

Background

About Morristown National Historical Park

Morristown National Historical Park (NHP) is a unit of the National Park Service located in Morristown, New Jersey. It "commemorates the sites of General Washington and the Continental army's winter encampment of December 1779 to June 1780, where they survived through what would be the coldest winter on record. The park also maintains a museum and library collection related to the encampments and George Washington, as well as items relating to pre- and post-Revolutionary America." 1

Morristown NHP totals 1,705.69 acres and is composed of four separate areas: Washington's Headquarters, Fort Nonsense, Jockey Hollow, and the New Jersey Brigade/ Cross Estate Area.

Need for a Strategic Action Plan

In recent history and like other agency units, the park has been challenged to balance management and operations of the park with unpredictable resources and disruption of operations. The park is affected by slow agency-wide hiring norms, and is facing the significant ramifications of the fact that 60% of its non-seasonal employees reaching retirement eligibility by 2025. While the impending loss of institutional knowledge coupled with hiring constraints creates challenges, it also provides the opportunity to organize operations to meet present-day and anticipated future needs of the park.

¹ https://www.nps.gov/morr/index.htm

Additionally, the proximity of Morristown NHP to other national parks creates opportunities to find ways to collaborate, support, and share resources to operate and manage the parks. For example, Morristown NHP currently shares staff with both Thomas Edison NHP and Paterson Great Falls NHP.

Another contributing factor impacting the park is increased operational complexity while maintaining a flat budget. A few examples of this include:

- **Flat Budget:** \$2.7M for FY19; 10 years ago (FY10) the park budget was \$2.7M. Reduced public hours of visitor facilities, increased furloughs and other cost-reducing actions have resulted due to flat base funds over the past 10 years (eroding base when inflation is factored).
- FTE: 25 (staff is smaller than in the past; many members have increased responsibilities)
- VIPs: 477 Volunteers gave more than 13,771 hours of service
- Educational Programs: 52 classes and 1,718 students
- Daily operations demands (e.g., cleaning restrooms) vs. Deferred Maintenance (DM) Projects: Park has aging infrastructure, much of the infrastructure is Bicentennial-era and nearing 50 years old. DM is \$7.2M (Buildings and Roads largest categories); the park has undertaken a variety of deferred maintenance projects including:
 - Rehabilitation of structures at the site
 - o Interpretive media, waysides, brochures and new signage, new park furniture
 - Parking lot rehabilitation and roadway overlay
 - Processing, cataloging and conservation of collections
- Partnering: New partnerships and formal agreements with partners (eg. General Agreements) that need to be maintained and managed

The combination of expected staffing changes due to potential retirements, projected ongoing flat budgets, and increased operational and project complexities has created a need for a strategic plan.

About the Strategic Planning Workshop

The multi-park workshop for Morristown NHP and Thomas Edison NHP was held in April 2019. The purpose of the workshop was to define the issues and challenges facing the parks, and identify key opportunities that will determine a guiding vision which the entire staff supports and advocates. For each park, the intended outcomes of the workshop included 1) a shared vision for the future of the park, 2) an actionable, comprehensive strategic action plan, and 3) increased understanding and collaboration among partners and the park.

All staff members of both parks were invited and most were able to attend at least some portion of the workshop. Representatives from many of the parks' partner organizations joined. In total, forty-five people participated.

Planning Model Used

The park utilized the model below, developed and taught by New Line Consulting, to create the "building blocks" of its strategic action plan. This document will follow a similar format.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN





Enduring: Core Purpose and Values

The strategic action plan should articulate a park's core purpose and values in order to remind those executing the plan what matters to the park and why it exists so that future decisions and direction are aligned with these essentials that remain constant.

Purpose ("what we do + why we do it")

The purpose of Morristown National Historical Park is to preserve, protect, and interpret the landscapes, structures, and other property of the military encampments of Revolutionary War interest in Morristown, New Jersey, and the vicinity and to maintain a museum and library containing manuscripts, books, paintings, and other objects pertaining to George Washington, the Revolutionary War, and the periods both preceding and following the war.

Core Values ("what matters to us")

Core Values are enduring principles that the park stands for and which cannot be compromised without compromising the basic identity of the park. The core values adopted by park staff are:

- **Preservation:** We uphold a tradition of preserving history, both of the Revolutionary War Era and its commemoration.
- **Partnerships:** We grow our success with the knowledge that our mission can only be accomplished through mutual cooperation.
- **Education:** We communicate the park's stories and provide access to its wealth of resources to engage as wide an audience as possible.
- **Excellence:** We deliver consistent, quality service based upon best practices for the public, staff, and partners.



