportunities.

The elements in the final theme hierarchy include:

Themes (Messages)

These are the key ideas or concepts to be communicated.

Sub-themes (these are included only if needed)

These are concepts that support a theme.

Supporting Stories

These are the stories that communicate a sub-theme or theme.

Themes are derived from goals and objectives by determining the concepts visitors need to understand in order for them to respond in a way that helps achieve the goals and objectives. In combination, the themes and sub-themes provide the guidance for selecting information to be presented.

Separate Theme Hierarchies are included for the four distinct story points of the park – Washington Crossing the Delaware, Taylorsville, the Thompson-Neely Farmstead and Bowman’s Tower.

Interpretive Theme Hierarchy: Washington Crossing the Delaware Story (WCD)

WCD Primary Overarching Theme

The following overarching theme is what the interpretive program is trying to communicate about the primary story.

The decisions and actions by Washington and his men on Christmas Day, 1776, supported by a myriad of noncombatants, and in the face of overwhelming barriers to success, was a pivotal moment in the history of the United States and the world.

WCD Primary Story Themes, Sub-themes and Supporting Stories

The following themes, sub-themes and supporting stories provide an array of 'entry points' into this story, with all supporting the overarching theme.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-1: The decisions and actions of Washington and his men began the 10 Crucial Days, the outcomes of which legitimized the war in the eyes of the people living in the 13 Colonies and of the rest of the world.

Examples of Supporting Stories

- Volunteers increased, soldiers reenlisted and Washington continued to have an army to command.
- The rest of the countries in Europe took notice of and interest in the war.
- The French began considering whether to support the Americans.
- Franklin used the victories to influence European countries to support the American cause.
- The British realized that this might be an actual war rather than just an uprising.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-2: If Washington and his men had not made the decision to cross the Delaware and attack the British in Trenton, the revolution would probably have failed and the country that is now the United States would probably have remained part of the British Commonwealth.

Examples of Supporting Stories

- The enlistment was up for Washington's men at the end of 1776. Soldiers whose enlistment was up prior to this time had left, along with a significant number of volunteers. Combined with those killed in action, Washington's army was at 10% of its original strength at the time of the crossing, and would have shrunk considerably when the enlistments were up at the end of the year.
- Without the three victories by Washington's army during the '10 Crucial Days,' (two victories at Trenton and the victory at the Princeton Battlefield) the army would have dissipated.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-3: The victory by the colonists in the War for Independence ushered in a radically different foundation for nations of the world, one that was based on the idea of liberty and equality for all.

Examples of Supporting Stories

- Nations of the world at the time of the American Revolution were built on the concepts of a class-based hierarchical order, and discipline, which was reflected in the two dominant armies in the world at the time – the British and the Hessians. The American Revolution was based on the concept of liberty and freedom for all, without a class-based hierarchical order, which was reflected in the American army.
- The political systems of many nations in the world today, including the United States, are based on the concept of liberty and equality for all, with no imposed hierarchical order.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-4: Countless others who toiled and sacrificed, both at the forefront and behind the scenes, were critical to the success of Washington and his troops.

Examples of supporting stories

- The hardships faced by the Thompson-Neely family during the Encampment.
- The story of the boatmen from Marblehead.
- The role of craftspeople who repaired and remade objects needed by the army.
- The women in camp who laundered, nursed and took on countless other tasks in support of the army.
- The African Americans and Indians who fought in John Glover’s regiment (Fourteenth Massachusetts Continentals).

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-5: The odds against success by American forces were staggering.

Examples of supporting stories

- The poor condition of Washington’s men.
- The weather at the time of the crossing.
- The lack of food, clothing and supplies.
- The physical effort required to cross the river and then march through freezing weather 9 miles and then engage in a battle.

WCD Secondary Overarching Theme

The following secondary overarching theme is what the interpretive program is trying to communicate about the role of cultural and natural features in the story of Washington Crossing the Delaware. It is not only of value in telling that story, it is a theme that applies to all of the separate areas in the park.

The topography and natural features, especially water in its many forms, played a major role in the cultural activity and history of the area during the 18th century.

WCD Secondary story Themes, Sub-themes and Supporting Stories

The following themes, sub-themes and supporting stories provide an array of ‘entry points’ into the secondary story, with all supporting the secondary overarching theme.

Interpretive Theme WCD 2-1: The Delaware River and surrounding topography played a major role in the 10 Crucial Days.

Examples of Supporting Stories

- The river was a barrier to the British and Hessians because the Americans had taken all the boats from the New Jersey side of the river and hidden them on the Pennsylvania side.
- The presence of a ferry, which was critical for getting canon and horses across the river, was a key factor in the choice of where to cross the Delaware.
- The high ground north of Trenton was a key to winning the first battle of Trenton because Washington could rake the main streets of the town with cannon fire.
- The high ground east of Trenton was a critical factor in the Americans winning the second battle of Trenton.
- High points on the south side of the Delaware, such as Bowman’s Hill, allowed Washington to gain information from lookouts on those high points.

Interpretive Theme WCD 2-2: Transportation routes, which were either rivers, river valleys, or routes dictated by topography, played a key role in the 10 Crucial Days.

Examples of Supporting Stories

- The importance of transportation routes in the 10 Crucial Days – the road to Trenton from McConkey’s ferry; the road linking Trenton and Princeton; the importance of the Pennington Road that Washington took to reach the high ground above Trenton for his cannon.
- The transportation route between New Jersey and Pennsylvania created by the presence of a ferry at that point was crucial to Washington’s success.
- The importance of the transportation link between Washington’s army and Philadelphia (and other points south) for getting crucial supplies.

Interpretive Theme Hierarchy: Thompson-Neely Farmstead Story (TNF)

TNF Primary Overarching Theme

The following overarching theme is what the interpretive program is trying to communicate about the primary story for this part of the park.

Colonists, especially those in the war zone, suffered a great deal of hardship during the war.

TNF Primary Story Themes, Sub-themes and Supporting Stories

The following themes, sub-themes and supporting stories provide an array of 'entry points' into this story, with all supporting the overarching theme.

Interpretive Theme TNF 1-1: The encampment brought hardships to the Thompson-Neely family, similar to those of many colonists within the war zone.

Examples of supporting stories

- The army commandeered living space, relegating the family to live in a single room of their house.
- The army took livestock and food supplies to feed the soldiers.
- The army used up medical stores to care for sick and injured soldiers.
- Washington ordered the grain seized so it could be ground into flour to make bread for the soldiers.
- The routine of life and of making a living was completely disrupted by the Encampment.
- The Encampment tore up the ground.

Interpretive Theme TNF 1-2: The war brought hardships to many colonists throughout the 13 colonies.

Examples of supporting stories

- Heads of households leaving to join the army or militia.
- More difficulty getting goods and supplies due to shortages and issues with disrupted transportation networks.
- Loss of markets for products.
- Loss of businesses (such as those who had businesses in NY) and occupations (such as the boatmen from Marblehead).
- Households ransacked and women raped (typical of areas with Hessian soldiers just across the river).

TNF Secondary Overarching Theme

The following secondary overarching theme is what the interpretive program is trying to communicate about the role of cultural and natural features in the story of the Thompson-Neely family. It is not only of value in telling that story, it is a theme that – in some form – applies to all of the separate areas in the park.

The topography and natural features, especially water in its many forms, played a major role in the cultural activity and history of the area during the 18th century.

TNF Secondary Story Themes, Sub-themes and Supporting Stories

Interpretive Theme TNF 2-1: The Thompson-Neely family succeeded in large part because of the natural features and resources available to them.

Examples of Supporting Stories

- Pidcock Creek as a source of power for the grist mill that was Thompson’s primary business, and for other mills, such as the sawmill, that produced necessary materials and food for the family, and also products for market.
- The Delaware River as a major transportation route linking the farm to markets.
- The surrounding forests providing timber for the sawmill.
- Availability of relatively flat, fertile land for growing grain and other foods.
- The Delaware River served as a lifeline for local residents providing access to much needed fresh water, food and goods from other areas.

Interpretive Theme TNF 2-2: Transportation routes, which were either rivers, river valleys, or routes dictated by topography, played a key role in cultural activity in the area throughout human history.

Examples of Supporting Stories that are better told at this site (rather than other sites in the park)

- The importance of the river and river valley as transportation routes for connecting the rural residents, such as the Thompson-Neelys, with the more settled parts of the country.
- The impact on the fortunes of the Thompson-Neelys of being close to the Delaware Canal, which became a major route for shipping and obtaining goods and products.
- A road to the mill allowed other farmers to bring grain to be ground, and allowed the ground flour to be transported to markets.

Interpretive Theme Hierarchy: Taylorsville Story (TS)

The theme that comes to mind when looking at the history of Taylorsville is the role of transportation routes in determining cultural activity. This point is supported by settlement patterns everywhere in the world, which are influenced heavily by the presence or absence of transportation routes, such as major rivers, coastlines (the marine highway), railroads, and roads. In this case, the presence of a ferry, the Delaware River, the Delaware Canal and transportation links to Philadelphia (roads) were key to the success of this town.

Interpretive Theme TS 1-1: The success and eventual decline of Taylorsville was due in large part to the transportation routes associated with the town.

Examples of supporting stories

- The establishment of the ferry was essentially the start of the town because it created an important transportation link between New Jersey and Pennsylvania, which made it of value to merchants transporting goods both along the roads accessing the ferry and on the Delaware River.
- Mahlon Taylor recognized that bridges were replacing ferries and was part of the company that built the bridge in its current location – right next to the old ferry – allowing the businesses of Taylorsville to continue uninterrupted.
- The Delaware Canal was another transportation link that could be exploited by the town.
- The decline of the canal, the establishment of major transportation routes (such as roads) that bypassed the town, and the building of other bridges along major travel routes, resulted in the eventual decline of the town.

Interpretive Theme Hierarchy: Bowman's Tower (BT)

Interpretive Theme BT 1-1: As in the world in general, natural features and resources have significant impact on cultural activity in this area.

Examples of supporting stories

- The role of rivers (in this case the Delaware) as key transportation routes, leading to settlement along the course of the rivers.
- The presence of fertile soil and flat land led to Pennsylvania becoming the breadbasket of the colonies.
- The river as both a transportation and settlement corridor, and a barrier.
- The Delaware River and the valley it created were the major transportation routes for much of human history, affecting travel, which in turn affected settlement, the economy and military strategy.
- From a military perspective, high ground is always critical. Given the location of this high point, it is likely to have been used as a lookout point by Washington during the Encampment in this area.

Note: This will be a good location for communicating some of the Environmental Education Themes because the view from the top is dominated by natural features rather than cultural features.

Theme Hierarchy for WASH Environmental Education Programs

Introduction

The natural and cultural resources at the park can be used to help meet many standards established for the Pennsylvania public school system, some of which don't require themes. For example, consider the requirements for meeting Standard 4.1.3.F in Standard Area 4.1: Ecology for Grade 3:

- Distinguish between scientific fact and opinion.
- Ask questions about objects, organisms and events.
- Understand that all scientific investigations involve asking and answering questions and comparing the answer with what is already known.
- Plan and conduct a simple investigation and understand that different questions require different kinds of investigations.
- Use simple equipment (tools and other technologies) to gather data and understand that this allows scientists to collect more information than relying only on their senses to gather information.
- Use data/evidence to construct explanations and understand that scientists develop explanations based on their evidence and compare them with their current scientific knowledge.
- Communicate procedures and explanations giving priority to evidence and understanding that scientists make their results public, describe their investigations so they can be reproduced and review and ask questions about the work of other scientists.

Other standards, particularly in Subject Area 4: Environment and Ecology, do reflect the need for a thematic approach. This Subject Area includes standards in the areas of ecology, wetlands and watersheds, natural resources, agriculture and society, and humans and the environment. The following potential themes are not meant to be an exhaustive list, but rather to serve as a starting place for developing a complete theme hierarchy for the EE program. They were selected because they are basic biologic concepts upon which a lot of additional themes are based, and could therefore be used in the interpretive program in the park.

Potential Themes, Sub-themes and Supporting Stories for the EE Program

EE Theme 1: All living organisms depend on healthy habitat for survival. Consequently, managing any species of wildlife or plants focuses on managing habitat.

Discussion: This is a key biologic concept that must be understood in order to understand the actions of resource managers. The theme supports many Standards in Standard Area 4.1, Environment and Ecology, such as Standard 4.1.3.D: *'Identify organisms that are dependent on one another in a given ecosystem: Define habitat and explain how a change in habitat affects an organism.'* It is also the basis for several sub-themes / supporting stories, including the following:

Examples of supporting stories

- Wildlife and plant populations are dependent on the availability of good habitat, and can increase or decrease due to human activity.
- Maintaining biodiversity is necessary for quality habitat.

EE Theme 2: Everything in an ecosystem is linked. Impact on any one component has a ripple effect that causes impact on the habitats it supports and on other components of that ecosystem, including humans.

Discussion: This is another basic biologic concept that is important to understand because it is the basis of the ecosystem management approach to managing resources. It also supports many Standards in Standard Area 4.1, Environment and Ecology, such as Standard 4.1.3.D: *'Identify organisms that are dependent on one another in a given ecosystem: Define habitat and explain how a change in habitat affects an organism.'* As another example, it supports Standard 4.1.4.A: *'Explain how living things are dependent on living and nonliving things for survival.'* Finally, understanding this concept is the key for people understanding that personal actions can cause widespread impact, and actions of others cause impact in return.

This theme could be modified to focus on something more tangible, such as a watershed. In that case, the theme would be: Everything within a watershed is connected in some way. Alterations to any part of the watershed will affect other parts of the watershed. That theme supports many Standards in Standard Area 4.2: Watersheds and Wetlands, such as Standard 4.2.4.A: *Describe the physical characteristics of a watershed.*

Sub-theme 2-1: Humans can determine what organisms live and what die by impact on habitat. Those impacts ultimately affect humans since humans are a part of the ecosystem. Another way of stating this is that people are a part of ecosystems, so everything they do has impact on other parts of the system. They can be a positive force or negative force – the choice is theirs. Ideally, we want this to be taken to the individual level, so people feel that they can make a difference by planting native plants in their yards, recycling, conserving water, and engaging in other actions associated with a sustainable lifestyle.

Examples of Supporting Stories

The following are some, but not all of the stories that can support this theme based on the tangible features in the park.

- The absence of many native biological organisms in the area due to destruction of habitat by humans.
- The return of species as habitat is restored.
- The impact of invasives introduced by humans.
- Many pollinators that are crucial for sustaining many of the foods we enjoy are endangered due to human activities. Proving this story requires showing how pollinators affect foods we enjoy, which could involve any business or institution that sells food, and showing how human activities have both positively and negatively affected pollinators. This should be followed by a Call to Action to let people know what they can do on an individual basis.

Sub-theme 2-2: Because individual actions add up incrementally to significant impacts, you can play an important role in conserving, recovering and maintaining natural resources in the park. In other words, what you do on a daily basis impacts our environment. You can have a positive or negative impact – the choice is yours.

Some version of this is, or should be, the key end point in many, if not all, theme hierarchies developed for Environmental Education Programs, and for interpretive programs based on natural resources because it empowers people to take action. There are myriad ways of saying this, including, “you are either a part of the solution or part of the problem.” I am more in favor of the first because it speaks specifically to the reader and is positive. Regardless, the key is to empower people so they have confidence that whatever small part they can play is still important in the grand scheme of things. This will be important when trying to motivate people to plant native plants in their yards and taking other small steps that help the environment.

Sub-theme 2-3: Human population and land use in the Delaware Basin watershed affects the bodies of water in the basin, and consequently, all organisms within the basin.

Examples of Supporting Stories:

- Nonpoint source pollution is caused by runoff from the land.
- Impervious surfaces from urban and suburban development increase storm water runoff and can contribute to flooding of streams and rivers.
- Pollution in the Delaware River was so severe in the past that there was a dead zone near Philadelphia prior to regulation by the Clean Water Act.

Sub-theme 2-4: Colonists found the land rich in resources, but used them with little regard for conservation. Responsible use of resources is crucial to ensure they will be available to future generations.

Examples of Supporting Stories:

- Wildlife such as whitetail deer, bald eagles, and beaver were at one point hunted to near extirpation but returned to the area after conservation and restoration efforts.
- Forests in the area had been clear-cut for building material and fuel.

Potential Locations for EE Programs

Features / locations noted in the following table that could be used for EE programs. Potential stories/themes are included for each location.

Lower Section of Park	
Location / Feature	Comments
Canal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man-made water feature that provides habitat to a variety of plants and animals. • Good location to discuss invasive plants. • Always wildlife to observe. • Location of most kayaking, fishing, and hiking programs.
Lagoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow wetland environment, the only example of that type of habitat in the park.
River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major water feature in Delaware Basin Watershed. • At this point has already intersected with Lehigh River and smaller tributaries, accumulating pollution from the northern part of the basin. • Important habitat for wildlife and drinking water source for local populations. • Flood-prone – locals will remember series of floods. • Environmental cleanup success story after establishment of EPA, Clean Water Act.
Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suburban land use and impact on rest of watershed. • Types of wildlife that coexist with humans in that environment. • Potential for converting some mowed land to a wildflower meadow with mowed walking paths. • Potential to install and demonstrate storm water mitigating landscape features.

Upper Section of Park	
Location / Feature	Comments
Tower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good vantage point for birding. • Provides opportunity to show a larger view of the watershed, topography, and land cover.
Grist Mill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of hydropower, using natural resources for a sustainable purpose. • If crops are planted eventually, opportunity to use and discuss sustainable farming practices.
Thompson-Neely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If interpreted as a farmstead, opportunity to compare how people lived vs. now in terms of effect on the environment, use of resources, energy, etc.
Bowman's Hill area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If more access was created to the forested hill (hiking trail to the Tower), interpret forest community habitat. • Discuss issues with deer population and over-browsing compared to the other side of the deer fence at BHWP.
Pidcock Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast between smaller stream environment and river or canal environment. Difference in water quality, riparian buffer, types of wildlife. • The only water feature really suited for macroinvertebrate sampling or stream mapping, but the majority of the stream is in BHWP.

Visitor Interpretive Experiences

Introduction

This section contains the recommendations for Visitor Interpretive Experiences to develop for Washington Crossing Historic Park. The information is arranged based on the following stages of a visitor experience:

- **Choice to Engage.** Visitor Experiences do not start with a web site. Something has to motivate a person to access the website for the park or the Friends group to get more information.
- **Pre-visit Experience.** This typically includes making a decision to visit based on information that markets the site and the available visitor opportunities, and planning the visit to the site, which requires trip planning information, such as directions, what to bring, hours open to the public etc. The latter information is typically presented on the Web. However, something has to make people aware of the site in such a way that it motivates them to visit the website.
- **Travel Experience.** The key to this part of the experience is the wayfinding network.
- **Arrival Experience.** Visitors are typically not interested in interpretation during their Arrival Experience. They are primarily concerned with meeting their needs, which include drinking water, restrooms, orientation and wayfinding information, site-specific trip planning information, and any information necessary to facilitate engaging in the activities that prompted their visit, such as exploring the story of Washington crossing the Delaware, attending an event, engaging in a recreational opportunity or something else.
- **Primary experience – Interpretive experience.** If visitors are coming for reasons other than an interpretive experience, such as simply to take a walk, the interpretation has to be integrated into such experiences so it adds value rather than competing for attention. The interpretive network should begin with Thematic Overview and then proceed to detailed interpretive information. Consequently, Thematic Overview needs to be available in all areas that are used by a significant number of visitors to enter the historic part of the park.
- **Departure experience.** This typically includes another visit to restrooms and a visit to the gift store. This is perhaps the best opportunity to market upcoming events and other opportunities on-site as well as off-site opportunities at partner sites.
- **Return travel experience.** The key to this part of the experience is simply to guide visitors back to the major transportation routes that were used to access the park.
- **Post-visit experience.** This part of the experience depends on what happens on-site. If the park can obtain contact information, it can continue to market events and opportunities directly to the visitor. If the park has been successful in marketing opportunities at partner sites, the post-visit experience for the visitor can be a continuum of experiences – both repeat visits and visits to related sites – that continue to reinforce key messages.