Vision for Change for Morristown National Historical Park

The vision for change is a proclamation of the desired future state of preservation and visitor experience. It will provide guidance to NPS staff and partners in decision making related to the site. This tells staff and partners **WHERE** they are leading the park in the future.

In 2025, new and diverse audiences at Morristown National Historical Park are forming personal connections with Park resources through active community engagement, support from aligned partners, and strategic staffing to address resource needs.

How did we develop this vision statement? The description of the desired future state was developed by reflecting on the major components of an effective vision for change: it must be aligned with the park's identity, it must account for what is unique to this moment in history, and it must address the realities facing the park. Participants identified the following components that were relevant to Morristown NHP's vision for change:

Aligned with Identity (mission, purpose, values; what we do, why we do it, what we believe in)

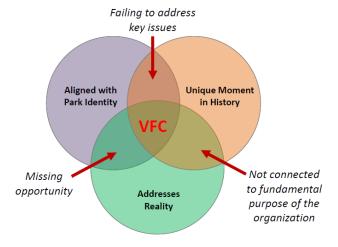
- Themes of leadership, survival, and local citizens
- 1st National Historical Park
- Community recreation (an alternative perspective of park value)

Unique Moment in History

- Anniversaries (nation's 250th, etc.)
- New Discover History Center
- Collection items beyond Revolutionary War
- Environmental threats
- Technology + interest in more interactivity

Address Reality

- Staffing/retirements/staff changes
- Flat budget
- Low morale
- Aging existing audience + lagging interest + lack of audience diversity
- Project management + structure, landscape, collections maintenance



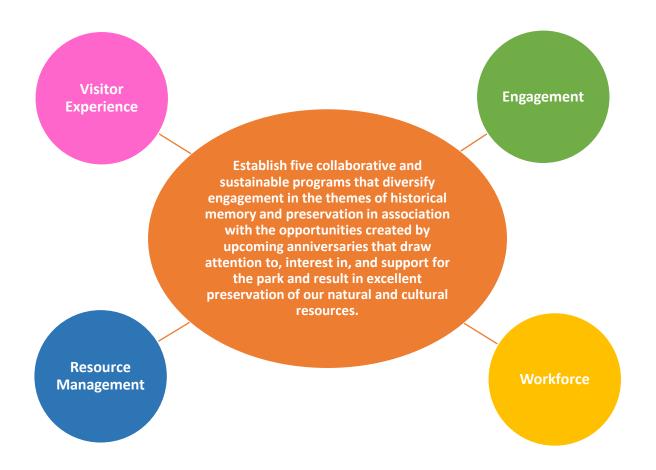
Park-Wide 5-Year Goal

The 5-year goal is a specific, measurable goal that, should we achieve it as a park, we believe we will realize our vision for change. This tells staff and partners **WHAT** they are going to do.

Establish five collaborative and sustainable programs that diversify engagement in the themes of historical memory and preservation in association with the opportunities created by upcoming anniversaries (ex: Park's 90th, Washington Association's 150th, Nation's 250th) that draw attention to, interest in, and support for the park and results in excellent preservation of our natural and cultural resources.

Strategic Focus Areas

Strategic focus areas are categories of work that park staff and partners will invest time and resources over the next five years in order to achieve the park-wide goal. These can be thought of as the "battles we must win in order to win the war." This tells staff and partners **HOW** to create the desired future.



Strategic Focus Areas Breakdown

The following is a breakdown of how each strategic focus area will contribute to reaching the park-wide 5-year goal and realizing the vision.

Visitor Experience: A new way of thinking about the visitor experience will create opportunities that draw diverse, multi-generational audiences.

▶ Primary Objectives: (1) Expand physical access and (2) provide new access to existing programs and resources; and (3) offer new, multiple-perspective programs and multiple language offerings.

Resource Management: We will systematically attend to the resource needs.

▶ Primary Objective: Implement Natural and Cultural Resource Plans.

Work Force: We will proactively and strategically navigate a period of staffing uncertainty.

▶ Primary Objectives: (1) A strategically aligned organizational chart is developed; (2) sustainable and equitable processes for determining needs and sharing workloads are developed; and (3) staff feel taken care of and morale is improving.

Engagement: We will engage communities to create awareness of the park and excitement about our stories that result in resources, support, and advocacy.

▶ Primary Objectives: (1) Prioritize our needs for partner support; (2) build a sustainable VIP program that aligns with strategic needs; (3) collaborate with organizations that can help create awareness of the park and its resources and build excitement for them.

Broad Strategies

Broad strategies are overall methods or regular practices that support park staff in achieving the goals.

Utilize Diversity Expertise

Seek out and utilize expertise in diversity, inclusion, and related topics for increasing engagement, changing the visitor experience, and staffing.

Strive for Smart Partnerships

Prioritize partners who:

- Understand and are aligned with our mission, vision, and goals
- Help us diversify our audience
- Assist in better balancing workload and capacity

Focus Partners on:

- Doing things we CAN'T do
- Doing things we choose not to do
- Doing things that create better products because of collaboration

How to Use this Document

Focus on Capacity

The park is operating in a time of complex change and limited resources. Recognize that park staff need clear, achievable priorities. Commit to continuously assessing actual capacity and let go of projects, programs, and activities that are not essential to the mission and long-term goals; those that meet the following criteria should be prioritized:

Does the project, program, or activity:

- ✓ Achieve the fundamentals outlined in our enabling legislation
- ✓ Align with the park purpose and complement our core values
- ✓ Align with and support the Vision for Change
- ✓ Support accomplishing the goals of the plan
- Consume manageable amounts of time, energy, and money
- ✓ Have a champion who has the time and attention required to manage it

Make This a Living Document

Review this document regularly (quarterly is recommended). Annually, meet with the park team (consider including partners) to check on progress, alignment, and to update the document to reflect current needs and conditions.

Supporting Priorities Yearly Breakdown

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Visitor Experience	A new way of thinking about the visitor experience will create opportunities that draw diverse, multigenerational audiences. Preparing for USA 250 (2020'-25')	Primary Objectives: (1) Expand physical access and (2) provide new access to existing programs and resources; and (3) offer new, multiple-perspective programs and multiple language offerings.	90 th Park Anniversary	150 th WANJ Anniversary		250 th Prep Year
Immersive Wick House	 Research other museums who have immersive experiences, what works, what doesn't work 	 Develop a plan for making a room or entire house accessible. Research and develop new program outline for immersive experience. 	 Purchase a new piece of furniture/object for Wick House Develop and implement training program for new Wick House experience 	 Purchase a new piece of furniture/object for Wick House Pilot test the new Wick House program. 	 Purchase a new piece of furniture/object for Wick House Review and refine new Wick House program. 	 Assess and adjust training program Market new program
Education	 Continue to develop a whole park, place based education program Pilot new program(s) at Washington's HQ 	 Evaluate program and adjust. Recruit and train education VIPs to assist with program(s). 	Evaluate program and adjust.			
Technology	 Work with WANJ on technology program- audio tour, etc. 	 Re-evaluate park website to Improve park mobile "app" 	 In partnership develop a technology program, audio tour, etc. 	 Improve and/or expand program. 		
Accessibility	Enter accessibility survey in PMIS	 Assess what language translations are needed 	 Translate the park brochure into one new language. 		 Conduct accessibility survey- PMIS 	Provide multiple language offerings
Physical Access	 Have Geo-caching program up and running 	 Review Geo-Caching program. Adjust as necessary. 	 Review Geo-Caching program. Adjust as necessary. 	 Survey visitors to see what hours they would like, such as evening hours. 	 Consider incentives for visitors staying late. eg. discounts at restaurants, etc. 	 Provide expanded access – both physical and programmatic.