Strategies by Stage of Visitor Experience

Choosing to Engage: Introduction

A Visitor Interpretive Experience does not typically begin with a visit to a website. Potential visitors have to first become aware of the park and that it has opportunities in which they might be interested in order to be motivated to visit the website. Potential visitors will learn of the park and the visitor opportunities through communication channels they already use, such as radio, television, newspaper, programs for school children, programs in the surrounding communities at events and other functions attended by residents of the area, traveling trunks for teachers, brochures/flyer available at locations frequented by residents and visitors to the area, and brochures/flyers at partner sites.

That necessitates extending the information / interpretive network into the surrounding areas and inserting elements of the network into places already frequented by the target audiences, whether physically or digitally. This will vary by target audience. For example, reaching seniors may involve putting information at retirement communities, community centers, doctor’s offices, health centers and similar locations. Reaching families may mean using radio and TV (especially Spanish channels if trying to boost the number of Latinex visitors), reaching children in schools (who will take information to their families), and putting an exhibit in a community center, mall and similar places. Good general locations include coffee shops, nurseries, social media, websites, newspapers, events, etc.

Note: In 2016 the term ‘Latinx’ was coined and was reputed to be the best all-inclusive, gender neutral term to identify anyone with Latin American roots. Shortly thereafter, someone changed it to Latinex because of the need to have a vowel separating the ‘n’ and ‘x.’

Regardless of the strategy, all should be trying to make people aware of Washington Crossing Historical Park, and/or aware of opportunities that they are likely not aware of, whether because they are new, are offered at new times, or for other reasons. These strategies also must include sources where a potential visitor can get additional information (typically websites). Given the limitations of the DCNR website, it will be important to include the Friends website in these strategies.

Choosing to Engage: Strategies to Catch Attention

Note: Listing of a strategy does not mean you aren’t already offering information in that way. It simply indicates that it is a part of the overall information network necessary to support visitor experiences.

Table Teasers

Objectives

After interacting with and of these opportunities, potential visitors will:

- Know that the park exists;
- Be aware, in general, of the entire array of interpretive and recreational opportunities offered throughout the year;
- Be motivated to seek out more information;

- Have or know where to obtain trip planning information (directions, hours open to public, schedule of activities, etc.).

Description and Concept

Table Teasers are intended to grab a person’s attention and interest so he or she is more likely to seek out more information about the park and what it offers. Table Teasers can take the form of place mats, laminated cards, or booklets to name a few possibilities, and are typically found in restaurants where people browse them while waiting for food. Table Teasers focus on presenting interesting tidbits of information (‘didjacks’) associated with the stories covered by the interpretive network. They should contain directions to the site and contact information, such as phone numbers, so visitors can obtain more orientation and/or interpretive information. All restaurants and coffee shops in the immediate area should have Table Teasers.

Traditional Mass Media Strategies – Radio, Television, Newspapers, etc.

***Note:** One of the goals is to increase visitation by segments of the PA population that are currently underrepresented in terms of visitors to the park. Some, if not all, of those audiences will need both opportunities that motivate them to visit the park, and information that makes them aware of such opportunities. Traditional mass media strategies may be an effective tool for reaching some of these target audiences, such as Latinex, who – at least in other areas with significant Latinex populations – seek information presented in Spanish.*

Objectives

The specific objectives will vary depending on the information included, but all should be designed with the same objectives in mind as those used for the Table Teasers.

Description and Concept

No specific design concepts are included because the context for which the information must be designed is often already determined (radio spots, television spots, newspaper articles). However, all of these strategies must focus on opportunities that would be of interest to urban residents rather than traditional users, and all must provide information on where a visitor can get additional information, such as the website, by telephone, etc.

***Note:** If this is to be a world class opportunity, basic information has to be presented in multiple languages. Additional languages in which information should be presented need to be identified.*

Rack Cards and Flyers

Objectives

The specific objectives will vary depending on the information included, but all should be designed with the same objectives in mind as those used for the Table Teasers.

Description and Concept

These need to be colorful to catch a person’s attention, and ideally should show visitors, at least some of whom come from underrepresented groups, enjoying an experience at the park to clearly communicate

that the park has opportunities that could be attractive to those audiences. As with other strategies trying to market visitor experiences at the park, these must provide information on where a visitor can get additional information, such as the DCNR website, the Friends website, by telephone, etc.

Pre-Visit Experience: Introduction

Note: *Nationwide, and to a lesser degree across the world, the story of Washington crossing the Delaware holds iconic status. In addition, it is likely that everyone living within a several hundred-mile radius is aware of the park, in large part due to the annual reenactment of the event. Consequently, the task of marketing a visit to traditional audiences should not be as difficult as for many other historical sites. However, if an increase in visitation by PA audiences currently under-represented is a goal, a different or modified marketing approach may be necessary.*

After learning that the park exists and has interesting recreational and interpretive opportunities, the next step for most potential visitors will be the website, possibly the Friends website rather than DCNR's because the latter is somewhat rigid at this point in time. Regardless, the website should focus on what the site has to offer, and then follow-up with trip planning information, such as best times to visit, what to bring, and directions. The website must be designed with a good navigation system so the user can get to desired information quickly. The site can also include interpretive opportunities, such as a virtual tour of the park. Note that a virtual tour and other information available through distance technology may be the primary experience for visitors who are unable to access the park due to physical infirmity or other issues.

Pre-Visit Experience: Strategies to Help People Plan a Visit

WASH Website

Note: *This site already exists. It is included because it is part of the Information Network necessary to support visitor interpretive experiences, and it can be modified to better support the interpretive program.*

Objectives

Ideally, when people finish interacting with the information on this website, they will:

- Be motivated to visit the park;
- Have the information necessary to plan a visit to the park (they should be able to print off a map/brochure);
- Be aware of upcoming projects in which they could be involved;
- Be aware of upcoming events;
- Know what they should bring (rain coat, food, water, etc.).

Description and Concept

As noted, this site already exists and currently has information on visiting and events. If possible, the Video Tour and Introductory Video should be able to be viewed on the website, and visitors should be able to download any relevant Applications (apps) or information for use on smart phones and/or iPads. In addition, information on the website needs to be evaluated and modified if necessary so it aligns with

the Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan. For example, the information on the Thompson-Neeley Farmstead starts out by stating that it was a field hospital, a conclusion that is not supported in the interpretive plan. It could also be improved by adopting the themes from the plan and applying them to the write-ups on different locations. Using the Thompson-Neely Farmstead as an example, it could be modified to be message-driven rather than information driven. If the goal is to attract visitors, then the story of the issues faced by the Thompson-Neelys during the Encampment should be the basis for selecting information to present, which would likely include their lifestyle before the war to act as a foil for what they had to endure during the war. The farmstead could also be used as a foil to tell the post-war story of the plight of those in Pennsylvania.

Note: *Given the relatively rigid template for the DCNR website it may not be possible for all of these strategies to be included. Any that cannot be made available on the DCNR website should be put on the Friends website and referenced on the DCNR website.*

Friends of Washington Crossing Historic Site Website

Note: *This site already exists. It is included simply because it is part of the Information Network necessary to support visitor interpretive experiences.*

Objectives

Ideally, when people finish interacting with the information on this website, they will:

- Be motivated to join the Friends group and/or provide support in other ways;
- Have the information necessary to join the Friends group or provide support in some other way;
- Be aware of upcoming projects in which they could be involved;
- Be aware of upcoming events.
- Be motivated to visit the park;
- Have the information necessary to plan a visit to the park (they should be able to print off a map/brochure);
- Know what they should bring (rain coat, food, water, etc.).

Description and Concept

This site already exists and currently has information on joining the Friends and on upcoming events. When the Introductory Video and the In-depth Video Tour are developed, they should be available on this site as well as on the USFWS website. As Applications (Apps) are developed, and other information that can be downloaded onto smart phones are developed, they should also be available on this site.

In-depth Video Tour

Note: *The website currently contains a video focused more on making people aware of the opportunities at the park to motivate them to visit. The In-depth Video Tour provides a more in-depth look at the site and story, and could be highly effective for people who are unable to visit the park for some reason.*

Objectives

In addition to basic awareness of the park and what it offers in terms of visitor opportunities, after interacting with this opportunity, visitors will:

- Be motivated to visit the park;
- Be motivated to contribute in some way to the park and/or conservation of the cultural and natural resources;
- Have a good understanding of the primary story, and some of the secondary stories as well;
- Feel empowered that he or she can make a positive contribution.

Themes

All the key messages should be woven into the video.

Description and Concept

One possibility is to offer the tour in a series of short programs focused on different areas/features of the park to communicate the key stories and messages. Providing the information in short segments avoids requiring the visitor to commit a long chunk of time to watching the entire video in one sitting. Although anyone can use the In-Depth Video Tour, it is especially useful for people who cannot come to the park and for 'armchair travelers.' The intent of the video is not to tour the park, but rather to use such a tour to communicate the key messages. It can and should have historical information intertwined, but with the intent of answering likely visitor questions in a way that inspires viewers to visit.

Travel Experience: Introduction

This is simply the part of the experience between when visitors leave home and when they arrive at the park. At that point, the travel becomes part of the Arrival Experience. The key information needed during this part of the experience falls in the category of wayfinding. Although many visitors will likely use GPS on cell phones, many will still rely on directional signage.

Travel Experience: Strategies to facilitate wayfinding

One key to a better travel experience is to try to figure out how to keep GPS from sending potential visitors to Washington Crossing State Park in New Jersey. In addition, directional signage along major highways needs to be improved to help visitors find their way to the park easily. The key is simply identifying 'decision points,' which in this case are places where people traveling to the park encounter a major intersection or a set of options where the right route is not easily identified. The following suggestions pertain to the off-site directional signage:

- Sign at 532 across from the Washington Crossing Inn should be replaced (fading).
- Signage needed along Taylorsville and 295, and from New Hope.
- Signage needed from 95.

Note: *No design concept information is presented because PA DOT controls the placement and design of these signs.*

Arrival Experience – Lower Section of Park: Introduction

Visitors know they have arrived due to the large welcoming sign that features the word ‘Welcome’ in several languages located at all entry roads into the park. The signs will include wayfinding information to the major destinations within the park (Visitor Center, Bowman’s Tower, Thompson-Neely Farmstead, General Greene Picnic Pavilion, etc.)

Regardless of the route taken to get to the park, all visitors are directed toward the road accessing the General Greene Picnic Pavilion, from which visitors can access either the primary parking area across the street from the Visitor Center (a left turn if turning onto the road from Highway 32), or the overflow parking area (a right turn if turning onto the road from Highway 32). Those parking in the primary lot exit their vehicle and walk on a sidewalk to a clearly visible kiosk-type structure located adjacent to the pedestrian crossing. The kiosk contains a panel with a user-friendly map of the upper and lower park and a ‘you are here’ so visitors can orient themselves. Ideally, visitors could pick up the WASH Map/Brochure and the Sense-ational Discovery Guide at this structure. Bicycle racks are also located in this area since it is where the bicycle concessionaire will be located. Finally, this is also one of the primary stops for the shuttle between the upper and lower sections of the park (the other locations to be used when needed are at the overflow parking area, the drop-off area in front of the Visitor Center and at Taylorsville).

For those who park in the overflow parking lot, a kiosk-type structure in the northeast corner of that lot, with the same information as the structure in the primary parking lot, marks an additional pedestrian crossing. (This requires a new crossing area, preferably with a blinking yellow light or some other strategy to alert motorists that people might be crossing the road at that point). Walking lanes have been established in both parking lots to increase safety for pedestrians. Visitors who cross River Road from this parking area will be on the major walkway through the Lower Park. To encourage visitors to go to the Visitor Center at the beginning of their visit, a new walkway has been constructed linking the Visitor Center directly to this pathway without requiring going up a flight of stairs.

Upon entering, visitors immediately see signage indicating restrooms to the right and information, exhibits and museum to the left. On the wall in front of them a loop projection shows a simulation of Washington and his army crossing the Delaware at night in a winter storm (audio supporting the images would be a nice touch, but not if it eventually caused issues with people staffing the Information Station). The figures move from right to left, which at a subliminal level will cause visitors to move in the same direction. Upon seeing the directional sign, many visitors will immediately turn to the right, where a large access doorway and international symbols for restrooms reassure them that the restrooms are in that direction. Those exiting the hallway with the restrooms first will have line-of-sight to the Information Station, and a ‘Welcome’ display above the archway that has the word repeated in a multitude of languages. Everyone stops at the Information Station to pay the entrance fee and pick up the Park Map/Brochure and the Sense-ational Discovery Guide if they have not picked them up elsewhere. Families can purchase a family ticket for a reduced price, and everyone has the option of purchasing an annual pass, which is likely to be more attractive to residents of the local area because they are more likely to be repeat visitors. Visitors note that the building has a gift shop, although they are not likely to visit it until their Departure Experience. The receptionist directs their attention to the Riverview Room, where small bistro tables provide an opportunity to sit and plan their visit.

Note: The projection on the wall can be easily changed periodically to help entice repeat visitors, but the image(s) should:

- Make visitors feel that they have ‘arrived’ at the site where Washington crossed the Delaware;
- Avoid causing visitors to stop because that could cause congestion.

Arrival Experience – Lower Section of Park: Strategies

Note: In general, visitors are not particularly interested in interpretive opportunities during the Arrival Experience. Typically they are on their way to the restrooms, have not really "arrived" yet and do not have the information necessary to orient and plan their visit.

Note: The following scenario is based on closing off the parking lot entry/exit directly across from the small parking area behind the Visitor Center. The closure and the subsequent landscaping of that space, along with sidewalks within the parking lot guiding people to the crosswalk, will help deter people from crossing the highway to the east of the Visitor Center.

The purposes of the information network supporting the Arrival Experience include the following:

- Guide visitors to a parking area;
- Move them easily from where they have parked to facilities to meet their needs (restrooms, drinking water, site-specific orientation information);
- Make them feel comfortable in their ability to find their way around;
- Guide them to locations to begin their primary experience.

The information network to facilitate the Arrival Experience includes the following strategies:

Exterior Directional Signage

Locations

At key decision points (intersections) potentially encountered by visitors during their on-site experience. This includes decision points for cars and other vehicles, and for pedestrian and cyclists who would be using trails. Every significant decision point should have directional signage, which may necessitate working with others, such as PA DOT. Sites in the park that need directional signage as part of the Arrival Experience includes, but is not limited to, the following locations (note that the list contains locations with existing signage. They are listed because the Sign Plan, if developed, may recommend a similar look to all signs, which may mean trading out existing signs):

- Intersection of Route 532 and River Road (Route 32).
- Intersection of River Road and all entry/exit roads to associated parking areas.
- Decision points after turning to access parking – sign associated with entry/exit to first parking area encountered, intersection with General Mercer Road, access road to overflow parking.
- River Road and Lurgon Road (heading to Bowman’s Hill Tower).
- Lurgon Road and access road to Bowman’s Tower.
- River Road and access to parking areas associated with Thompson-Neely Farmstead.
- Decision points along access road to Thompson-Neely Household, including the intersection of the road with the current parking area (which will probably contain handicapped parking after a

new parking area is constructed), intersection of access road and access to new parking area, and intersection of access road and road to Soldier's Graves.

- Route 32 and access road to Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve.

Note that directional signage will be needed at these locations for both arriving and departing vehicles.

Objectives

After encountering a directional signage visitors will

- Be able to quickly make a choice as to direction with confidence.

Design Concept

To be determined by designer based on the Sign Plan, which should contain color schemes and style used in other elements of the information network.

Park Orientation Panel

Locations

On kiosk-type structures at all parking areas adjacent to the primary pedestrian walkways that lead from the parking area. Elsewhere where needed (such as at trailheads).

Objectives

After viewing the panel visitors will:

- Know where they are in relation to other locations at the site;
- Know where to go next to continue their experience;
- Be aware of key interpretive/recreational opportunities on-site;
- Feel comfortable in their ability to navigate the site;
- Be aware of the opportunities that are fully accessible.

Design Concept

The following are key aspects of the design and placement of the Park Orientation Panels that will increase the effectiveness of the sign and the orientation network:

1. Limit information on the map to that which helps with its function, and avoid putting symbols and information that does not help. Adding unnecessary information clutters the sign and increases the difficulty in getting the desired information, which usually focuses on answering the questions, "Where am I?" "What is there to do here," and, "How do I get where I want to go?" At a minimum the Park Orientation Panel should contain the following:
 - Simple map of the site including roads, parking areas, trails, structures and key features;
 - Images of people having fun at each of the key areas in the park;
 - Mileages and times for walking the trails and getting between the upper and lower sections of the park whether on foot, by car, or on a bicycle;
 - A "You Are Here;"
 - Visuals of key interpretive and recreational opportunities tied to location;
 - List of services available in the Visitor Center;
 - North arrow;
 - Legend scale i.e., 1 inch = 100 yds.

2. Orient the panel in the direction that the visitor is facing when looking at the sign instead of north. People expect information at the top of a map to be in front of them. This requires determining location and orientation for panels prior to fabrication.
3. Viewing the same map on a panel as is used in an associated brochure helps visitors move back and forth between the two, so consider adopting the maps essentially the same, although the one in the brochure is likely to have more information since it should provide all information people need for moving around the park.
4. Use a 3-dimensional look to the map to help visitors recognize features. This is not always possible, especially if you are trying to match maps used elsewhere, but studies show it is significantly easier for many people to use a map with 3-dimensional orientation rather than a flat map.

One possible concept is to use a stylized oblique aerial perspective graphic of the site as the major orientation element and as a backdrop for all the basic orientation information. Arrange images of interpretive and recreational opportunities around the perimeter of the map, with a graphic element (line) connecting the image to the appropriate location on the map.

Washington Crossing Historic Park Map/Brochure

A map exists showing the key features, but it should be updated.

Objectives

After interacting with this opportunity visitors will:

- Have had most if not all of their orientation and wayfinding questions answered, especially, "What is there to do here?" and "How do I get to where I want to go?"
- Be excited about exploring the park;
- Feel comfortable in their ability to find their way around the site;
- Have all the information they need for planning and having their desired experience;
- Are aware that the park offers programs and stages events, and that they can get a schedule in the Visitor Center or sign up to get notices on-line.

Description and Concept

The primary purposes for this user-friendly publication are to provide basic orientation and wayfinding within the site and to market experiences at Washington Crossing Historic Park (this is the publication that is likely to be passed from friend to friend). It should be a simple map with images of interesting features and people enjoying themselves in different areas of the park, directions to all parts of the park, and other orientation and wayfinding information so visitors can find their way around. One possible design approach is to create a 3-D illustration of the site from an oblique aerial perspective to use as a backdrop for the rest of the information. This allows people to be able to identify where they are based on features they can see rather than having to use a flat map, which many people cannot do. In addition a 'menu' of experiences based on time required should be included, along with suggestions about what a visitor should do if they have limited time.

Note: *The map should match the one on Park Orientation Panels.*

Discovery Guide (Sense-ational Discovery Guide)

Objectives

The intent of this guide is to motivate visitors to:

- Experience key features of the Park using all of their senses;
- Explore the environment both within and outside the Visitor Center and in all areas of the park.

Themes

All major themes should be covered in this strategy.

Design Concept

This strategy focuses on helping visitors connect with the cultural history of the park and the natural context within which the history happened by making them ‘detectives of the landscape.’ Clues addressing all senses help visitors discover evidence of the past in the current landscape. It could also be expanded for use in the EE program by adding in a focus on natural history.

This opportunity can be made available in a variety of forms, including an App and a publication. The actual device can be anything easily carried and used as an identification guide and check-off list, such as a small booklet or set of cards with pictures on a ring. Whatever is used, it should contain descriptions and images of features to look for and check off. Experiences should involve all senses, and it should be designed so parents can interact with children to ‘discover’ the park.

Interior Directional Signage

Locations

At key decision points (intersections) potentially encountered by visitors during their experience in the Visitor Center. The signage should include, but is not limited to, directional signage visible when visitors enter the building indicating that restrooms are to the right and the information desk, gift shop, Riverview Room, museum, and auditorium are to the left. There may be a need for directional signage when people leave the Auditorium and Museum because they will have a need to re-orient themselves.

Objectives

After encountering a directional signage visitors will

- Be able to quickly make a choice as to direction with confidence.

Design Concept

To be determined by designer based on color schemes and style used in other elements of the information network.

Information Station (staffed)

Location

The information desk is located in a good position because it is visually accessible to people who have entered the building by way of the main doors, and is in direct line-of-sight for visitors coming out of the restrooms.

Objectives

The Information Desk provides the opportunity to gather information from and ask questions of the staff. It is a critical part of the experience in part because some people prefer to get information personally, and in part because it sends the message that DCNR thinks that serving the public is important enough to dedicate staff to that function.

The objectives for this part of the experience are essentially the same as for the Self-Serve Orientation Area. After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Have had most if not all of their orientation and wayfinding and trip planning questions answered, such as, "What is there to do here?" and "Where did Washington actually cross the Delaware?"
- Be excited about exploring the site and the Park;
- Have all the information they need for their desired experience;
- Feel welcome.

Self-Serve Orientation Area

Location

The exact location hasn't been determined, but it can't block access to the Gift Shop and can't be located where the visual access to the Information Desk is affected. Consequently, the most likely location where it would fit without interfering with other opportunities is along the wall across from the information desk. It might be that this is the location for picking up information needed to plan and execute a visit, and that an area in the Riverview Room is set up with bistro tables and chairs for groups to sit down and do their planning.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Have had most if not all of their orientation and wayfinding and trip planning questions answered, such as, "What is there to do here?" and "Where did Washington actually cross the Delaware?"
- Be excited about exploring the site and the Park;
- Have all the information they need for their desired experience;
- Feel welcome.

Design Concept

To function effectively, visitors entering the facility must be able to quickly identify the type of information offered at this station. One possibility for a basic exhibit is to use a large title and visual element, such as "What is there to do here?" and/or "Planning your Visit," accompanied by a stylized three-dimensional representation of the area from an oblique aerial perspective as an organizer for large images of people engaging in a variety of recreational activities in the park. Those images would be linked to specific sites in the park using a graphic device such as a line. The intent is not to show all locations for all activities, but rather to convey the idea that the park offers a large array of opportunities and that visitors can find information about all of those activities at this station. A map of the Park and publications relating to each activity would be available at the station. Depending on money and the likelihood of easily repairing technology, the exhibit could include an interactive element that allows a visitor to push a button corresponding to a specific location (Thompson-Neely Farmstead, Bowman's Tower, etc.), prompting the display of a short video or series of images of that area.

Changes to facilitate the Lower Park Arrival Experience

- Eliminate the entry/exit to the primary parking area located directly across from the rear of the Visitor Center and landscape the location to discourage pedestrians crossing the road at that point.
- Create a shuttle drop-off / pick-up space in or adjacent to the primary parking area, and one in the overflow parking area (the pull-through at the front of the Visitor Center can function as a shuttle stop).
- Construct a building for a bicycle concessionaire adjacent to the primary parking area. (Note: If DCNR wants to provide the opportunity for people to move back and forth between the upper and lower park along the canal, better canal access and a clearly marked improved surface trail should be considered so that bikers don't have to ride through the 532 parking area to access the Canal towpath trail.)
- Develop protected pedestrian walkways to access the primary walkways after parking the car (this is important for families because parents worry about their children);
- Develop an additional pedestrian crossing from the corner of the overflow parking area nearest the Visitor Center and create a new connecting trail, without steps, between the major paved trail in the lower section of the park and the Visitor Center.
- Widen the entryway to the restrooms so it has more attraction power, and put restroom symbols on the wall next to the entry to reinforce the directional signage near the entryway.
- Set up bistro tables with chairs in the Riverview Room so groups have a chance to sit down and plan their visit.
- Lowering the front part of the Information Station so visitors can see people in that area. This would also be important if a person in a wheelchair was staffing the station.
- Develop a sign plan that establishes common features to be included on all signs, and identifies location and verbiage for all signs.

Primary Interpretive Experience – Visitor Center: Introduction

Note: *The interpretive experience in the lower section of the park is divided into the following components:*

1. *The interpretive strategies in the Visitor Center;*
2. *The interpretive strategies outside the Visitor Center that focus on the story of Washington Crossing the Delaware, which includes the opportunities along a new pathway near the river;*
3. *The interpretive strategies focusing on the story of Taylorsville.*

Note: *This is the part of the experience in the Visitor Center that focuses on telling the stories rather than addressing needs, such as restrooms and orientation information.*

Note: *The interpretive experience should begin with Thematic Overview and proceed into interpretive detail so regardless of where the visitor goes next, the detailed interpretive information should make sense. Given that the visitor has options for moving through the park, Thematic Overview will be needed in more than one location.*

Note: *Design concepts will not be as extensive for the interpretive opportunities within the building because the designer was part of the planning team.*

The Visitor Center has to function as a hub for all sections of the park and an anchor for all the stories by providing Thematic Overview. The Visitor Center contains three areas in which interpretive information will be available: the Riverview Room, the Auditorium, and the Museum. It is important to keep in mind that the auditorium is used for other purposes as is the Riverview Room. Those other uses help the park financially, so those areas should be able to function for uses other than just interpretation, which suggests that exhibits in the Riverview Room must either be easy to move if on the floor, or located on the wall. Of those three areas, only the Riverview Room is directly in the visitor's pathway, assuming that he or she moves from the main desk to the Riverview Room to access the back exit. That creates some issues in trying to ensure everyone has easy access to Thematic Overview before exiting the building, while at the same time avoiding redundancy in the interpretive opportunities. Finally, the Riverview Room has a number of travel corridors that must be kept clear, which limits floor locations for exhibits and also suggests that exhibits on walls might be better suited to this space.

Primary Interpretive Experience – Visitor Center: Strategies

Thematic Overview Film

Location

This will be shown in the auditorium

Objectives

As a result of engaging with the interpretive opportunity, visitors will:

- Be more aware of the significance of the decision by Washington to cross the Delaware and attack the Hessian troops in Trenton;
- Understand the reasons for the timing;
- Be motivated to engage with other interpretive opportunities throughout the park to get more of the story.
- Appreciate the unsung people who toiled to support the army;
- Understand the idea that the men under Washington's command were living the liberty they were fighting for (hence the variation in clothing of the men on the boat in Leutze's painting, an expression of the independent nature of the men who came together with the common goal of independence (Fischer, David Hackett; *Washington's Crossing*; page 6.);

Themes

Since this is a Thematic Overview Film, it should include all the major themes, and most, if not all of, the sub-themes.

Description and Concept

The new film will focus on communicating the new set of themes and focusing more on the 'Decision' rather than the 10 Crucial Days. The latter is still important as an epilogue to the story of the 'Decision' and should be included in the film, especially since it will be difficult to focus on that story in any other part of the interpretive network. The film should touch on the use of the Thompson-Neely household as part of the encampment as a means of motivating visitors to visit that site. One suggestion was to have the film begin with the present-day view, and move slowly back in time to the day of the crossing. That would allow visitors to 'see' the site as it might have looked at the time, and also to gain an understanding of the sequence of events and timeline of the changes to the site.

Note: *Given the size of the reproduction of Luetze's painting, it may have to remain where it is.*

Note: *A suggestion was made to take advantage of technology and create an audiovisual program that included images of British and Hessian soldiers marching down one side of the auditorium and the colonial army down the other.*

A Summation of the Event

Location

In the Riverview Room set against the wall shared with the museum so it is in line-of-sight of visitors as they enter this space coming from the main entry.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Understand the significance of the 'Decision' both from the perspective of the United States and from the perspective of the rest of the world.
- Have a grasp of the tremendous odds against success, both because of the training of the armies and because of the condition of Washington's army.
- Want more detail on the event (which will be offered in the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail).
- Want to take the 10 Crucial Days Tour.
- Want to visit the Thompson-Neely Farmstead.

Themes

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-1: The decisions and actions of Washington and his men began the 10 Crucial Days, the outcomes of which legitimized the war in the eyes of the people living in the 13 Colonies and of the rest of the world.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-2: If Washington and his men had not made the decision to cross the Delaware and attack the British in Trenton, the revolution would probably have failed and the country that is now the United States would probably have remained part of the British Commonwealth.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-3: The victory by the colonists in the War for Independence ushered in a radically different foundation for nations of the world, one that was based on the idea of liberty and equality for all.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-4: Countless others who toiled and sacrificed, both at the forefront and behind the scenes, were critical to the success of Washington and his troops.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-5: The odds against success by American forces were staggering.

Interpretive Theme WCD 2-1: The Delaware River and surrounding topography played a major role in the 10 Crucial Days.

Description and Concept

The point of the exhibit is to use the contrast between the armies to highlight the different political and cultural context from which those armies sprang, and to use that as a starting point for explaining the significance of the event from the perspective of the rest of the world. One possible approach is to use a small visual of Luetze's painting on the right, showing Washington and his men crossing the Delaware, and a visual of Hessian troops marching in military precision coming from the left, giving the impression

that the two groups would collide. They both would be digital images on a screen, which would create the possibility for a touch-screen interactive where visitors could touch one of the people in the 'painting,' which would activate an audio element so the person in the image would then provide a small bit of information, ideally about the concept of the 'liberty' he was fighting for, or something else that reinforces the overall story and is consistent with the themes.

Text in the area of the images would be limited, but should sum up the essence of that moment. For example, the text could be something like:

'The Country Clown and a ragtag army attacks the best army in the world . . . and the rest is history.'

Another option is the description of the Crossing of the Delaware and the Battle of Trenton by Sir George Trevelyan, British Historian and Statesman statement, in 1899:

"It may be doubted whether so small a number of men ever employed so short a space of time with greater and more lasting effects upon the history of the world."

The Crossing

Location

Looking out of the windows at the river.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Understand the conditions under which Washington and his army had to cross the Delaware.
- Want to come during the Reenactment.
- Appreciate the importance of the boatmen from Marblehead.

Themes

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-4: Countless others who toiled and sacrificed, both at the forefront and behind the scenes, were critical to the success of Washington and his troops.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-5: The odds against success by American forces were staggering.

Interpretive Theme WCD 2-1: The Delaware River and surrounding topography played a major role in the 10 Crucial Days.

Description and Concept

The view out of the windows of the Riverview Room creates a great opportunity for 'showing' the crossing because it focuses a visitor's view on the natural landscape, so elements just need to be 'added' to the view to create the scene. Options for doing this already exist, such as augmented reality on a

very large scale. Seating facing the windows will provide visitors with the opportunity to sit and ‘watch’ the crossing from within the room.

The 10 Crucial Days

Location

Given the need to maintain maximum floor space, this exhibit should go on a wall, possibly the one to the left of the windows.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Understand that the significance of the event was not winning a single battle, but in winning 3 battles in a row against what was considered to be one of the best armies in the world.
- Be aware of the area in which this series of events took place.
- Want to go on the 10 Crucial Days Tour.
- Be in awe of the men and what they had to endure to win those battles.

Themes

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-1: The decisions and actions of Washington and his men began the 10 Crucial Days, the outcomes of which legitimized the war in the eyes of the people living in the 13 Colonies and of the rest of the world.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-5: The odds against success by American forces were staggering.

Interpretive Theme WCD 2-1: The Delaware River and surrounding topography played a major role in the 10 Crucial Days.

Description and Concept

It will be up to the exhibit designer working with DCNR to develop this exhibit, but the following is one possible approach. It is based on a highly successful exhibit in the National Museum of New Zealand that told the story of the battle of Gallipoli. That exhibit used a basic topographic model of the battle site and lights representing troop movements – red for the ANZAC forces and blue for the Turkish army. The lights played across the model as a narrator recounted the various movements of troops in attacks and counterattacks. The narration took a few minutes, but at the time I viewed the exhibit, a crowd had gathered around, and not one person left until it was over. That is the approach I suggest considering for this exhibit. Red lights for the British and blue for the American forces would move across the model depicting the movements of various groups of soldiers. Narration might be an issue due to the potential for noise in that room.

Museum Exhibits

Note: *The plan will provide key themes, visitor circulation, and key stories, but much of the interior layout and design will be developed by the exhibit designer and the client.*

Note: *I am calling this area a museum because it needs to curate artifacts associated with the story. However, the exhibits should be ones that you would expect to find in an interpretive center.*

Location

The museum in the Visitor Center.

Objectives

After interacting with the opportunities in this area visitors will:

- Appreciate all the non-combatants who were crucial to the success of Washington's army.
- Understand and appreciate the difficulty Washington had because of the multiple armies that existed within the colonies.
- Understand the importance of the actions of the Hunterdon militia and John Ewing's men prior to the 10 Crucial Days – harrying the Hessian Troops and exhausting them, which was likely a factor in the decision by the Hessians not to have patrols out on Christmas Day.
- Have a better understanding of the impact of Washington's decision to cross the Delaware and attack the Hessians at Trenton.
- Be inspired to use the 10 Crucial Days Passport and visit other sites involved in this story.

Themes

Different themes will be communicated in different exhibits, but the entire museum experience should include all the major themes associated with the site of the Crossing, and with the Thompson-Neely farmstead. In deference to the importance of the event, exhibits should not focus on the themes associated with Taylorsville or Bowman's Hill Tower.

Description and Concept

As noted, the information in this section will focus on the key stories, visitor circulation and key themes and leave the specific design to the next phase of the project. The general approach is to use the museum to tell stories related to the event that are not critical to understanding the overall story, but that are significant enough to include somewhere in the interpretive network. Topics identified at this point include the following:

1. **13 Armies for 13 Colonies.** This exhibit focuses on the fact that at the beginning of the war each colony had an army, which created a lot of problems for Washington. Artifacts could include uniforms of each of the armies, insignia or other elements that identified the army to which the soldier belonged. To maintain a focus on the story at Washington Crossing, the story could highlight those armies involved in this event.
2. **The Unsung Heroes.** This exhibit focuses on all those who contributed to the success of the attack but who worked behind the scenes and thus are not usually recognized. This includes the camp followers, cooks, servants and others attached to the army. It should also include those who helped from a distance, such as those who shipped supplies to the front.
3. **Guerilla warfare – the Hunterdon Militia and John Ewing's forces at Trenton Ferry:** This exhibit focuses on putting a spotlight on two groups of men who played a key role in the victory at Trenton by wearing down the Hessians stationed there.
4. **The Hessians.** This exhibit focuses on the professional army of Hessians hired as mercenaries by the British. The point of the exhibit is not so much about who they were and where they came from, but rather their skill as professional soldiers. The exhibit is meant to impress upon people that the odds were very much against success of the daring attack on Christmas Day night. The

best artifacts would be ones that spoke to the professionalism of these soldiers, such as their uniforms. It would be ideal to pair this with a 'uniform' of a soldier who followed Washington that night – one that was thin and worn, made up of pieces of uniforms or clothing that did not match, without any protection from the weather, and perhaps with no shoes.

5. **The Encampment.** This would provide an overview of the story of the Encampment using the Thompson-Neel family as an example. The purpose is not to tell the whole story, but to motivate visitors to spend some time in the upper section of the park.
6. **What Decision Would You Make?** This is an interactive exhibit that involves making different choices associated with the 10 Crucial Days to see what would have happened. Participants should come away from this exhibit understanding the significance of Washington's decision. The actual exhibit should be designed so parents can interact with children in 'discovering' the impact of the decision.

Comments

- The seating area for looking outside should be integrated into the story.
- Some space in the museum should be reserved for borrowing exhibits from other sites.
- Additional exhibits can be fit within this space.
- Exhibits should be designed with families in mind to ensure that it has appropriate access points (a point where a child can begin his or her experience with the exhibit), and to ensure that an effort is made to include objects that involve use of senses to gather information first hand.

Modifications to facilitate the Visitor Center Interpretive Experience

The visitor interpretive experience in the Visitor Center is based on the following modifications to the building and/or policy:

- Lock the doors to the auditorium accessed from the entry hallway (make them openable only from the inside) except when a function is scheduled for that space. Doing so forces visitors to enter and exit the auditorium from the door in the Riverview Room, thus creating better control of traffic flow into and out of that space.
- Reconfigure the Museum so that the entrance is through what is now the exit. This avoids having the glass windows looking out over toward the New Jersey shore in a visitor's field of vision when he or she enters, which might cause visitors to bypass the museum exhibits and head toward the windows. This change puts the window view in the position to be the 'finishing touch' of a visit to the museum.
- Put some type of eye-catching images or element next to the entry to the museum to draw attention to its presence.
- Relocate the stone monument visible outside of the windows because it interferes with the effort to recreate the scene as it might have looked on the night Washington crossed the Delaware.

Primary Interpretive Experience – Washington Crossing the Delaware - Exterior

Outside of the Visitor Center, the interpretive opportunities related to the primary story are located along the route of a new fully accessible pathway that winds along the banks of the Delaware from the Visitor Center to McConkey’s Ferry Inn. The primary stories told along the way include the conditions under which the crossing took place, the condition of the army, the crossing, and the decision by Washington and his men to attack. The information will be provided using a variety of media, including signage with an optional audio element, a walking tour brochure, augmented reality available on an iPad or cell phone, tour guides and a podcast. The latter can be downloaded ahead of time, accessed using something similar to a QR code on each interpretive panel, or triggered by a beacon. The pathway, begins across from the exit from the Riverview Room, and heads upriver for a short distance and then downriver to maintain a grade acceptable for wheelchairs. The route also contains benches located in strategic positions so key points of interest are in the field of view of a person sitting on the bench.

Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Experience: Strategies

All information will be keyed to specific stops along the route, all of which have interpretive panels to indicate the stop, and all other information delivery strategies noted in the introduction will use those stops to provide interpretation.

Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Walk

Location

This is a new, fully accessible pathway that begins at the rear of the Visitor Center, goes upstream for a short distance and then downstream as a means of maintaining a grade acceptable for wheelchairs. Near McConkey’s Inn the main trail heads back uphill towards Taylorsville. Those on a tour go into the Inn, while those not on a tour begin their experience with the story of Taylorsville, which includes Stops 8 and 9 (see description for those stops under the Taylorsville Experience). A secondary trail accesses the replica ferry and ferry landing near the water. (See map on following page.)

Note: *This has to be designed as a stand-alone interpretive opportunity because we cannot assume that visitors will have engaged with the exhibits in the Visitor Center prior to taking this trail.*

Objectives

After engaging in this interpretive opportunity, visitors will:

- Understand why the decision was made to cross at this point, where a ferry was located.
- Understand the critical importance of the ferry in Washington’s plans.
- Understand how the river was a barrier that protected Washington’s army from the Hessians and British.
- Be amazed that Washington succeeded against tremendous odds.
- Appreciate the importance of the Marblehead boatmen.
- Understand and appreciate the importance of taking all boats from the New Jersey side of the river and hiding them on the Pennsylvania side.