New Stories/Old Stories in New Ways	 Park staff chat on Imperiled Promise or similar topics, new scholarly research on park topics, new presentations on styles/trends. Multiple perspectives. Offer at least one "scholarly" program to staff. Survey content of programs/exhibitswhere are we strong; where do we need to grow. 	 Offer at least one "scholarly" program to staff. Select one current program /exhibit and identify ways to present it with a different perspective (ex. modern historical interpretation) 	 Offer at least one "scholarly" program to staff. Begin research and development of the re- designed program/exhibit 	 Offer at least one "scholarly" program to staff. Begin research and development of the re- designed program/exhibit 	 Offer at least one "scholarly" program to staff. Begin research and development of the re- designed program/exhibit 	 Offer at least one "scholarly" program to staff. Review and refine redesigned program/exhibit. Provide multiple perspective opportunities Training for both Staff and VIPs. Market new programs
Land Use	 Create briefing statement on how the park lands have been used over time. 	 Explore different ways that park lands could be utilized by visitors – Incorporating both Recreation and History 	 Research and develop a program/exhibit that could incorporate both history and recreation 	 Pilot test the new history /recreation program 	 Continue to explore other park land use programs 	
Visitor Facilities	 Contingent on funding and contracting, repave Ft. Nonsense Road and Parking area and new guard rails. Contingent on funding and contracting, update Historic Furnishings Report (HFR) for the Ford Mansion. 	 Contingent on funding and contracting, Bluestone Walkway in front of Ford Mansion is rehabilitated. Contingent on funding and contracting, rehabilitation work begin on soldier huts 1, 2 and 4. Contingent on funding and contracting, update Historic Furnishings Report (HFR) for the Ford Mansion. 	 Contingent on funding and contracting, rehabilitation work is underway for accessible walkway and ramp into Ford Mansion Contingent on funding and contracting, rehabilitation work is underway on the visitor center roof, drainage, walls and walkways. 	 Contingent on funding and contracting, rehabilitation work is underway on the exterior of the Wick House Contingent on funding and contracting, reconstruction of soldier huts 3 and 5 is underway. Contingent on funding and contracting, park wide wayside panel planning is underway. 	Contingent on funding and contracting, the Wick House, Ford Mansion and Guerin House are painted.	Contingent on funding and contracting, wayside panel installation commences park wide.

Resource Management	We will systematically attend to the resource needs. Preparing for USA 250 (2020'-25')	Primary Objective: Implement Natural and Cultural Resource Plans.	90 th Park Anniversary	150 th WANJ Anniversary		250 th Prep Year
Exhibits	 Begin to review park exhibits/materials for inclusiveness using latest scholarship and trends. (eg. Imperiled Promise) Monmouth archaeology research plan/collaboration Create soldier hut plan: use, locations, rehabilitation, interpretation 	 Analyze and digest findings of 2020 review Implement Monmouth archaeology work on site. Implement soldier hut rehabilitation project plan with Mather HS and volunteers. 	 Reach out to local colleges and OAH to begin to discuss changes to historical offerings. Implement soldier hut rehabilitation project plan with Mather HS and volunteers Review archeology studies to ascertain possibility of adding another hiking trail – areas to review: Bettin Monument, Ft. Hill to White Trail 	 Convene staff and partner experts to continue to evaluate findings and make recommendations Implement soldier hut rehabilitation project plan with Mather HS and volunteers Wayside panel planning and design begins 	 Implement findings of historical study groups and begin to move to create the multiple stories. Implement soldier hut rehabilitation project plan with Mather HS and volunteers Wayside panel planning and design continues 	 Modern historical approach to multiple park stories (FM, Wick, JH); Factoring OAH and Imperiled Promise Rotate exhibits to ensure preservation of artifacts in galleries and to reflect modern historical approach Wayside panel planning and design complete with contracting scheduled for fabrication and installation in 2026.
Vegetation / Deer Management Plan Implementation	 DEWA fire staff assess MORR for prescribed fire program and begin work on Prescribed Fire Plan. 	 MORR Prescribed Fire Plan is approved. Planning underway for Deer control. 	 MORR prescribed fire plan is implemented. Deer control initiated. 	Deer control continues	Deer control continues	 Deer control project implemented reducing deer population to 20 deer/square mile, 5% reduction in invasive plants park wide.
Alternative Transportation	 Input PMIS projects from recommendations of park alternative transportation plan 				 Reevaluate alternate transportation program in park-adjust 	 Realize funding from PMIS for alternative transportation project implementation
Foundation Document PMIS Recommendation	 Input in PMIS "high priority" resource needs as identified in 2018 Foundation Document 	 Medium priority projects in Foundation Document entered into PMIS 		 Input worthy Low priority projects in Foundation Document into PMIS 		
Cultural Resources	 Continue to carry out rehabilitation projects on structures and landscapes. 	Ongoing work	Ongoing work	Ongoing work		