Stops for the Interpretive trail, and access routes from parking areas to the visitor center

Themes

Although all the themes relating to this story could be included, the focus of the first 6 stops should be on the actual event rather than the impact of the event. Those themes are as follows:

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-4: Countless others who toiled and sacrificed, both at the forefront and behind the scenes, were critical to the success of Washington and his troops.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-5: The odds against success by American forces were staggering.

Interpretive Theme WCD 2-1: The Delaware River and surrounding topography played a major role in the 10 Crucial Days.

Interpretive Theme WCD 2-2: Transportation routes, which were either rivers, river valleys, or routes dictated by topography, played a key role in the 10 Crucial Days.

Stop 7, which focuses on Washington's decision to make the crossing, and the stops within the Inn focus on the decision to cross and impact of that decision, but as an overview (you can't put much information on an interpretive panel). Because it is such a significant story, it is important for the panel at Stop 7 and the information provided by the guides in the Inn to let visitors know where to get more information (which may be the museum to start with). Those themes are as follows:

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-1: The decisions and actions of Washington and his men began the 10 Crucial Days, the outcomes of which legitimized the war in the eyes of the people living in the 13 Colonies and of the rest of the world.

Interpretive Theme WCD 1-2: If Washington and his men had not made the decision to cross the Delaware and attack the British in Trenton, the revolution would probably have failed and the country that is now the United States would probably have remained part of the British Commonwealth.

Description and Concept

Interpretive stop 1: The first interpretive panels, located at the beginning of the trail, provide an overview of the story of the crossing in such a way that visitors will want to go to the next stop (that will be true of every stop – market the next stop to visitors). Associated images take the scene in line-of-sight and show how it might have looked the night of the crossing. Associated audio would provide an overview of the weather and conditions of the army prior to crossing. Ideally the narration would include background noises of men, horses and inclement weather, and would use excerpts from diaries when possible to paint the picture of that night just prior to the crossing. Narration should be in the first person when possible, as if it is a soldier or someone else involved in the crossing who is talking.

Interpretive stop 2: These panels, oriented upstream, would focus on the removal of all boats on the New Jersey side of the river and hiding those boats on the Pennsylvania side to prevent the Hessians from following them across the Delaware. The role of the Delaware River as a barrier should be emphasized. As with the first stop, the audio component should be delivered in first person. One of the speakers could be the Hessian officer who couldn't find any boats to speak of on the New Jersey side of the river.

Interpretive stop 3: These panels, oriented toward the river, focus on the weather conditions and the ice-filled river. They will include that the river conditions prevented the troops at the two downstream ferries from crossing.

Interpretive stop 4: These panels focus on the condition of the men, and the fact that they all made the decision to follow Washington. The audio at this location could include part of Washington's speech that night (from writings of Thomas Paine).

Boathouse: An image depicting the crossing will be visible on the wall of the boathouse. This can be a still image, which would not compete as much for a visitor's attention, or it could be a video or film. One of the discussion points was how to use the boathouse to focus on this story, and not interfere with the telling of the Taylorsville story, which it would do if open on the side facing away from the river. A suggestion was made to put glass doors on the boathouse for visitors to look in at the Durham boats. This could shift attention to something modern (the glass doors), which would not be desirable since the effort is focused on trying to recreate an image of a historic event. Also, there will be a boat outside the boathouse, so the only additional information a visitor would get from looking through glass doors is the number of boats the structure contains.



The view along the new Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Walk

Interpretive stop 5: These panels, oriented toward a replica Durham boat that visitors can access outside the building, tell the story the role of the boats and of the boatmen from Marblehead in crossing the river.

Interpretive stop 6: These panels, oriented toward a replica ferry and ferry landing, focus on the importance of the ferry to bring the horses and cannon across the river, and hence, the decision by Washington regarding the location of the encampment. (Visitors have the option of accessing the ferry landing to get a closer look at the replica ferry.)

Interpretive stop 7: These panels, oriented toward McConkey's Ferry Inn, focus on Washington's decision to cross. Although this information is also available inside the building, access is limited to those with a guide, so this panel cluster will be important for those who are not on a guided tour to essentially finish the story. The route now takes visitors who are with a guide to the side door accessing the Inn. Directional signage will be needed to ensure that visitors without a guide know where to go. Those without a guide continue past the side of the Inn to the asphalt roadway that parallels the river.

McConkey's Ferry Inn – Rooms 1, 2 and the 2nd floor: Story of Washington Crossing the Delaware (This is only available to those on a guided tour.) The first two rooms continue the story of Washington crossing the Delaware, with a focus on Washington's decision to cross, despite the condition of the army, the weather, and the fact that the troops at the other two ferry crossings could not cross. The narrative includes the consequences if he did not follow through with an attack before the end of the year. Audio is used in both rooms. In the first room it is as if the visitor is overhearing Washington's

officers discussing the situation. Through their conversation the visitors are reminded of the condition of the army, the weather conditions, and the fact that the troops at the other ferries could not cross. That sets the stage for the narrative in the second room, which is set up as it might have been when Washington was penning his letter informing others of his decision to go ahead with the crossing despite the odds. The audio is a reading of Washington's letter, as if it were Washington talking. That is followed by the epilogue, noting that Washington's decision to cross, and the decisions of his men to follow him, set in motion a chain of events that rejuvenated the American cause. It includes the following two quotes:

"When the illustrious part your Excellency has borne in this long and arduous context becomes a matter of history, fame will gather your brightest laurels rather from the banks of the Delaware than from those of the Chesapeake."

Lord General Charles Cornwallis's toast to General Washington after Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, October 1781.

"It may be doubted whether so small a number of men ever employed so short a space of time with greater and more lasting effects upon the history of the world."

Sir George Trevelyan, British Historian and Statesman, describing the Crossing of the Delaware and the Battle of Trenton, 1899.

The second floor focuses on the capture of the Hessian officers and what that indicated. It should follow the signing of the letter by Washington so it essentially moves from the prelude to the crossing, when chances of success are slim, to having captured Hessian officers, which indicates that the crossing and subsequent actions, despite the odds, was successful. Since this is a Guided Tour, the tour guide will be responsible for the interpretation. The focus should be on the success of the first battle, and the issue of transporting prisoners, which would have taken manpower away from Washington's army, which crossed the Delaware again to engage in the second battle of Trenton. Potential copies of artifacts to support these stories could be letters and/or orders from Hessian soldiers indicating that an attack would not happen because of the weather conditions, any letters written by Hessian soldiers just after the engagement, etc. It will be important to stick to information that supports the overall themes and avoid falling into a recitation of facts.

McConkey's Ferry Inn: Transition to the story of Taylorsville

The rest of the tour through McConkey's Ferry Inn focuses on moving the story ahead to the founding and flourishing of Taylorsville so when visitors exit the building they are focused on a different story. Any information presented should be from that perspective to maintain a storyline. In other words, the importance of inns in that time period can be included, but within the context of the narrative of the years following the war. The addition of rooms and other modifications to the Inn can also be covered within that narrative.

10 Crucial Days Passport

Objectives

After engaging in this strategy, visitors will:

- Walk the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail;
- Visit the upper section of the park to learn about the Encampment;
- Explore other sites in PA and NJ that are linked to and can help tell the story, such as Trenton, the Princeton Battlefield, and the Museum of the American Revolution.

Themes

All major themes should be covered in this strategy.

Description and Concept

This strategy focuses on helping visitors understand the story better by motivating them to visit all the places in the park with interpretive opportunities that help tell the story, and motivating them to explore other associated sites so they can better 'see' the story. Since a passport implies getting a stamp at different locations within and outside the park, a method has to be developed so the visitors can get stamps at other sites. Partner sites that are staffed and willing to supply a stamp to visitors to their site, are not an issue. Unstaffed sites, such as the monument in Trenton, are an issue. One approach is to develop unique symbols for each site and create a small plaque (the size of a stamp) from which people can obtain their own stamp using a process similar to brass rubbing. The plaques could be mounted to a surface at the site they represent, such as being put on a wooden post, or attached to existing infrastructure. Visitors would put the correct page on the plaque and rub it to obtain an image. The issue with this approach is that the plaques might be stolen. Another approach is to have visitors take a picture of the site they visit, and then come back to WASH to get associated stamps. This could be a way to increase repeat visitation.

Note: This would be a good strategy to develop with partner sites if they are willing.

Modifications to facilitate the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Experience

The visitor interpretive experience could be improved by taking the following actions:

- Construct a fully accessible pathway along the river bank that begins near the exit from the Riverview Room.
- Place benches along the route.
- Construct a replica ferry and ferry landing that are accessible to visitors.
- Plant vegetation to help minimize the visual intrusion of the buildings associated with Taylorsville, the bridge, and the parking area behind the Visitor Center.
- Construct a support for placing the non-seaworthy Durham boat outside the boat barn and put the boat on the support. Consider cutting a 'door' in the back so people can go inside the boat. Give people (especially children) the opportunity to try to move an oar.
- Clean up the Embarkation Point Monument so it can be used in the EE programs and possibly as a place included in the Sense-ational Discovery Guide.
- If possible, re-locate the stone marker currently along the pathway on the river side of the Visitor Center.

Taylorsville Interpretive Experience: Introduction

One of the problems in developing interpretive opportunities to tell this story is the fact that Thematic Overview should be presented first, followed by detail, which is not much of a problem when visitor traffic flow is predictable and flows in one direction. In the case of this site, visitors can access it from a number of different directions. With that in mind, Thematic Overview needs to be presented in the stretch along the asphalt 'road' between the Visitor Center and the Hibbs House for those approaching from the Visitor Center, and along the route from the exit point from the Inn and the asphalt 'road' for those who are accessing Taylorsville from the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail. Although visitors on a tour may have already received Thematic Overview to the Taylorsville story, visitors on a self-guided tour will not. The Thematic Overview is the same for each panel cluster, but the images change to adjust for the visuals in a visitor's field of vision from that point. Additional interpretive opportunities within this experience will not be designed to be presented in sequence due to the fact that visitors will be approaching them from different directions. Information will continue to be delivered using the same array of information delivery strategies that are used in the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Experience.

Taylorsville Interpretive Experience: Strategies

As with the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail, interpretation will be delivered using a variety of different media, with interpretive panels identifying the locations where information will be offered. All information will be keyed to specific stops along the route, all of which have interpretive panels to indicate the stop, and all other information delivery strategies noted in the introduction will use those stops to provide interpretation.

Historic Taylorsville Interpretive Trail

Location

The trail, as currently envisioned, is located on the asphalt roadway between Highway 532 and the Visitor Center. It could be extended across the highway if that was considered important to the visitor experience, which would be the case if the Taylorsville store opened to sell local items.

Objectives

After engaging in this interpretive opportunity, visitors will:

- Understand that the town was not here at the time of the crossing.
- Understand that the 'Inn' they see was not what was here at the time of the crossing, although there was an Inn in which Washington penned his letter announcing his intention to follow through with the attack.
- Understand what they are looking at – houses in which members of the Mahlon Taylor family resided, and buildings in which artisans resided, plying their trade.
- Understand the importance of transportation routes on cultural activity.

Themes

Interpretive Theme TS 1-1: The success and eventual decline of Taylorsville was due in large part to the transportation routes associated with the town.

Description and Concept

Thematic Overview Stop: The information presented at this stop focuses on providing an overview of the story of Taylorsville. As noted, this stop will actually occur in at least two and possibly three locations depending on how easy it will be for visitors to access Taylorsville by crossing Highway 532 from the south. A Thematic Overview stop will be needed between the Visitor Center and the Hibbs House for visitors approaching along the asphalt ‘road’ from the Visitor Center, and one will be needed for visitors approaching from the river or Inn as part of experiencing the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail. If a significant number of visitors are accessing the site from across the highway, a Thematic Overview stop should be developed near the roadway.

Ideally, the audio presentation at this site and other sites within this experience will include narration as if someone from that time period was talking. In this case, the ‘character’ would be Mahlon Taylor. His narrative should include reference to the houses he leased to craftsman and tradespeople in addition to his house and those of family members. The Interpretive Panels should include a ‘Welcome to Taylorsville’ with the date on which it was founded, and other strategies if necessary, to facilitate the shift in a visitor’s mind from the Washington Crossing the Delaware story to the Taylorsville Story.



Interpretive panel cluster focusing on McConkey’s Ferry Inn, Mahlon Taylor House and Taylorsville General Store

Mahlon Taylor House, Taylorsville General Store and McConkey’s Ferry Inn Stop: At this point, this is envisioned as a set of interpretive panels, with accompanying information delivery strategies, located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Highway 532 and the asphalt ‘road’ running down the center of Taylorsville. The three panels would each be oriented toward the structure it was interpreting. The audio narrative for this stop should feature the voices of different characters, including Samuel

McConkey, Benjamin Taylor, Mahlon Taylor, his wife, a general store manager, and perhaps others. The stories would focus on the establishment and continuum of history of Taylorsville.

Blacksmith Shop Stop (Interpretive Stop 8 on the map): The story at this stop would be from the perspective of a blacksmith from the time when Taylorsville was flourishing. It should include noting that the asphalt 'road' was the actual original roadway through Taylorsville.

Hibbs House Stop (Interpretive Stop 9 on the map): The story at this stop would be from the perspective of Abdon Hibbs, and would focus on the life of a tenant craftsman in middle of the 19th century. The stop would have at least two panels, with one focused on the garden.

Craft Fair Event: This event includes opportunities for children to try their hand at some of the crafts that would have been located in Taylorsville, or at least use their senses in some way to gather information first hand, like lifting the hammer a blacksmith would have used. This could be combined with the same type of event at the Thompson-Neely farmstead where children would have the opportunity to try their hand at various crafts that the Thompson-Neely children would have been involved with (and games they might have played).

Modifications to facilitate the Taylorsville Interpretive Experience

The visitor interpretive experience in Taylorsville could be improved by taking the following actions:

- Remove the large panel showing the battles during the 10 Crucial Days.
- Put furniture and other artifacts in the buildings so visitors looking in the windows will get a view consistent with the stories being told.
- Consider improving the pedestrian crossing.

Arrival Experience – Upper Section of Park: Introduction

Because some visitors will begin their experience at Washington Crossing Historic Park in the upper section of the park, it must offer all the information and basic amenities necessary for a good arrival experience. That also may be necessary for visitors coming to this section of the park from the lower section as they will have a need to orient themselves to the site and probably conduct some site-specific trip planning.

Regardless of the direction from which visitors approach, warning signs and an entry sign, identifying this site as **'Washington's Encampment at the Thompson-Neely Farmstead,'** will facilitate turning in the right place to access the parking for the site. As soon as visitors turn into the drive, they will see a large sign similar to the ones in the lower section of the park welcoming visitors in multiple languages. Directional signage will lead them to the parking area. Upon exiting their vehicles (or parking their bicycles or exiting the shuttle), they will proceed to a kiosk-type structure located along the trail that currently connects this part of the park with the towpath along the canal. The structure will have the same orientation panel that was used in the lower park, a panel with a site-specific map (including the Soldier's Memorial, showing the location of attractions and distances between those attractions. Ideally, visitors will be able to pick up the park map/brochure and Sense-ational Discovery Guide at this structure. Directional signage will identify the direction to go to access the Contact Station, restrooms, the house, the grist mill, the canal and the Soldier's Memorial.



The Thompson-Neely Farmstead, part of Washington's Encampment prior to the crossing



System of pedestrian pathways at the Thompson-Neely Farmstead

Arrival Experience – Upper Section of Park: Strategies

Note: The following scenario is based on creating a new parking area between the existing parking area and the river, rehabilitating most of the existing parking area, and improving the trail from the towpath to the house and under the bridge to access the grist mill.

The purposes of the information network supporting the arrival experience include the following:

- Guide visitors to the parking area;
- Move them easily from where they have parked to facilities to meet their needs (restrooms, drinking water, site-specific orientation information);
- Make them feel comfortable in their ability to find their way around;
- Guide them to locations to begin their primary experience at the site.

Most visitors will begin their experience in the parking area, where they will be drawn to a kiosk at the edge of the parking area adjacent to the access path. The kiosk will contain an orientation panel with a 'you are here' and walking distances to the sites accessed along the path. Visitors would turn right at this point to access the home and farmstead and the grist mill, or left to walk along the towpath of the Delaware Canal or visit the Soldier's Memorial. The kiosk could contain a brochure holder for distributing the park map/brochure, and one for the Sense-ational Discovery Guide if the potential for

vandalism is low. Visitors who turn to the right will shortly encounter the staffed Contact Station, where they can obtain the publications if they are not distributed at the kiosk-type structure, ask questions of the person staffing the Station, and ideally, use restrooms adjacent to the Contact Station.

Note: *Changing the point of arrival onto the site means re-locating the key elements that should be available at the beginning of the visitor experience, notably, restrooms and a map.*

The information network to facilitate the Arrival Experience includes the Washington Crossing Historic Park Map/Brochure and the Park Orientation Panel already described in the section covering the Arrival Experience strategies for the lower section of the park. The information network supporting the Arrival Experience also includes the following strategies.

Exterior Directional Signage

Locations

At key decision points (intersections) potentially encountered by visitors during their on-site experience. This includes decision points for cars and other vehicles, and for pedestrian and cyclists who would be using trails. Every significant decision point should have directional signage. The following are decision points where directional signage is necessary:

- Highway directional signage from each direction (vehicular)
- Directional signage to handicapped drop-off / parking (vehicular)
- Directional signage identifying road to Soldier's Memorial (vehicular)
- Directional signage at intersection of parking area and trail to TN site (pedestrian and bicycle)
- Directional signage at intersection of trails in front of the house, and all other intersections of designated trails (pedestrian).

Objectives

After encountering a directional signage visitors will

- Be able to quickly make a choice as to direction with confidence.

Design Concept

To be determined by designer based on color schemes and style used in other elements of the information network.

Park Orientation Panel

Locations

- On a kiosk-type structure at the point where the trail and parking area abut.
- At the Soldier's Memorial.
- At handicapped parking if it is in a different area.

Objectives and Design Concept the same as for the panels in the lower section of the park.

Thomson-Neely Farmstead Interpretive Experience:

Introduction

As with the lower section, the interpretive experience begins with Thematic Overview and proceeds into interpretive detail. The goal of the Thematic Overview is to communicate the key messages so regardless of where the visitor goes next, the detailed interpretive information should make sense.

The primary story in this section, based on events and features, is the story of the Thompson-Neely family during the war prior to the encampment, and the story of the encampment associated with Washington Crossing the Delaware, with emphasis on the sacrifices and hardships of colonists outside of and within the war zone. The presence of the canal creates an opportunity to communicate the concept regarding the impact of transportation routes on cultural activity, but the building of the canal occurred decades after the war, so I suggest considering telling that story somewhere along the canal or at the bridge, and maintaining a focus at the farmstead on the time period of the war with emphasis on the encampment. The current grist mill is also a part of the story that occurred after the war because it was built on the location of an original grist mill that was moved to this location because of the building of the canal. However, it could be used symbolically as part of the encampment story because of the role of grain mills in that story.

The upper section of the park presents some of the same challenges as the lower section, along with a few additional factors that have to be considered. As with the lower section, the Thomson-Neely Farmstead has no visuals that clearly relate to the story of Washington crossing the Delaware other than the Soldier's Memorial and whatever artifacts or replicas that are currently used within the Thomson-Neely house that relate to that story.

The challenge at this site is to focus on the Encampment Story and the hardships it brought to the family, and on extension of that story to focus on hardships suffered by colonists during the war, with the dominant visuals all 'telling' the story of the Thomson-Neely Farmstead and farm. Although that issue can be addressed on the site with the use of augmented reality, interpretive panels and other strategies to show visitors what the site might have looked like during the encampment, it is quite a bit more difficult in the confines of the house, where the easiest story to tell is that of lifestyle of the people who lived there and how it evolved over time. However, if the name of the site is changed to something along the lines of "Washington's Encampment at the Thomson-Neely Farmstead," the primary focus in the house should be on the encampment, with a secondary focus on the hardships colonists in the war zone had to face (especially across the river in areas with British and Hessian soldiers), and a tertiary focus on the story of the Thomson-Neely family, because the name will create an expectation of the story that would be told. The following interpretive network reflects that recommendation.

Note: *The primary interpretive efforts at this site focus on the Encampment, making it a part of the story of Washington Crossing the Delaware. However, it could include a secondary focus on the lives of children in the early 19th century as an extension of the Taylorsville Interpretive Experience. As noted in the Taylorsville Interpretive Experience, the Thomson-Neely Farmstead would be a part of the Craft Fair event. At this site children could have the opportunity to engage in different aspects of crafts that children would have been involved with in the middle of the 18th century, and the opportunity to play games those children would have played, especially games that allowed them to burn off energy. It could also include a petting zoo.*

Thomson-Neely Farmstead Interpretive Experience: Strategies

Contact Station (“Cooper’s Shed”)

Location

Along the trail between the parking area and the front of the house

Objectives

After encountering the contact station, visitors will:

- Have the Park Map/Brochure.
- Have the Sense-ational Discovery Guide.
- Have any questions not answered on the Park Orientation Panel answered.

Description and Concept

The suggestion is to convert an existing structure (Cooper’s Shed) into a Contact Station that would be staffed by volunteers. The Contact Station would be a place for distributing the Park Map/Brochure and other relevant literature, marketing upcoming events, letting people know about the Friends Group, etc. Ideally, restrooms would be available at this location. Requiring visitors to access the current set of restrooms would disrupt the flow of the Visitor Experience.

Thematic Overview Interpretive Panel Cluster

Location

This stop is located along the pathway in front of the house.

Objectives

After engaging with this interpretive opportunity, visitors will:

- Want to take the house tour.
- Want to visit the grist mill.
- Have increased understanding of the hardships of the colonists during the war years, especially those who lived in the war zone.
- Understand that not all colonists were for the war, which often made it difficult to get food for the army.

Themes

Interpretive Theme TNF 1-1: The encampment brought hardships to the Thompson-Neely family, similar to those of many colonists within the war zone.

Interpretive Theme TNF 1-2: The war brought hardships to many colonists throughout the 13 colonies.

Description and Concept

The approach to supplying information is the same as in the lower section of the park – use a combination of interpretive panels, audio elements and an App to provide the information. The focus at

this point is on presenting Thematic Overview, with a focus on the encampment and on the general hardships colonists had to endure during the war. This would include the head of the household joining the militia. The visual for the encampment panel should show the scene in front of the visitor as it might have looked when soldiers were camped all over the property. The sketch below depicts how the Interpretive Panel Cluster could look.



An interpretive panel on the other side of the walkway, or facing the other direction from the house, would provide an image of how the view might have looked when the grist mill was located there. It could include other outbuildings, but the key is the grist mill because that is the focal point of the interpretive information. The story associated with the grist mill would focus on the importance of grain to the army, the abundance of grain in Bucks County, the reluctance of millers to sell or grind grain for the Continental Army and the eventual decree by Washington to seize mills and grain from uncooperative farmers, with directions to provide compensation.

House Interpretive Tour

Objectives

After engaging in this interpretive opportunity visitors will:

- Understand the type and extent of hardships suffered by colonists during the war in general;
- Understand the type and extent of hardships suffered by colonists living within the war zone;
- Understand the type and extent of hardships suffered by colonists with homes within an encampment, such as the one from which Washington crossed the Delaware.
- Understand that the hardships suffered by colonists within the area occupied by Hessian and British troops were often much more severe.

Themes

Interpretive Theme TNF 1-1: The encampment brought hardships to the Thompson-Neely family, similar to those of many colonists within the war zone.

Interpretive Theme TNF 1-2: The war brought hardships to many colonists throughout the 13 colonies.

Description and Concept

This tour focuses on the hardships of the Thompson-Neely family during the war and especially during the Encampment. The story of the Thompson-Neely family before and after the event can be used to contrast life during the Encampment. For example, in the dining room the story can begin with how the Thompson-Neely family used that space, followed by how it was used during the Encampment, and the hardship that created for the family. The stories told in the house tour should include one focusing on the fact that the Continental Army was not made up of professional soldiers, but rather colonists who had other professions. Consequently, their businesses and families all suffered during the time that a man was away fighting in the army. The story of William Neely, who fought in several battles as a member of the Bucks County militia, can be told to communicate this story. The story in a storage room could be about how the Encampment meant decimation of stored food and medicines. To be consistent with the focus on the Encampment story, the door should be answered, if possible, by a soldier in uniform – one of the aides to the officers that would have been billeted there. Ideally, the information presented in the house would all be through a living history approach with costumed interpreters.

Note: *Although the care of sick soldiers should be included, the idea that this was a field hospital should not be included as there appears to be no evidence to back that claim.*

Farmstead Buildings Interpretive Panel Cluster

Location

The location of this stop has yet to be determined, but it seems as if it should be one site rather than a stop at each of the outbuildings. Consequently, it needs to be located where a visitor can see the array of outbuildings.

Objectives

After engaging with this interpretive opportunity, visitors will:

- Understand the need for livestock in the lifestyles of rural people at that time.
- Understand how impacts from the Encampment extended far beyond the event due to loss of livestock, damage to farm fields, and other outcomes of men encamping all over your property.
- Want to take the house tour.

Themes

Interpretive Theme TNF 1-1: The encampment brought hardships to the Thompson-Neely family, similar to those of many colonists within the war zone.

Description and Concept

As with the house tour, the focus is on the impact of the Encampment with the story of the lifestyle before and after the event used to put the story of the Encampment in context. The Encampment meant that livestock would be decimated to feed the army and that supplies of food and medicine would be used in significant quantity, often leaving a family with very little to get by on.

Modifications to facilitate the Thompson-Neely Farmstead Interpretive Experience

The visitor interpretive experience could be improved by taking the following actions:

- Move the parking area to a strip between the home site and the canal. This would help isolate the visual of the canal from the rest of the site, which is an advantage if trying to tell the story of the site during the Encampment because the canal belongs in a different time period. This location, along with associated information kiosks and pathways, could help funnel people up the paved pathway between the house and the creek, which can facilitate entering into a 'story' with the house as a focal point.
- If handicapped parking is not feasible within the new parking area, retain some of the parking lot for handicapped parking and return the current parking area to a natural state.
- Construct a fully accessible trail from the new parking lot around the east side of the house to connect with the existing paved trail system.
- Take off the shed on east side of house (which would allow visitors to see the beehive oven).
- Put restrooms adjacent to the contact station.
- Put bicycle racks in the new parking area.
- Establish a shuttle drop-off / pick-up area in the new parking area.
- Improve the pathway under the bridge that connects the house site to the grist mill.
- Use vegetation to screen the visual impact of the canal.
- Change the name of the site to 'Washington's Encampment at the Thompson-Neely farmstead,' which makes the focus of the upper section consistent with the name of the park.

Grist Mill Interpretive Experience: Introduction

The grist mill is not on the location of the original grist mill, but on the site of the one built after the building of the canal made the original mill non-functional. It has been rebuilt with the second mill in mind, so it is not the grist mill that would have been here during the Encampment. That creates some issues if the story at the Thompson-Neely house focuses on the Encampment. However, it could still be used to symbolize a grist mill with associated interpretation focusing on the importance of grist mills in the area and the issues during Washington's Encampment caused by millers not willing to provide grain to Washington. The fact that the road separates the mill from the house site helps create flexibility on how it can be used in terms of telling stories. It can also be used to highlight the importance of running water to power mills and the impact that had on settlement patterns in the country. Note that the Friends Group has put a significant amount of money into repairing the mill so it can grind grain. Their hope is that they can then sell the flour produced from grinding the grain. That means the mill will be operating some of the time, creating a very attractive interpretive opportunity. Since it won't be operating all the time, the interpretive opportunities at this site must tell the story.

Grist Mill Interpretive Panel Cluster

Location

This stop is located along the pathway that connects this site to the Thompson-Neely Farmstead. It is on the lower level looking at the mill from the approach under the bridge.

Objectives

After engaging with this interpretive opportunity, visitors will:

- Want to look inside the mill.
- Have increased understanding of the importance of having running water on your property if you were a colonist because of the need for power.
- Understand the important role of specific natural resources – running water for power, timber for building materials, good soil and flat land for growing crops, etc. – in the cultural activity in an area.

Themes

Interpretive Theme TNF 2-1: The Thompson-Neely family succeeded in large part because of the natural features and resources available to them.

Interpretive Theme TNF 2-2: Transportation routes, which were either rivers, river valleys, or routes dictated by topography, played a key role in cultural activity in the area throughout human history.

Description and Concept

The focus of the interpretive opportunity is on the concept that natural resources played a key role in settlement patterns. This includes water as a source of power for grist mills and saw mills, and also the abundance of timber and of fertile soil to grow grain. One of the panels, featuring a cutaway as if you were looking into the mill, will focus on how the mill operates, with emphasis on the role of running water as a power source.

Grist Mill Interpretive Tour

Location

In and just outside the Grist Mill

Objectives

After engaging with this interpretive opportunity, visitors will:

- Understand the importance of mills during the time of the war.
- Understand how a grist mill works, including the need to have running water as a source of power.
- Have engaged in trying to grind grain into flour (this is a simple interactive that was included in the interpretive opportunities at Thompson's Mills in Shedd, Oregon).

Themes

Interpretive Theme TNF 2-1: The Thompson-Neely family succeeded in large part because of the natural features and resources available to them.

Interpretive Theme TNF 1-1: The encampment brought hardships to the Thompson-Neely family, similar to those of many colonists within the war zone.

Description and Concept

This is a guided tour of the mill, with the content focused on the following:

- How a grist mill operates;
- The importance of flowing water (with the embedded story of why the Thompson-Neely grist mill had to be moved because of the canal);
- The status of Bucks County as part of a 'breadbasket' because of how much flour it produced.
- The story of the importance of flour to help feed the army, the issues Washington had getting flour from the people in Bucks County (which should highlight the fact that not all colonists were in favor of the war), and the subsequent action by Washington to seize the mill and grain.

Modifications to facilitate the Grist Mill Interpretive Experience

The visitor interpretive experience could be improved by taking the following actions:

- Plant wheat around the mill.
- Construct a fully accessible path that connect the parking area to the interpretive stop along the access path from the Thompson-Neely Farmstead.

Bowman's Tower Interpretive Experience: Introduction

The tower was built by Washington Crossing Park staff beginning in 1929 as a memorial to Washington and his men who crossed the Delaware. The structure, therefore, doesn't really have a story it 'tells' other than one that might be associated with architecture or building materials or the mood of the nation at that time. Interpreters at the park have connected the site to the story of Washington crossing the Delaware by noting that he probably had spies on the hill because it was a high point with a clear view across the river to land held by the opposing forces. However, telling that story might be confusing for some visitors as they might assume that the tower was actually there at the time. In fact, not only was the tower not there, the trees may not have been either.

Whereas the view from the ground level is limited to the tower and the surrounding trees, the view from the top of the tower extends for miles, creating the opportunity to tell several stories, all of which would focus on the natural environment and its impact on cultural activity. However, technology now affords us the opportunity to tell that story on the ground while looking at the surrounding landscape from an oblique aerial perspective, which is a plus from an ADA standpoint and simply from an accessibility standpoint for those who would have difficulty climbing to the top of the tower.

Bowman's Tower Interpretive Experience: Strategies

Interpretive Panel Cluster

Location

At the bottom of the tower.

Objectives

After engaging with this interpretive opportunity, visitors will:

- Be aware that the tower was not present at the time of the crossing, although it was built to commemorate the crossing.
- Understand why Washington may have posted lookouts on the hill.
- Be interested in climbing to the top of the tower.
- Be satisfied in general even if they cannot climb to the top of the tower (which would be because of the opportunity to 'see' the same view as those on the top would have).
- Be interested how the natural features where they live affected the development of that area.

Themes

Interpretive Theme BT 1-1: As in the world in general, natural features and resources have had and continue to have significant impact on cultural activity in this area.

Interpretive Theme WCD 2-1: The Delaware River and surrounding topography played a major role in the 10 Crucial Days.

Interpretive Theme TNF 2-2: Transportation routes, which were either rivers, river valleys, or routes dictated by topography, played a key role in cultural activity in the area throughout human history.

Description and Concept

This set of panels and other elements clarifies when and why the tower was built. It also includes the opportunity to access a 360° view of the area taken from the top of the tower or from a point higher in elevation (such as an image taken by a drone) to allow visitors who can't access the top to get the same view as they would have if they had been able to climb to the top. The associated story would focus on the impact of the natural landscape on cultural activity, with emphasis on the importance of the river as a travel corridor connecting rural areas to cities, which in turn had impact on settlement patterns. The story can be tied to the location of the Thompson-Neely household, and that the success of the family that was due in part to being directly adjacent to a travel route (the river) so they could ship products to markets. Although the story of the river as a barrier, one of the roles it played at the time of the crossing, could be told, I suggest simply focusing on the impact of the landscape in general and let the story of the river as a barrier be told at the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive area, where visitors can see the river and the New Jersey bank.

Top of Tower Interpretive Opportunity

Location

This is located on top of Bowman's Tower.

Objectives

These will be essentially the same objectives as the ones at the interpretive opportunity on the ground.

Themes

The same themes apply to the interpretive panel cluster and the Top of the Tower Interpretive Opportunity.

Description and Concept

This interpretive opportunity tells the same story as below, but does not require technology to provide the view. However, technology (a smart phone at least) will be necessary to access any information much beyond identifying directions and features. I suggest when the time comes to implement this strategy that you consider the most recent technology similar to a vodcast or podcast to deliver information.

Modifications to facilitate the Bowman's Tower Interpretive Experience

The visitor experience could be improved by taking the following actions:

- Since the goal is to have a world class park, this site and building need to be cleaned up so it looks well taken care of.
- The Interpretive opportunities need to be improved / expanded, with some provided through the use of new media (cell phone technology, apps, etc.).

Action Plan

Introduction

The following is a recommended course of action for implementing the Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan for Washington Crossing Historic Park. The next section contains the details of a phased approach to implementing the plan. That is followed by tables listing the changes to the infrastructure, orientation and wayfinding strategies to implement, interpretive strategies to implement, and additional actions to take.

Priority was established using the following criteria:

- Major changes to the infrastructure, especially those that disturb ground, will require significant lead time.
- Major interpretive elements will require significant lead time to develop designs.
- Visitors can have a great experience without interpretation, but not without orientation and wayfinding information, so orientation and wayfinding are higher on the priority list.
- A good visitor experience already exists, so actions that are not taken until later Phases does not mean that interpretation in that particular area or focusing on a particular topic is not available. For example, developing new exhibits for the museum is in Phase 3, but the existing exhibits can still be used until the museum area has to be modified.
- Safety is of paramount importance
- The overall visitor experience is more important than the interpretation
- Orientation and wayfinding are more important than interpretation
- Thematic interpretive overview is more important than interpretive detail
- Taylorsville is less important than the rest of the lower section of the park and less important than the upper section of the park
- Bowman's Tower is not crucial for telling the story of Washington's Encampment and Crossing the Delaware, but it is a highly important part of the park because of high visitation
- Visible projects with tangible results are important because they help establish that the park is changing, and build momentum
- Projects that the Friends Group is willing to take on are important to take advantage of their expertise and continue to have them involved at an integral level
- The reenactment is a critical part of the interpretive network
- The places people are more likely to go have higher priority. This means the Riverview Room exhibits are more important than redoing the museum; the Thompson-Neeley Home is more important than the Grist Mill, etc.

Phase 1: Upgrading the Basic Visitor Experience

Phase 1 contains actions that can be accomplished relatively quickly, and improve what is already a good visitor experience, which can then be the basis for improving the visitor *interpretive* experience. In other words, the focus is on all of the actions necessary to improve the visitor experience, with most of the interpretive opportunities being developed in later phases. That does not mean planning and design of those interpretive opportunities should wait until later phases. Phase 1 should start immediately, with many of the actions continuing rather than ending at the end of Phase 1.

Note: Priority within a phase will be the decision of Pennsylvania DCNR based on budget, staffing and other factors.

Parkwide Actions

The following actions affect more than one part of the park. Note that they are not listed in order of priority.

1. **Begin developing additional marketing venues.** This will be ongoing through the next two phases.
2. **Develop a Sign Plan.** This has to precede any upgrade or directional and orientation signage in the park.
3. **Design and install the family of Park Orientation Panels.** These will have to be updated whenever significant changes occur, consequently, the designer should focus on a method for upgrade that reduces cost as much as possible without sacrificing the 'high class' appearance of the signage.
4. **Install exterior directional signage.**
5. **Evaluate Environmental Education programs.** Environmental Education programs should continue because they provide a lot of return on investment as long as they focus on communicating key messages. However, they should be evaluated to determine whether they are consistent with and help reach park goals. EE programs can help reach goals by:
 - Collaboration between friends and EE staff ensure messaging is addressing same story
 - Building strong relationships with teachers;
 - Creating opportunities to communicate key messages;
 - Establishing value for the site by the community;
 - Increasing visibility of and interest in the park;
 - Establishing reasons to visit on a regular basis. This is not necessarily by bringing school children as part of a class, although that is important, but rather establishing reasons to come other than with a school group, such as to engage in Citizen Science projects and recreational opportunities.
6. **Create a mechanism for evaluating events and then evaluate existing events along with additional ideas for events.** In general, events are positive in that they bring visibility and help build a relationship with residents. That does not mean that all events are of equal value. Events take staff and volunteer time and resources, so it is crucial that events bring the highest return on that investment. Criteria should be established for evaluating existing events and ideas for new events. The criteria could be a list of questions such as the following:
 - Does the event create positive visibility?
 - Does the event build relationships with target audiences?
 - Does the event help establish value in the eyes of target audiences?
 - Does the event include opportunities to communicate key messages?
 - Does the event make progress towards goals and objectives?

To establish priorities, a scale needs to be associated with each question because all of the events offered in 2018 would probably receive a 'yes' answer to each question, yet all of them

are not equivalent in terms of return on investment. In addition, other ideas for events already exist and more will be forthcoming. At some point staff time and resources will be maxed out, so a method is needed to determine which events to keep and which ones to eliminate.