Work Force	We will proactively and strategically navigate a period of staffing uncertainty. Preparing for USA 250 (2020'-25')	Primary Objectives: (1) A strategically aligned organizational chart is developed; (2) sustainable and equitable processes for determining needs and sharing workloads are developed; and (3) staff feel taken care of and morale is improving.	90 th Park Anniversary	150 th WANJ Anniversary		250 th Prep Year
Worforce/Morale	 Determine park tasks and needs (let go, keep, reorganize) Yearly PD review (identify and prioritize) Reevaluate org chart Hire; develop interview questions related to core values 	 Assess retirement and vacancies and reevaluate org chart. Taking Care: Determine what positions need desk reviews Update priority PDs as needed. 	 Assess retirement and vacancies and reevaluate org chart. Taking Care: complete desk reviews Ongoing review of PDs and needs 	 Assess retirement and vacancies and reevaluate org chart. Ongoing review of PDs and needs 	 Assess retirement and vacancies and reevaluate org chart. Ongoing review of PDs and needs 	 Assess retirement and vacancies and reevaluate org chart. Ongoing review of PDs and needs
Morale	Ongoing: empowering staff to identify and determine their own morale needs	Low pressure design thinking modeling to gradually move toward empowerment culture	Staff leading their own design thinking initiatives or prototypes			
Training	Taking Care: Determine what training is wanted; prioritize and develop a 5-year plan	Taking Care: 10% of prioritized training from plan completed	Taking Care: 25% of priority training from plan completed	Taking Care: 50% of priority training from plan completed	Taking Care: 75% of priority training from plan completed	Taking Care: 100% of priority training from plan completed

Engagement	We will engage communities to create awareness of the park and excitement about our stories that result in resources, support, and advocacy. Preparing for USA 250 (2020'-25')	Primary Objectives: (1) Prioritize our needs for partner support; (2) build a sustainable VIP program that aligns with strategic needs; (3) collaborate with organizations that can help create awareness of the park and its resources and build excitement for them.	90 th Park Anniversary	150 th WANJ Anniversary		250 th Prep Year
VIP	 Establish annual VIP meeting and assess training needs, etc. 	 Evaluate VIP program needs and create strategic plan FY21-25 	Implement VIP plan in alignment with goals	Implement VIP plan in alignment with goals	Re-evaluate VIP plan and adjust as necessary	
Returning Visitors		Brainstorm incentives to get visitors to return to park	 Pilot 1-2 incentive programs for return visitors 	 Evaluate pilot incentive program and fully implement success story. 		
Partners	Set and prioritize clear outcome-oriented needs that partners can assist with	Identify partners (Crossroads, NJARRT, local universities, WANJ, Morris County Tourism Bureau, Chamber of Commerce and additional partners)	Engage interested partners to support strategic park needs	Engage interested partners to support strategic park needs		
Community	Diversify recruitment and community stewardship strategy (expand how we engage and promote ourselves in the community).	 Use community engagement results to determine direction of visitor experience. Carry out one community based program. 	 Use community engagement results to determine direction of visitor experience and engage partners to carry out programs and projects. Carry out one community based program. 	Carry out one community based program.	Carry out one community based program.	Carry out one community based program

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
(DRAFT)	189840 – Wick	238667 - Access to	227256B – Repair	201628A – Replace		
Formulated	Orchard	HQ Restrooms	VC roof, drainage	Brick Pavers NY		
	Preservation		and walkways	Brigade Comfort		
PMIS Projects –		211205 – Write		Station		
(Not including	227053-	Wick House	256943 –			
design	Rehabilitate	Historic	Rehabilitate Wick	227273 – Repaint		
_	Bluestone Walkway	Furnishings Report	House Exterior	exterior of Wick		
projects)	in Front of Ford	22C0F2 Harand	2200040 110	House		
	Mansion	236853 – Hazard	2389048 - HQ	227271 Domaint		
	226073 – Write	Tree Backlog	Museum roof	227271 –Repaint exterior of Guerin		
	Historic Furnishings	246504 – Initiate	repairs	House		
	Report on Ford	vegetation	246504 –	nouse		
	Mansion	inventory	Complete	201748 – Repaint		
	IVIAIISIOII	inventory	vegetation	exterior of Ford		
	245911 – Replace	201946-	inventory	Mansion		
	culvert pipe on	Rehabilitate	inventory	IVIAIISIOII		
	Grand Loop Trail	Museum Ceiling to				
		preserve				
	201624 – VC and	collection				
	NY Brigade ADA					
	Restroom doors	238267 - Upgrade				
		Museum HVAC				
	222159 - Repave	system to improve				
	Fort Nonsense	performance				
	access Road and					
	Parking Area	246620- Replace				
		underground				
	253832 - Continue	storage tanks with				
	Archaeological	above tanks				
	survey of the Fort					
	Hill Area	215252 –				
	225075 D	Implement plans				
	226976 - Replace	for universal				
	Heat and Smoke	access to Ford				
	detector system at HQ Museum and	Mansion				
	FM	227839 - Stabilize				
	1 141	and repair Huts #				
		1, 2 & 4				