7. **Begin working with the local and state transportation agencies to install clear directional signage to and from the park, and to install a light at the pedestrian crosswalk linking the visitor center to the parking areas.**
8. **Work with Google** to correct issues with guiding visitors to Washington Crossing State Park in New Jersey instead of Washington Crossing Historic Park.
9. **Train all volunteers and staff to be effective Tour Guides and Roving Interpreters.** This is the quickest and easiest way to provide interpretation using a strategy that can be adjusted on the spot to accommodate different audiences, and updated and modified overnight. (Consider hosting a Certified Interpretive Guide training.)
10. **Modify all tours** so the presentations are consistent with the messaging. This includes the tour in the Lower Section, and the tour of the Thompson-Neely Farmstead.
11. **Upgrade websites (official WASH website and Friends website) to reflect messaging and new plan, and improve the navigation on the sites.** Information on the website needs to be evaluated and modified so it aligns with the Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan. For example, the information on the Thompson-Neeley Farmstead starts out by stating that it was a field hospital, a conclusion that is not supported in the interpretive plan. It could also be improved by adopting the themes from the plan and applying them to the write-ups on different locations. Using the Thompson-Neely Farmstead as an example, it could be modified to be message-driven rather than information driven. If the goal is to attract visitors, then the story of the issues faced by the Thompson-Neelys during the Encampment should be the basis for selecting information to present, which would likely include their lifestyle before the war to act as a foil for what they had to endure during the war. The farmstead could also be used as a foil to tell the post-war story of the plight of those in Pennsylvania. Note that any upgrades that can't occur on official site due to restrictions should be done on the Friends' site.

Lower Section of Park

12. **Upgrade Reenactment for viewers (more bleachers, more heated and sheltered space, live stream into Riverview Room).** This is the iconic opportunity at the park, and the one opportunity that cannot be duplicated anywhere else. Although no specific strategies have been identified in the plan, some opportunities related to the reenactment were discussed, such as a live stream in the Riverview room so people could watch from there, installing additional bleachers, and expanding the amount of viewer space that is sheltered and heated.
13. **Install directional signage within visitor center.**
14. **To the extent possible, restrict access to parking area entry directly across from the rear of the Visitor Center.** This could be done using a gate to allow flexibility for the future. The purpose is

not so much to restrict access by vehicles, but rather to discourage pedestrians crossing the main road from that access point.

15. **Begin planning and design of the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail**, including any necessary subsurface investigations, and including the interpretive opportunities so they can be put in place as soon as the trail is completed.
16. **Begin the re-design of the information desk *area* in the Visitor Center**. This includes planning for the **Self-Serve Orientation area**.
17. **Begin design of modifications for museum space. This needs to occur before design of exhibits.**
18. **Begin design of the exhibits for the Riverview Room in the Visitor Center**
19. **Develop accession / deaccession policies for the museum and begin acquiring and disposing of artifacts as dictated by those policies.**
20. **Revise furnishings in McConkey's Ferry Inn as directed to help tell the stories established for that site.**
21. **Begin design of the new access pathway from the parking lot furthest from the visitor center, including a new crosswalk**. Also design the information kiosk to be installed at the junction of the parking area and visitor pathway.

Upper Section of Park

22. **Change the name of the upper section of the park on all signage, literature and websites.**
23. **Begin planning the changes to the infrastructure in the Upper Section**. The changes include building a new parking area close to the river, modifying the existing parking area for handicapped parking only, developing the pathway from the new parking area to access all the attractions, including the Grist Mill, installing a Contact Station, repurposing or removing other structures along the new pathway, developing the site for the Thematic Overview Panels, and putting in restrooms.

At the conclusion of Phase 1, the following major changes should be complete:

- All orientation and wayfinding strategies should have been implemented;
- All tours should have been upgraded to reflect the messaging;
- The planning and design of major modifications to the Visitor Center (information desk area and museum), lower park (Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail), upper park (parking area, pathway);
- The design of exhibits should be complete.

Phase 2: Initial Interpretive Program and other Improvements

Recommendations in this phase focus on continuing optional site improvements, providing thematic overview, and providing some detail on key stories.

General

1. **Create the Thematic Overview film for auditorium.**
2. **Develop the 10 Crucial Days Passport, ideally in partnership with other sites.**
3. **Develop the Discovery Guide.**

Lower Section of Park

4. **Re-locate stone monument** near proposed beginning of Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail.
5. **Complete the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail** and design, fabricate, and implement/install all associated interpretive opportunities.
6. **Modify the information desk area in the Visitor Center**, including modifying the Information Desk, developing the Self-Serve Orientation area, and adding additional elements called for in the plans.
7. **Modify the infrastructure associated with the museum and design the museum exhibits.**
8. **Design, fabricate and install the exhibits for the Riverview Room.**
9. **Design, fabricate and install the Interpretive Panel Cluster for Taylorsville.**
10. **Develop the stand for the Durham Boat along with associated interpretation** (this depends more on the Friends Group rather than the park).

Upper Section of Park

11. **Design and install Thematic Overview panels at Thompson-Neely Farmstead.**
12. **Modify the entire infrastructure associated with the Thompson-Neely farmstead site.** In other words, put in the new parking area and modify the old one; put in the information kiosk for the new parking area; create the new trail along the east side of the site, create a new contact station, repurpose or remove other structures along the route, upgrade the access path to the Grist Mill, and install new restrooms.

13. **Design and implement Farmstead Interpretive Panel Cluster** at the Thompson-Neeley Household.

14. **Upgrade the Bowman Tower site.**

At the end of Phase 2, the following *major* changes should be complete:

- Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail completed along with all interpretation (includes relocating the stone monument);
- Riverview Room exhibits completed;
- Infrastructure changes to the Visitor Center completed;
- Thematic Overview film for the auditorium completed;
- Revised layout of Thompson-Neeley farmstead site completed;
- Bowman Tower site upgraded.

Phase 3: Filling out the Interpretive Network

This phase focuses on completing the rest of the information network and infrastructure modifications to support the visitor experiences.

General

1. **Review the Visitor Interpretive Experience Plan** and revise as necessary based on information gleaned from actions taken in Phase 2, and from any changes in context.
2. **Complete the video tour** for the website.

Lower Section of Park

3. **Design, fabricate and install all the museum exhibits.**
4. **Repair and upgrade area near ferry landing.**
5. **Construct a replica ferry**, with associated interpretive panel and additions to guided tours.
6. **Repair the Embarkation Point Memorial.**

Upper Section of Park

7. **Design, fabricate and install the panel cluster at the Grist Mill.**
8. **Revise the interpretive opportunities at Bowman's Tower. This includes both the Interpretive Panel Cluster at the base, and the Top of the Tower interpretive opportunities.**

Priorities for Actions

The priority categorization into high, medium and low is self-explanatory. The ‘NA’ designation means Not Applicable.’ It is given to actions that are so simple that you should simply do them as soon as possible. The first table contains priorities for modifications to infrastructure, first for the lower park, then the upper park and finally, Bowman’s Tower. The second table focuses on changes to the Orientation and Wayfinding Network. The final table focuses on interpretive opportunities to develop. When applicable, actions have been grouped to indicate that they should be a part of a single project.

Major Infrastructure Modifications

The following table contains the recommendations for modifications to infrastructure. The information is arranged by section of the park – Lower, Upper and Bowman’s Hill Tower – and arranged within each section into high, medium and low priority.

Lower Section of Park		
Change	Priority	Comment
Build the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail pathway with associated benches	High	All components of the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail, including the interpretive strategies, should be developed as one project.
Relocate the stone memorial that interferes with the beginning of the Washington Crossing the Delaware interpretive trail	High	The priority is high because it affects the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail, which is a high priority
Construct the structure for the boat and put boat on structure (associated interpretive opportunities will be developed as part of the Interpretive Trail)	High	This is a good project for the Friends Group.
Create a walkway associated with the parking that takes people from both parking areas to pedestrian crosswalks. Also install signage at the access road off Route 32 indicating the location of the pedestrian crossing. Restricting use of the entry road across from the Visitor Center by pedestrians should occur at the same time.	High	This is a safety issue. Ideally, the new pathway from the new primary parking area would be developed concurrently.
Upgrade the infrastructure for visitors to view the Re-enactment (install additional bleachers and additional areas sheltered and heated).	High	This strategy is one that is quite popular and highly visible.
Install a live stream in the Riverview Room to accommodate more visitors to the Re-enactment	High	
Create a safer walkway between the parking areas and visitor	High	This is a safety issue

center, ideally by installing some type of light		
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Develop the pathway from the new primary parking area to the existing trail system, including a wheelchair accessible spur to the Visitor Center	Medium	The kiosk with orientation and wayfinding information should be developed at the same time, along with any additional directional signage.
Create information kiosk for new parking area	Medium	Should be developed when new pathway to visitor center is developed
Modify the existing information desk in the Visitor Center	Medium	
Redevelop museum space	Medium	
Repair the Embarkation Point Memorial	Low	Unless this is a safety hazard. If so, it should be moved up
Repair river access behind McConkey's Inn (near bridge) for future placement and use of replica ferry	Low	
Construct a replica ferry	Low	The Friends Group is currently working on this project, and want to use it during re-enactments
Remove the '10 Crucial Days' map in the Taylorsville area	NA	This is currently used during all tours so it should be replaced at the same time the panels are created for the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail.
Remove the existing orientation panel on the parking area side of the road adjacent to the pedestrian crosswalk	NA	This panel does not contribute much and should be removed.
Upper Section of Park		
Change out the objects inside the house to reflect the stories being told	High	This is relatively simple and needs to be done at the same time the tours are revised and tour guides trained.
Construct new parking area and repurpose old parking area except for handicapped parking	Medium	All of the infrastructure changes should happen at one time, with the possible exception of the demolition work necessary to remove structures that interfere with telling the story.
Construct new accessible pathway from new parking area all the way to the grist mill	Medium	This could be extended to the Soldier's Graves
Remove/repurpose other buildings along route between new parking area and bridge that are not historic and do not contribute to the story	NA	

Develop a Contact Station in one of the old buildings along the route between the new parking area and the interpretive panel cluster in front of the house, and repurpose / remove other structures along the route.	Medium	
Construct restrooms (or install porta-potties) at Contact Station	Medium	
Remove existing orientation / interpretation kiosk associated with old parking	Medium	
Design and build new orientation / interpretation kiosk associated with the new parking area and new trail.	Medium	
Take out the sheds on the east side of the Thomson-Neeley House	NA	If the sheds do not interfere with the interpretation, they can be a low priority. Otherwise they should be removed as part of the project to redevelop the site.
Bowman's Hill Tower		
Upgrade the site, parking and access to tower and site	Medium	

Orientation and Wayfinding Network

As noted in the list of criteria, Orientation and Wayfinding strategies are a need while interpretation is an option. Consequently, the basic orientation and wayfinding strategies are at least medium priority with most being high priority. The web sites are a part of the network of marketing strategies.

General		
Work with PA DOT to upgrade directional signage to park	High	
Work with Google to ensure that people calling up the park on their GPS are not sent to Washington Crossing State Park in New Jersey.	High	
Create Washington Crossing Historic Park Guide and Map Brochure	High	
Develop a Sign Plan	High	This needs to be done before designing the directional signage.
Upgrade Friends Web Site	High	
Install exterior directional signage	High	A Sign Plan, noted in the final table, needs to be developed before any new signage.
Install directional signage within visitor center	High	See above
Change the name of the upper section on all signage, literature and websites	High	
Develop and install the family of Park Orientation Panels	High	Termed a 'family' because although each panel will have the same information, all will be oriented based on the way a visitor is facing when reading the panel, regardless of whether that is north.
Develop Self-Serve Orientation area in Visitor Center	Medium	
Create the video tour for the website	Low	
Upgrade WASH web site	Low	

Interpretive Opportunities

The following table contains the recommendations arranged by section of park – Lower, Upper and Bowman’s Hill Tower – and arranged within each section into high, medium and low priority. Strategies affecting both the Upper and Lower sections are classified as ‘General.’

General		
Modify all Guided Tours to reflect the themes	High	Includes tours in both Lower and Upper Sections of park
Train Tour Guides (volunteers and staff) both for tours and as Roving Interpreters	High	
Develop the 10 Crucial Days Passport	Med	Developing interpretive opportunities in the park is a higher priority than a strategy focused on providing an interpretive opportunity that encompasses other sites.
Lower Section		
Develop the interpretive strategies for the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail.	High	Includes panels and other strategies for providing information – the pathway and associated opportunities should be considered a single project.
Modify the array of objects in each room of the Inn to reflect the specific story being told in that room (including the attic)	High	
Design and implement interpretation associated with Durham Boat, including structure for supporting a boat outdoors	Medium	This is in addition to the panel on the boats associated with the Washington Crossing the Delaware Interpretive Trail.
Design, fabricate and install Riverview Room exhibits	Medium	Includes The Crossing; 10 Crucial Days; and A Summation of the Event
Create the Thematic Overview film	Medium	
Create Discovery Guide	Medium	
Add audio components for the Inn	Low	Because these are guided tours, the guide can provide the necessary information, so the addition of recommended audio components can be delayed. That does not mean the Inn should not be set up to reflect the progression of stories.
Design, fabricate and install historic Taylorsville interpretive signs	Low	No construction is needed to create the trail, just the interpretive opportunities, which consist of the Taylorsville Interpretive Panel cluster.
Design, fabricate and install museum exhibits	Low	The museum redevelopment should occur first, or in conjunction with developing the museum exhibits.

Upper Section		
Design, fabricate and install Thematic Overview Interpretive Panel Cluster	High	
Thompson-Neeley House Guided Tours, including training of Tour Guides (volunteers and staff)	High	This is about training guides and reworking tours to reflect messaging.
Grist Mill Guided Tours / Talks, including training of Tour Guides (volunteers and staff)	Medium	This is about training guides and reworking tours to reflect messaging.
Design, fabricate and install Farmstead Interpretive Panel Cluster	Low	
Design, fabricate and install Grist Mill Interpretive Panel Cluster	Low	
Bowman's Hill Tower		
Design, fabricate and install Bowman's Tower Interpretive Panel Cluster	Medium	
Design, fabricate and install Top of the Tower Interpretive Opportunities	Medium	

Other Actions

The following are actions that should be taken to help facilitate the functioning of the park and promote the experiences.

Develop a sign plan	High	This is a key plan to develop because all signage should reflect the guidelines that will be a part of such a plan, and any terms on the signage should be the same terms that appear on maps.
Develop a set of criteria to evaluate events and evaluate them to determine whether they should be retained as is, retained but modified, or eliminated.	High	
Develop an accession / deaccession policy for the museum that applies to current collections and future donations based on the stories to tell identified in this plan	High	
Develop 10 new marketing venues over the next 5 years	Ongoing	Consider upgrading the basic visitor experience before focusing on bringing more people to the park.
Develop 5 new marketing opportunities each year to promote other sites in the story.	Ongoing	This differs from the previous action in that it focuses on marketing sites associated with WCHP rather than the park.
Develop criteria for evaluating Environmental Education	Medium	

offerings and evaluate those offerings to determine what to retain as is, retain but modify (at least to reflect the new set of themes), or eliminate.		
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Appendix A: Background Information

Target Audiences

Introduction

Information - including interpretation - is a commodity; people have to buy it with their time, a highly valued personal resource, along with attention and cognitive effort. They also incur opportunity cost; in other words, if they spend time reading a sign or walking an interpretive trail, they can't spend that time doing anything else. Since different people "buy" different interpretive experiences, it is important to identify the key target audiences, and then build profiles of those different visitor groups to determine the type of interpretive experiences they are *willing* to "buy" with their time, and the level at which the information must be presented so they are *able* to process given their knowledge and background. Ideally, the audiences you want to reach are ones that will help achieve your goals, even if those audiences are not currently or never will actually visit the park.

In general, experiences that visitors are willing to buy can generally be described as ones that:

- Meet their **needs**;
- Meet their **expectations**;
- Are within their **limitations** of time, money, energy, and other such personal resources;
- Are **opportunities** that compete successfully with other options for spending time, usually through association with interests that were the primary reason for visiting?

Needs include such basic amenities as food, shelter, and restrooms. The key information-related need is orientation and wayfinding. Interpretation is an option. Consequently, orientation and wayfinding must be addressed at the beginning of and throughout the visitor experience.

Expectations are more variable because they are created by previous experience, what people hear and what they read.

Limitations are factors that prevent someone from engaging in an experience or interpretive opportunity, such as not knowing the language in which it is presented, and factors that tend to offset the reward for engaging in an experience and can therefore cause a potential user to bypass an opportunity. For example, visitors are often on vacation and do not want to 'work'—either physically or mentally—at their recreation unless the personal benefit is worth the time and effort required. Limitations can be related to physical ability, language, education level and other characteristics.

Opportunities that can compete for a person's time typically relate to a visitor's interests. Although those interests can exist prior to arrival, they can also be generated by what they see or hear on a guided tour, or by features they encounter. On-site features are of key importance because they represent one of the best opportunities to capture the interest of a visitor and begin the communication process.

Key Target Audiences

The focus of the audience analysis in Visitor Interpretive Experience Planning is to first determine the target audiences and then analyze those audiences to determine what type of *experiences* would attract them to the park and/or that they would engage with when here. Once that is accomplished, interpretive opportunities can be identified that add value to those experiences, as the target audience defines value, and that they are willing to engage with and able to understand. Potential key target audiences for WASH include those listed below. Note that a person can belong to more than one target audience, such as families and residents.

- Local residents
- Residents of Pennsylvania, especially under-represented groups
- Families
- Children on school field trips
- People with physical impairments (sight, hearing and mobility). Addressing these groups will also address the elderly as it is loss of physical ability that affects experiences that meet their limitations rather than age.
- Citizens of the U.S.
- People from outside the U.S. (If the desire is to be a world class site, you need to be visited by people from the rest of the world.)

Audience Characteristics

Regardless of the target audience, it must be assumed that all preferred learning styles and all physical impairments will be represented. It also must be assumed that children will be a part of any audience as will the elderly. Consequently the following characteristics must be considered when choosing and developing visitor interpretive experiences.

All Visitors

The following characteristics and limitations apply to almost every situation and every audience.

Characteristic: All visitors will expect anyone associated with the park to answer basic questions regarding basic cultural and natural history, especially the cultural history surrounding Washington crossing the Delaware.

Implication: All on-site staff need to be able to answer basic questions and direct visitors to on-site locations where they can obtain additional information.

Characteristic: Visitors will expect orientation information to interpretive and recreational opportunities in the surrounding area (what is there to do around here?), especially opportunities with a similar focus as the park (what other sites tell stories of the American Revolution?).

Implication: Staff should be prepared to answer such questions, particularly regarding sites telling a part of the same story.

Characteristic: A significant percentage of visitors can be reached using social media such as Twitter, Blogs and Facebook, and a significant percentage of visitors are comfortable with and prefer using new technologies, such as vodcasts, podcasts and GPS-based tour programs.

Implication: New media should be used as part of the information delivery network when appropriate to the audience and situation.

Characteristic: Many travelers plan part of their trip, including general itinerary, prior to arriving. Many will use the INTERNET to access information in order to plan.

Implication: Marketing, trip planning and orientation and wayfinding information should be available on the INTERNET.

Characteristic: People tend to visit in groups, typically family or friends. Families and other similar groups have a variety of educational levels within the group.

Implications: This characteristic has several implications:

- Interpretive opportunities such as signs and exhibits should be designed to accommodate at least small groups.
- Also, the interpretive program should provide opportunities that allow all members of a family or group to be involved at the same time and place, despite having different educational or experiential backgrounds. This can be accomplished by providing several opportunities in one location, each catering to a different educational level, or a single strategy that is designed in such a way that everyone in the group has an intellectual entry point into that exhibit.
- The interpretive program must offer opportunities that are understandable to audiences with limited expertise and knowledge.

Characteristic: Families tend to visit more often in summer months, when most school children are on summer vacation. Older visitors are better represented in the shoulder seasons.

Implication: This characteristic has several implications:

- Parts of the interpretive network should be able to be easily changed to take advantage of seasonal changes in audiences.
- Programs in the summer months should be more family-oriented.

Characteristic: People visiting an unfamiliar area are focused initially on meeting needs, including the need to feel confident in their ability to navigate the unfamiliar environment.

Implication: It is important for the orientation and wayfinding network to be designed to make all visitors comfortable and confident in their ability to find their way around. This will help alleviate concern on the part of any visitor regarding their ability to find their way around in the park, and back to wherever they need to go. Such a concern is common among people navigating an unfamiliar environment, such as people from other countries and people who were raised in urban areas.

Characteristic: Visitors will have varying limitations in terms of energy, time, and interests.

Implications: This characteristic has several implications:

- To the extent possible, the interpretive program should offer opportunities to “skim,” “browse,” or “gorge” the information to accommodate preferences and to accommodate visitors on a tight schedule.
- The interpretive program should provide an ‘opportunity menu’ that lists time required for each activity and suggested itineraries based on time available. For example, it should suggest an itinerary for the visitor that has a half-hour, 2 hours and a half-day.
- Frequent and well-placed opportunities to sit and rest in the shade will enhance the experience for many people.
- To the extent possible, the interpretive program should present information in a way that is rewarding, within a visitor’s limits imposed by a ‘leisure’ activity, and organized according to themes to eliminate unnecessary effort.

Characteristic: Many visitors will have a general lack of knowledge regarding the American Revolution, while others will have a significant amount of knowledge.

Implication: The Interpretive Program must not assume knowledge of the war. Visitors must have the opportunity to start at a point that assumes little or no knowledge, but they also must have the option of skipping to an entry point based on their knowledge.

Characteristic: Any given group of people is likely to have one or more preferred learning styles within the group. The suggested number of different learning styles depends on the model. The most common model has 3 - visual, auditory and kinesthetic; others have more. Regardless, within any given audience you will have those who are more likely to engage with experiences involving social interaction, others who are more likely to engage in experiences offering the opportunity for ‘hands-on,’ and those who want to ‘see’ what you are trying to communicate.

Implications: Since audiences are voluntary participants, offering information in the preferred learning style of the participant is more likely to be successful; if they are uncomfortable it is likely they will choose not to participate. Since all learning styles are likely to be represented in any one group, optional learning environments should be created to accommodate each group. For example:

- **Hands-on.** An environment where visitors can work ideas and concepts out for themselves.
- **Observation:** An environment where visitors can collect, analyze and reflect on information to come up with a concept. Information can be presented in a myriad of forms, such as images, sounds, text, scents, and textures. It can also be presented in person, although interaction should not be forced.
- **Social:** Most people visit in groups within which social interaction in relation to the information being presented will occur. Create opportunities for groups to discuss ideas. This is especially important for families. Also, if possible, create an environment with the option of asking someone questions.

Families

Characteristic: Families are made up individuals of many ages.

Implications: There is a need for a variety of interpretive strategies to address numerous learning styles and education levels. Experiences need to be within close proximity to amenities.

Characteristic: Families often have strict time limits based on the needs of various members.

Implication: Experiences need to be at convenient times and flexible in order to adapt to family needs.

Characteristic: Families have a need for a sense of safety and security.

Implications: Facilities need to be well-maintained, accessible, and secure. Guidelines for safety need to be well-communicated for experiences.

Characteristic: Family experiences are social.

Implications: Experiences need to engage the family as a whole, with parents facilitating activities for their children. Experiences need to engage all members of the family as individuals.

Children

Reaching children is not about dumbing down the information presented. It is about offering experiences in nature that help build emotional, physical and intellectual connections to the extent possible, and laying groundwork for understanding key concepts when they are older. Key characteristics include ones relating to their physical limitations and assets, and one relating to mental limitations.

Characteristics – Physical: Children are short. They also often have an abundance of energy.

Implications: Viewing opportunities and material addressed to children needs to be at a comfortable height. In addition, interpretation-related opportunities that involve expending energy should be identified and developed.

Characteristics – Mental: Children are a challenge because they have limitations regarding learning the same way as adults. Whereas adults can learn by processing incoming verbal information based on past experience and existing knowledge, children up to around the age of 8 do not have a vast storehouse of existing experiences and knowledge. Consequently they are primarily focused on acquiring information firsthand. Since they have not completely mastered the symbol system we call “language,” they use their primary information-gathering tools – their senses – to explore their environment.

Implications: Opportunities to touch, smell, taste, see and hear are critical to an effective experience for children. This is an important point because we often focus on the need for activities to be interactive, and believe we have accomplished our goal if they can push buttons.

Although the opportunity to interact in such a way increases the attraction power of an opportunity, if it is not an opportunity to discover information using senses, it is not nearly as effective for children in terms of gathering and processing information.

People with Disabilities

The ADA is a civil rights law ensuring that the 20% of the U.S. population with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in all areas of public life. Using a Universal Design Approach, which focuses on creating experiences that can be enjoyed by all parts of the target audience, including people with disabilities, involves integrating multiple delivery tactics that involve multiple senses within the same interpretive opportunity. The result is an overall array of experiences with opportunities for everyone.

A Universal Design Approach also benefits our aging population because it is physical change, such as deteriorating eyesight, hearing and mobility that are the core of the issues that older adults have with interpretive and recreational experiences, not their age. Therefore, a separate category for 'older adults' is not needed.

The overarching implication is that the interpretive program should adhere to universal design standards to make the information accessible to all people, despite any impairment, whether it is visual, auditory, physical or otherwise. The following are specific characteristics and implications based on specific disabilities.

Disability: People who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices

Note: *Surfaces that provide easy access for wheelchair users also generally work for people who use other mobility devices such as a walker or cane.*

Characteristic: Visitors who use manual wheelchairs, power wheelchairs and scooters sit at varying heights but are lower to the ground than a standing adult, making it harder to see objects and read text mounted at a height intended for someone standing.

Implication: Take into account the average sightline for adults who are shorter in stature or use wheelchairs as well as standing adults. Use where the sightlines overlap for mounting heights. A good set of guidelines can be found at: https://www.si.edu/Accessibility/SGAED#page_21.

Characteristic: Visitors who use wheelchairs or scooters need maneuvering clearance.

Implication: This has to be taken into account with all infrastructure – parking areas (accessible spaces), width of walkways, hallways, wheelchair locations integrated into the seating plan for a public program, etc.

Characteristic: Design exhibit interactives so they are within reach range of people who use wheelchairs as well as standing adults. The following is a link to Chapter 3: Building Blocks of the ADA Standards. The chapter focuses on information related to physical access. <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines->

[and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/ada-standards/chapter-3-building-blocks#308%20Reach%20Ranges](#)

Implication: Exhibits with text need to have it located at the right height and angle to be easily read from a wheelchair. All interpretive opportunities, including outdoor signage, needs to be designed for knee and toe clearance, thus allowing the person to get closer to text and other features of an exhibit. Pushbuttons and other devices that activate parts of the exhibit have to be within reach of someone sitting in a wheelchair.

Characteristic: Provide an accessible route from the exterior of a building, through the entrance and to all program spaces.

Implication: All areas of newly designed and newly constructed buildings and facilities and altered portions of existing buildings and facilities need to meet federal accessibility requirements.

Characteristic: Manually operating a wheelchair is physically challenging for some visitors depending upon the topography and surface they are navigating. Some people may need to move more slowly or tire more easily.

Implication: Program pace (in terms of speed when moving) must be slowed down. Plans should be made for additional time between program stops, and program routes may need to be shortened.

Characteristic: Visitors who use wheelchairs are just like able bodied visitors. Be inclusive in your program design and treat everyone in the same manner.

Implication: All elements of the Interpretive Program should be designed using a Universal Design Approach. That approach seeks to ensure that everyone can be involved in an interpretive opportunity at the same time and place.

Disability: People who are blind or have limited vision

Characteristic: Difficulty seeing clearly or at all.

Implication: Key information should be offered in an audio format, ideally with supporting tactile elements (which will also appeal to other audiences). To facilitate reading by those who are experiencing some loss of vision, fonts should be easily readable with font size large enough to achieve a high degree of probability that people with low vision will be able to read the text. Also use universal symbols when appropriate.

Characteristic: People with vision loss need mobility and orientation information to successfully navigate unfamiliar terrain.

Implication: An accessible route is equally accessible to people with mobility and vision disabilities. There must be at least 2030 mm (80 in.) of clear head room along the circulation route. Obstacles to be avoided include overhanging branches. Color contrast on the edge of a path can be useful.

Disability: People who are Deaf or have hearing loss

Characteristic: There is a range of hearing loss, from slight to profound. People who are Deaf often identify with the culture and language (American Sign Language) of their community.

Implication: Effective communication can be achieved through written materials, an accessible website, hiring a sign language interpreter for a program on request, and assistive listening equipment.

Residents

Characteristic: Since they live close to the park, local residents have a higher potential for repeat visits than people who live some distance from the park.

Implication: A changing variety of interpretive activities and programming are needed to keep them coming back to engage in the Interpretive Program.

Characteristic: Local residents feel a connection to the park as part of their community.

Implication: Residents of the area may feel a greater pull to become a volunteer or join the Friends groups.

Characteristic: Local audiences may not be aware of facilities, programs, and services offered by WASH.

Implication: Marketing strategies need to be revised to reach local audiences more effectively.

Additional potential characteristics of residents and associated implications

In addition to the characteristics noted for all audiences, the following are key characteristics of residents in general that probably apply to residents of the surrounding area and should be considered in developing the interpretive network.

Characteristic: Residents often have specific times when they could participate in interpretive opportunities, such as in the evening and during weekends. They are also present year-round. They are often interested in local issues because of direct impact on their lifestyle.

Implication: Serving residents effectively may require programs specifically designed for this audience or a segment of this audience, and scheduled at times they can attend.

Characteristic: Residents often prefer more in-depth material if about the area, and/or can handle more in-depth material because of familiarity with an area and local issues.

Implication: Opportunities to obtain material that is more in-depth, such as purchasing publications, should be available.

Characteristic: Some residents get to the point of considering a park 'theirs' and resent visitors from outside the area, especially when they interfere with activities in which the residents want to engage.

Implication: Having special programs that cater more specifically to residents may be effective in countering resentment by residents toward visitors.

Parameters

Introduction

Parameters are those conditions under which visitor experiences and the associated Interpretive Program must be developed, such as monetary constraints, and under which it must function, such as climate. They are also called 'givens,' 'circumstances' and 'constraints.' Identifying parameters ensures selection and development of experiences and interpretive and wayfinding strategies and infrastructure that are effective and realistic, not idealistic.

The following section contains key parameters. In reviewing the parameters, it is important to remember that they represent what is, not what should be or what is desired.

Key Parameters

Budget

B-1: Budget is not likely to be sufficient to implement everything recommended in the plan at the same time. The plan needs to be structured so it can be implemented using a phased approach. In addition, the first experiences developed should be highly visible with a high probability of quick return on investment to maintain momentum.

Staffing

S-1: WASH has a limited number of staff and volunteers trained to provide interpretive services. This has several implications:

- Although personal interpretive services should be offered whenever possible, the visitor interpretive experiences must be designed to function with no or limited number of staff to ensure a viable interpretive experience even when no staff are available.
- If additional living history or other interpretive opportunities requiring staff/ volunteers are to be developed, additional staff/volunteers will be necessary.
- Additional facilities / structures will require additional maintenance and perhaps additional security, both of which represent additional costs and need for increased budget.

Environmental Conditions

E-1: Weather can be harsh in the winter.

- Outdoor signs and structures must be constructed of materials resistant to the weather conditions (ice, freezing, damp).
- A more extensive array of indoor opportunities might be more effective in attracting and holding visitors during the winter.
- This is sometimes an issue during re-enactment because there is only one covered, heated tent.

E-2: Inclement weather can occur any time of the year, especially fall, winter and spring. If the park wants to sustain visitation all year, the type and extent of opportunities inside or in sheltered areas need to provide enough motivation for people to visit during those time periods.

Physical Infrastructure and Layout

PI-1: The Park consists of multiple non-contiguous parcels. Wayfinding is a potential issue. Also, access will typically involve getting back in a vehicle and traveling to other attractions in the park. This has several implications:

- A good orientation and wayfinding system should be developed
- Transportation, such as a regular shuttle, between the upper and lower park should be considered to reduce traffic on the roadway and issues with parking.

PI-2: The historic structures in the park do not all belong to the same historic period. This creates some challenges because from a landscape perspective, the visual scene is not accurate to any particular period.

PI-3: The upper section doesn't have a visitor center. A small staffed visitor center should be considered as it will help anchor the experience in that area.

PI-4: The lower section has a visitor center with an auditorium and exhibit areas. This is currently, and will continue to be, the hub for the park because of its size and proximity to the location where the crossing of the Delaware actually took place. Consequently, it needs to function as a hub, which involves providing an overview of the stories and then sending visitors elsewhere to get more of the story. In addition, it should provide a complete experience as it is the only sheltered and heated area in the park.

PI-5: Many of the historic structures are not fully accessible. Accessibility options must be examined for existing and historic structures. Accessibility of future structures must be developed. As the site includes uneven terrain that currently restricts persons in wheelchairs or with other mobility challenges from visiting the site, staff must examine alternatives, such as having outdoor/all-terrain wheelchairs available upon request. Finally, interpretive opportunities that offer the same information but are fully accessible need to be developed.

PI-6: Bowman's Tower is accessible only part way up the tower. To the best of DCNR's ability, the Interpretive Program needs to make information gained by going to the top of the tower accessible to everyone.

PL-7: The actual site of the crossing does not have any significant natural features marking it as such. Most of the cultural features were not present at the time Washington crossed the Delaware. The visual setting for the site is dominated by a bridge over the Delaware. These factors simply make it more incumbent upon associated interpretive opportunities to paint a clear picture of what happened.

Location and Access

LA-1: Washington Crossing Historical Park does not have public transportation access. Visitation may be capped due to parking area limitations. This may not be an issue except during major events.

Policy and Legal Issues

PL-1: All operations must comply with ADA rules and regulations. All information presented within the interpretive network will be accessible in some way for those with disabilities.

PL-2: State park policy requires that participants sign liability waivers before taking part in recreation programming. If the interpretive opportunity requires engaging in a recreational activity, such as kayaking, participants will need to sign-in before participating.

PL-3: Highway signs are under the jurisdiction of PA DOT. Components of the wayfinding system requiring additions/modifications to highway signage will require working with PA DOT, and will likely require a longer lead time than alterations to components that are within the jurisdiction of DCNR.

PL-4: Infrastructure needs to meet established state and agency policies. Restored structures need to meet established safety codes. New structures will need to be constructed to meet established codes. Both increase the cost of creating or restoring infrastructure.

PL-5: All modifications to existing structures and landscapes and development of new facilities and landscapes shall be consistent with DCNR policies, which promote:

- Environmentally sustainable land use
- Building uses compatible with existing historic construction and natural environment
- Appropriate partnerships to assure economic sustainability.

PL-6: Modifications to historical structures shall comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties.

Existing Information and Interpretive/Educational Opportunities

EI-1: WASH puts on a reenactment of Washington Crossing the Delaware every Christmas Day. People already come to this event in large numbers so this opportunity could be expanded to take advantage of the visitors being on-site and/or other opportunities can be marketed during the event.

Safety

S-1: The parking areas for the Visitor Center are across the roadway, with the pedestrian crossing located at the end furthest from the building, resulting in people crossing outside the crossing. This creates safety issues that need to be addressed.

S-2: There is some concern regarding children climbing on the boats. Perhaps a barrier of some kind is necessary.

S-3: The River is easily accessible. Water safety information should be communicated to all visitors.

Potentially Complementary/Competing Opportunities

PCO-1: The following offer interpretive opportunities associated with the story of Washington Crossing the Delaware. To the extent possible, the park should try to develop complementary opportunities rather than competing ones. That said, the story of Washington making the decision to cross the Delaware and attack the Hessians and the actual crossing are stories that are best told at the park because this is where it happened. The value of many of these sites is as a follow-up location to send visitors after they experience the interpretive opportunities at this park. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list (there are literally hundreds of sites in the area that either tell a part of the story or could be used in a tour).

- **Washington Crossing State Park (New Jersey):** Focuses on the 10 Crucial Days with emphasis on exhibits in their museum (because they have an extensive collection of artifacts). Most suited to tell the story of the Hunterdon Militia.
- **Princeton Battlefield:** Minimal interpretation. Focus is on the 3rd battle (Battle of Princeton) in the story of the 10 Crucial Days. This could be a complementary opportunity.
- **Trenton Battle Monument:** This marks the high point where Washington placed his cannon in the first battle of Trenton. No interpretation exists, parking is limited, and safety (from crossing streets to get to the monument) are issues.
- **Hessian Barracks in Trenton:** The barracks housed Hessians during the 10 Crucial Days. Interpretive opportunities offered on the site cover a wide range of topics in addition to the stories associated with the American Revolution.
- **Museum of the American Revolution (Philadelphia):** Provides great context for and impact from the crossing.
- **Reenactment of the Battle of Trenton (in Trenton):** This is a part of Patriot's Week in Trenton. It also includes walking tours, lectures and a variety of other visitor opportunities during the last week of December.

Other

O-1: Washington crossing the Delaware is a part of a larger story that includes Washington Crossing State Park in New Jersey and the city of Trenton. This creates the opportunity to develop an array of complementary opportunities and to focus on telling the stories that the features and events associated with the park are best suited for and let others tell other parts of the story.

O-2: The encampment story includes both sections of the park. An in-park transport system needs to be explored. In general, the likelihood of visitors simply going home increases if they get back into their cars to travel to another part of a site.

O-3: The reenactment of Washington crossing the Delaware has limited bleachers, making it difficult for many attendees to actually see the event. The existing event should be analyzed to determine if strategies exist for providing more viewing opportunities.

O-4: All orientation and wayfinding information – both fixed and non-fixed – are in English. If the park wants to attract audiences that speak other languages it may need to develop basic orientation, wayfinding and interpretive information in other languages.

O-5: If additional living history opportunities are to be developed, additional staff will be needed and training will be needed for staff portraying characters. This is an added cost in time and expense that has to be addressed in the planning.

O-6: Using animals as part of living history interpretive opportunities requires special care and handling of those animals. That cost has to be considered in determining whether to include animals.

O-7: The historical structures and landscapes in the park are critical for communicating key stories. Critical viewsheds need to be protected.

Inventory of Features

Introduction

The Visitor Interpretive Experience Planning Process includes selecting themes (messages) that will, if understood by the visitor, have the potential to cause a change in knowledge leading to an impact on behavior that is consistent with the DCNR goals. Stories are the vehicles for communicating the themes. People generally become more interested in a story when they can see something related to it, and they are more likely to believe what they see than what they only hear or read. Therefore, the more an interpretive opportunity connects with and uses actual artifacts, specimens, features and other sensory stimuli in conveying information, the more effective the opportunity will be. With that in mind, the inventory of potential stories within the context of Visitor Interpretive Experience Planning is focused on identifying sensory stimuli as a means of determining what stories can be told most effectively.

The following table contains some of the prominent features and stories that could be told using that feature. It does not include any of the collections, which include a myriad of items, such as:

- muskets,
- a bayonet,
- Hessian snuff box,
- a military manual,
- maritime objects,
- medical instruments,
- cannon balls,
- spurs,
- ironware,
- prints,
- reproduction cannon,
- Captain-Lieutenant James Moore's Headstone,
- a 1770's stove plate found in the archaeology of the mill (located in Harrisburg) and
- large variety of decorative arts.

The planning team also noted that the PHMC has a flag of the First Continental Regiment that they may lend, and the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia is willing to work with WASH by loaning artifacts, if needed.

The latter point is important in assessing the potential of a museum to communicate themes, because museums can establish the visual context through use and arrangement of artifacts, and they are in a position to borrow or replicate those artifacts. In other words, a museum is not limited to the features in the cultural and natural environment. It is also not limited by what is in the collections because they are in a position to borrow artifacts from other collections or create replicas. Therefore, although what is in the collections at this time is important, it is not a limiting factor to the stories that can be told. The next step for the museum is now to develop an Acquisition Policy focused on telling stories that support the themes established for the Interpretive Network.

Large Features and Associated Stories

Feature	Associated stories and comments
Thompson-Neely Farmstead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardships endured by people living in the war zone • The influence of transportation routes on cultural activity and development. • Early EuroAmerican lifestyles (as a foil for what the family had to endure during the Encampment)
Bowman's Hill Tower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WPA / CCC • Importance of high vantage points in military strategy • Possibly a location for a lookout attached to the army
Delaware River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of waterways (transportation routes) on extent and type of cultural activity • River as a barrier
McConkey's Ferry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of ferries in Washington's success during the 10 Crucial days • The influence of transportation routes on cultural activity and development.
Durham Boats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role in crossing the Delaware • Design as a function of context
Taylorsville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The influence of transportation routes on cultural activity and development.
Thompson-Neely Grist Mill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of a grist mill in the lives of the Thompson-Neelys • Importance of waterpower
Soldier's graves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the larger context of the story of the crossing
Pennsylvania Canal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of waterways (transportation routes) on extent and type of cultural activity
Leutze's painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the book 'Washington's Crossing,' by Fischer, a case is made that the painting can be used to tell valid and important stories regarding the fight for independence. The key elements in the painting are the clothes worn by the people in the boat and the cultural heritage of those people. The fact that the clothing is all different reflects the essence of the revolution – it was people from all walks of life, not just soldiers, joining together to fight for independence. As noted by the Planning Team, it is important to remember that Leutze had the advantage of seeing the impact of the revolution because he created the painting decades after the war was over. He was also trying to inspire his countrymen during a time of unrest and revolution throughout Europe.

Appendix B: Conditions Pre- and Post- Revolution in Pennsylvania

The following report was commissioned by Bucy Associates to ascertain the results of the war on the lives of colonists living in rural Pennsylvania.

Notes on Life in Rural Pennsylvania 1756-1799
by Dr. Brendan Bucy

The story of ordinary Pennsylvanians before and after The Revolutionary War is one of economic hardship. In the decade preceding the war, Pennsylvanian farmers, laborers, and artisans suffered from the wide-ranging effects of a cash shortage that resulted from British economic policies enacted to deal with the significant war debt incurred during the French and Indian War. In the decades following the Revolution, ordinary Pennsylvanians again suffered from a cash shortage, this time because of state and federal policies enacted to stabilize the economy in the aftermath of their great struggle for independence.

Pennsylvania was founded as a proprietary colony chartered to William Penn, who envisioned a colony of broad equality and toleration. In keeping with this vision, Pennsylvania was arguably the most open and diverse colony in early America, with broad equality based on extensive land-ownership. The colony's espoused toleration and its generous land grants to homesteaders attracted a broad range of settlers of different religious and ethnic backgrounds. Indeed, by 1755, nearly half the population was composed of settlers from countries other than Britain, and religious sects multiplied rapidly (Selsam, 1971, p. 4-5). What is more important for understanding the plight of Pennsylvanians under the British, perhaps, is the widespread land-ownership that resulted from those early land-grants. In colonial Pennsylvania, independence was largely equated with land-ownership (Bouton, 2007, p. 17). Land-owners tended to have a higher standard of living than wage-earners, and they had some political power by satisfying the land requirement to vote. In Pennsylvania this comfort and enfranchisement was widely shared. Indeed, 50% to 75% of Pennsylvanians owned enough land to vote, as compared to 15% in Britain (*ibid.*). Though this broad economic independence (if not equality) was a great source of stability in early Pennsylvania, it also lay the groundwork for the great *internal* revolution that Pennsylvania underwent in 1776. As one author notes, the revolution *within* Pennsylvania, based on an extreme suspicion and hatred of moneyed elites, was more radical than in any other colony (Rosswurm, 1987, p. 3). This emerging class tension that became so influential to the revolutionary vision of ordinary Pennsylvanians began with the French and Indian War.

The French and Indian War (Seven Years' War, 1756-1769) brought great hardship to ordinary Pennsylvanians. Not only did they struggle to furnish the militias with men and supplies for the war effort, but they were also taxed both during and after the war to pay for it. Those in the agrarian west, on the frontier, were most upset, since they had defended themselves against raiding Indians with their own lives and money and saw very little British investment in their defense. To then be taxed to pay for their defense was galling to the highest degree. In addition to this perceived injustice, the British also enacted policies that created a cash scarcity in Pennsylvania. The government in Pennsylvania had printed money to fund the war effort and the British, noting the depreciation in value that this had brought to the paper currency, decided to get their financial house in order by eliminating the local paper money. They taxed the currency out of existence and then enacted taxes for which they would only accept payment in gold or silver. This created extreme hardship for the colonists because ordinary Pennsylvanians relied on paper currency for the bulk of their transactions and gold and silver were scarce. Indeed, Britain had a policy of running a trade deficit in their colonies to ensure that money was always flowing to the mother country. The colonists had been in the habit of securing the gold and silver they needed by means of illegal trade with other countries—illegal because the Navigation Acts outlawed trade between the colonies in America and any country other than Britain. Illegal trade had been standard practice in America, but Britain began cracking down, cutting off this supply of hard currency. Hence, the Stamp Act (a tax on official documents) and the Townshend Acts (taxes on luxury goods, like tea) were so infuriating not just because of "taxation without representation" but because

they were taxes that could only be paid in hard currency, which was in shorter and shorter supply in the colonies because of Britain's other oppressive policies (Bouton, 2007, p. 18-23).

In addition to this, the scarcity of money prompted British creditors to call in their debts from Philadelphia merchants, who in turn called in their debts from shopkeepers, who in turn called in their debts from rural farmers who had borrowed to buy land, equipment, and supplies. This collapse of the credit lines in Pennsylvania hit "land-holding farmers of the middling sort" worst of all—they were well enough off to secure loans but poor enough to need them, and because they had borrowed when money was abundant and cheap and were forced to settle up when it was scarce and valuable, most could not pay. A slew of foreclosures followed. In some rural counties, there were enough foreclosures to reach over 50% of the population. Of course, there was no money and suddenly there was a lot of land for sale, so with little demand and an abundance of supply land prices dropped dramatically, meaning that these ruined farmers neither saved their land nor earned enough money from it to pay their debts. Shopkeepers, too, couldn't sell off their goods to pay their debts, since goods were abundant and money was scarce. In short, commerce came to a halt, and with no commerce, work came to a halt as well. By the end of the French and Indian War, the poverty rate in Philadelphia had risen 800% (Bouton, 2007, p. 24-28).

While the proportion of rural Pennsylvanians that were enfranchised was remarkable for that time, this did little to alleviate their suffering. Even though most Pennsylvanians were engaged in agriculture (Brunhouse, 1942, p. 1), their representatives still made up a minority in the General Assembly, which was dominated by easterners who didn't share their concerns (Selsam, 1971, p. 2). Moreover, "laws passed by popularly elected legislatures could be vetoed by the Penn family, the London Board of Trade, Parliament, or the king" (Bouton, 2007, p. 28-29). When they protested, they found their political rights to speak and assemble further limited.

These years of suffering and the class rivalry that developed between the downtrodden laborers and farmers and the well-connected, wealthy elites—both Pennsylvanian and British—fostered a "spirit of democracy" that animated the 1776 revolution within Pennsylvania (Selsam, 1971, p. 1). Following the French and Indian War, Pennsylvanians of all walks increasingly concluded that good government required political and economic equality. They sought "a new idea of governance in which the government worked to make ordinary white men independent property owners and to diminish the power of the affluent" (Bouton, 2007, p. 32). Rural farmers discovered the inadequacy of their political representation and this united them with eastern laborers, who were disenfranchised because they failed to meet the property requirement (Selsam, 1971, p. 2). These two groups formed the basis for the most radical branch of the revolutionary (Whig) party—they advocated an immediate break with Britain and they sought to replace the charter government with a more democratic constitution (Selsam, 1971, p. 95-97).¹ There was also a more moderate faction of the Whig party made up of merchants and lawyers and others who advocated opposition to the British but who wished to keep the charter government more or less intact. They wished to stop short of independence (Selsam, 1971, p. 95; Brunhouse, 1942, p. 12). Both of these factions opposed the conservative Tories (mainly the wealthy

¹ It's worth noting that, though these radicals were so committed to political and economic equality that they saw no possibility of remaining within the British empire, when the war was going poorly it was not clear that rural Pennsylvanians weren't eager to accept the favorable terms offered by the British. In the days leading up to Washington's crossing of the Delaware, droves of rural Pennsylvanians signed General Howe's proclamation guaranteeing them their property and political rights and the restoration of commerce in exchange for their allegiance to the king. The proclamation had already been a sweeping success in neighboring New Jersey, where the British had clear control of the field of battle. Washington's success at Trenton and beyond stemmed this popular tide of defection from the cause (McCullough, 2005, p. 258, 270).

and aristocratic whose influence depended on their connections to the proprietary family and government), who were loyal to the crown and wished to quell the rebellion (Selsam, 1971, p. 94-95, Brunhouse, 1942, p. 10).

While the moderate Whig faction was sympathetic to the radical faction, they still sided with the Tories, at least initially, in their opposition to independence from Britain. Thus, when Pennsylvania sent a delegation to the Continental Congress, they were given orders to vote against independence. It was not until Congress, bent on declaring independence, called on the colonies to form new governments friendly to the cause that the radicals gained the popular momentum they needed to overthrow the charter government. They usurped power and used their political momentum to install a radically democratic constitution in Pennsylvania—the Constitution of 1776. They instituted a unicameral legislature with no formal checks on its power and they eliminated the property requirement to vote or hold office. Moreover, they established a “Council of Censors” to oversee the government and ensure that it was acting in line with the new Constitution. The Council was composed of two delegates from each county, which inflated the power of the numerous but sparsely populated rural counties and diminished the power of the few but densely populated urban counties. This “guaranteed the Radicals the control of the State,” which was particularly troubling to the moderate Whig faction who felt that they were losing control of their movement. They therefore devoted themselves to reigning in the “rampant democracy” that was gaining power (Brunhouse, 1942, p. 12-15).

Having once supported the radicals against the “tyrannical” policies of the British, the moderate Whigs now found themselves in favor of enacting very similar policies. It was monetary policy, especially, that split the moderate faction from the radicals. Recognizing, as the British had, the devastating effects that the liberal printing of money had had on the economy, the moderates advocated eliminating the supply of paper money and instituting a financial system based on hard currency. “They enacted policies almost identical to the ones Britain had passed during the 1760s and 1770s: they tried to eliminate paper money and public land banks and then tried to enact new taxes payable only in gold and silver.” And knowing that this would be unpopular, they attempted to limit democratic power to ensure that their policies would not be overturned (Bouton, 2007, p. 62).

The goal was to stabilize American credit and get the fledgling country’s finances on track (Wilson, 1942, p. 6), but the advocates may have woefully underestimated the hardship they were imposing on rural and laboring Pennsylvanians, among others. The Continental Congress entrusted Robert Morris of Philadelphia with fixing the dire economic situation that the war had produced. Robert Morris came up with the idea of the Bank of North America, which would be a private bank that was publicly funded. It was chartered by Pennsylvania as well as the Continental Congress, since it was to be a national institution but based in Philadelphia and replacing the bank there. It would hold deposits of hard currency, which it could then lend out to keep in circulation, and it would issue bills based on its holdings. Because it was a private bank, there would be no incentive to heed popular demands to print more money. On the contrary, they would have every incentive to prevent the devaluation of money, since that devaluation would hurt the bank’s shareholders. What the Bank of North America failed to note—or chose not to note—was that they had far too little capital to put enough money into circulation to satisfy the needs of Pennsylvanians, let alone the rest of America. Consequently, there was, once again, a cash shortage that was, once again, most devastating to the poorer classes, since they had no spare resources to draw on. Moreover, the Bank of North America, unlike the banks it was replacing, refused to accept land as collateral for loans, so most farmers couldn’t secure the loans they needed. “[F]armers—the primary beneficiaries of the old land-bank system—received just 2 bank loans” of the 1,806 loans the Bank of North America approved from 1782 to 1783. As a result, farmers were forced to accept loans from other private lenders at much higher interest rates than they had previously enjoyed. On top of this, the state legislature also enacted new taxes, payable only in hard currency, as part of the effort to wean themselves of paper currency. These were, of course, impossible to pay. In the

face of these oppressive policies, the farmers of rural Pennsylvania even began a secession movement (Bouton, 2007, p. 75-81).

These financially crippling policies also came on the heels of a financially crippling war. Many of these farmers and laborers had just returned from several years of fighting rather than working, with nothing to show for it but some unredeemable IOUs from state and federal governments (Wilson, 1942, p. 5). Fearing that these would depreciate before they could be redeemed, and unable to wait several years for the money anyway, 95% of Pennsylvanians sold their certificates for pennies on the dollar (Bouton, 2007, p. 84-85). Rural Pennsylvanians blamed the Bank of North America and its advocates for their woes. They again saw elites lining their pockets at the expense of the laboring classes. But this time the radicals had enough power in the state legislature to kill the bank, which they did in 1785. Unfortunately, this just made matters worse. It took money out of circulation and, crucially, limited the ability of employers to take out loans to pay their workers when cash was tight (Wilson, 1942, p. 19; Brunhouse, 1942, p. 192). The moderate Whig faction pointed this out to the wage-earners, whose support could have tipped the balance of power in favor of the moderates were it not for the fact that the radical faction, despite their "radical democracy," effectively disenfranchised wage-earners by manipulating tax laws and polling hours (Brunhouse, 1942, p. 192). It was not until the Continental Congress adopted the Constitution in 1787 that the moderates began to enjoy popular favor again. Ironically, the same Congress that had bolstered the radical element in Pennsylvania and helped bring them to power in 1776, now, 11 years later, appealed to the people of the various states to ratify a Constitution that embodied many of the checks on radical democracy that the moderate Whigs in Pennsylvania had been promoting for years. In making the case for independence, Congress had supported the radicals against the moderates and loyalists; in making the case for ratification of the Constitution, they now published persuasive arguments that tilted popular opinion in the favor of the moderates against the radicals (Brunhouse, 1942, p. 191; Bouton, 2007, p. 176). In 1790, the moderates (now known as Federalists) came to power and replaced the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776 with a more limited democratic constitution, modeled on the U.S. Constitution (Bouton, 2007, p. 195).

In the years following the Federalist ascendancy, there were two attempts by the more radical Whigs in Pennsylvania to reclaim the Revolution. The first was the so-called Whiskey Rebellion (1794). It was the largest protest to date in Pennsylvania, including the protests ignited by British policies prior to the Revolution (Bouton, 2007, p. 217). Rural Pennsylvanians "were convinced that Federalists at both the state and national levels were working to reward wealthy speculators at the expense of those who worked for a living" (Bouton, 2007, p. 220). The rebellion was dubbed the Whiskey Rebellion because it was set in motion by an excise tax on distilled spirits. But the protest did not concern the tax so much as what the tax stood for. The tax was levied to pay for the Funding Act of 1790, which sought to make good on U.S. war debts. That is, in 1790 Congress decided to pay back all those certificates that rural Pennsylvanians had been forced by their financial circumstances to sell to speculators just a few years earlier. Recall that 95% of Pennsylvanians sold their certificates for a fraction of the face value, since they needed the money urgently and they feared that the U.S. would never give them what the certificates were supposed to be worth. But now, while economic times were still dire, the U.S. was paying out those certificates, with interest, and the speculators, who had gobbled them up dirt cheap, were cashing in. What's worse, to fund those payouts Congress enacted taxes on the very people who had sold off their certificates. There were many new taxes but the tax on distilled liquor was particularly galling because it seemed targeted at poor farmers, such as those in rural Pennsylvania. It was especially harmful to them because in the absence of money (the cash shortage being still alive and well), farmers had started using whiskey as a medium for trade (Bouton, 2007, p. 221). And this was not just a ragtag bunch of farmers, it was a well-organized protest by several counties in western Pennsylvania as well as a couple of counties in Virginia who, though they considered secession, ultimately saw themselves as patriots and "defenders of democracy and good government (Bouton, 2007, p. 228-235, 238). Congress,

anxious to protect the authority of the young government and particularly on edge given the raging revolution in France, decided to send out federal troops to crush the rebellion in Pennsylvania early and thereby end the seed of what they feared was a national movement to oust the Federalists and reclaim the Revolution for more radical revolutionaries. The rebels ultimately disbanded on the news that federal forces were heading their way (Bouton, 2007, p. 241).

The second attempt to challenge Federalist rule was John Fries' Rebellion (1799). As with the Whiskey Rebellion, on this occasion, "people rose up for fundamentally the same reason: because they believed that their governments were undermining equality through policies that favored land and war speculators and because they opposed how the governments were attempting to stifle democratic self-expression" (Bouton, 2007, p. 244). This time the main issue was an expensive military build-up in anticipation of war with France. The Federalists under John Adams enacted new taxes to pay for the war preparations. Though the taxes were meant to be progressive, there was a land tax that small farmers thought treated land speculators more favorably than active farmers, and there was a new stamp tax. Additionally, the Adams administration passed the Alien and Sedition Acts at the same time, in part because they were afraid of immigrants sympathetic to France undermining the anticipated war effort. The Stamp Act harkened back to the British, so rural Pennsylvanians were immediately against it. The land tax struck them as unjust because it favored speculators, and they also thought it was part of a plan to reduce formerly independent farmers to serfdom—they thought the Federalists were helping to consolidate land in the wealthy few, which would then be rented back to now desperate farmers (Bouton, 2007, p. 245-247). And the growing economic inequality after the war didn't help. "During the postwar decades, wealth had accumulated at the top of society and decreased among ordinary citizens [...] many people worried that they or their children might join the expanding ranks of the landless" (Bouton, 2007, p. 247). Moreover, some of these taxes were going to pay new war bonds with 8% interest that were mainly bought up by the wealthy few. The timing of the Alien and Sedition Acts, which made protests of the administration more difficult and riskier, seemed like an overt attempt to prevent dissent in the face of these new taxes. Hence, just as in the earlier rebellion, the people of Pennsylvania "believed that their government was undermining the accomplishments of the Revolution by working for the interests of moneyed men and making it harder for ordinary folk to reverse the trend—or even complain about it" (Bouton, 2007, p. 245). In this case, John Fries marched a militia to Bethlehem to free citizens that had been jailed by a federal marshal for impeding collection of the taxes. The Adams administration did not take the move lightly and sent out an army. Again, with the threat of facing a federal force in the field, the protesters relented (Bouton, 2007, p. 252-255).

The decades surrounding the America's battle for independence from Britain were decades of extreme economic hardship for rural Pennsylvanians. Farmers who had lived in a world in which land-ownership ensured security and dignity were devastated by two wars and the public debts they produced, and then they were devastated further by two government's attempts to stabilize their economies and recover from those massive war debts. Pennsylvania's history of economic independence and political equality made these rural Pennsylvanians all the more eager to institute reforms that would ensure relative political and economic equality, believing that the greatest threat to good democratic government was the concentration of money in the hands of the few. Whether they rightly understood the motives of the moderate Whigs (Federalists) who ultimately reined them in is a topic of further debate.

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