

The six-part, twelve hour series of Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns was prevalent on public television last fall. The heightened interest in the national parks provides Lowell National Historical Park the entrée into increasing visitor satisfaction and understanding about this unique national park unit at the bend in the mighty Merrimack River. The Park staff, volunteers, and partners collaborate with an emphasis on preservation and intriguing programs for a story harkening back to America's industrial revolution. Lowell may not have appeared on that big screen, yet the growth of the national park system to include sites that illustrate more of this nation's varied narratives was told. Lowell appropriately stands tall in the telling of America's colorful history, and continues to leverage that character in unique ways. In 2009, the Park Visitor Survey reflected 100% satisfaction by park visitors.



Lowell Summer Music Series

In partnership with the Lowell Festival Foundation, the self-sustaining Lowell Summer Music Series attracted 30,201 people to Boarding House Park in 2009, its 20th season. Despite the economic downturn, the Series had its most successful season ever. Featured acts in the 20-show series included Joan Baez, Ani DiFranco, Derek Trucks Band, Blues Traveler, Aimee Mann, Los Lobos, The Wallflowers, Los Lonely Boys, Michael Franti, Dar Williams, Livingston Taylor, Tom Rush and others. In 2010, look for another amazing lineup that has begun to take shape with a celebrated mix including perennial favorite Marcia Ball, the B-52's, Joan Armatrading, and Lyle Lovett and His Large Band. Schedule can be found at www.lowellsummermusic.org.



Lowell Folk Festival

The 2009 Lowell Folk Festival won rave reviews for its offerings and successful implementation. The 23rd Lowell Folk Festival, produced by Lowell National Historical Park, National Council for the Traditional Arts, City of Lowell, Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the Lowell Festival Foundation, presented 23 performers at 6 stages. Fifteen traditional New England Craft Masters demonstrated their talents at the craft area while more than a dozen local ethnic groups prepared and sold traditional foods to the visitors. A dedicated corps of volunteers worked in the planning and execution of the festival clocking in nearly 25,000 hours to make it happen. In 2010, the festival is July 23-25. Information can be found at www.lowellfolkfestival.org.





Pathways for Youth

Connecting with youth has long been a goal in which Lowell National Historical Park has been fully engaged. With the support of national, regional, and Park NPS funding, as well as American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allocations, youth programs will continue to grow.

Student Career Intake Program (SCIP)

Lowell NHP along with several other Massachusetts national parks kicked off a high-intensity venture with four students in June 2009. The goal of the program is to reach youth early in their consideration of careers, offering the National Park Service as an option. The students were investigating a variety of career paths, visiting national parks in New England with diverse emphasis areas, shadowing employees, and engaging in a curriculum that integrates leadership development. The program continues forward with four new participants in 2010.

Spindle City Corps

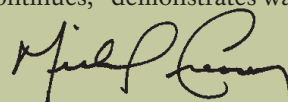
Spindle City Corps offers youth employment opportunities, whether the participants lend a hand to youngsters in creating unique art, discover and portray historical characters of Lowell's history, or build a healthy respect for the effort that goes into properly maintaining park resources. In partnership with Community Teamwork, Inc., the Park coordinated two summer maintenance teams, ten students with the Youth Theater Program, and three students staffing the Artship Enterprise while travelling to weekly events. The new component of a year 'round SCC saw twelve students assisting with special events and participating in planning and executing service projects. All SCC members joined in hosting the Youth Summit held at Boarding House Park in August, with nine regional youth programs and over 120 youth in attendance.

Tsongas Industrial History Center

How many young adults remember first visiting Lowell on a school field trip? Their destination continues to draw students and teachers to the Tsongas Industrial History Center, a partnership of the Park and UMass Lowell. Here, students experience history by doing—trying their hand at weaving, working on an assembly line, role-playing immigrants, voting in a town meeting, or becoming inventors. Students can also “do science” as they use the engineering design process, manipulate simple machines, create canal systems and test water wheels, measure water quality, trace the flow of groundwater pollution, or discover river cleanup techniques

In 2008-2009, the Center served a total of 47,315 teachers and students through teacher workshops, in-school programs, guided tours of Park resources, and summer camps. With the support of a \$224,998 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Center broadened its reach to a national audience, offering three week-long workshops titled, “Inventing American: Lowell and the Industrial Revolution.” 116 educators from 24 states around the country attended. The Center also participated in a pilot distance-learning project, funded by Parks as Classrooms. Closer to home, children ages 8-12, attended six one-week sessions of four different summer day camps during the summer of 2009.

The indisputable collaborative spirit in Lowell is frequently acknowledged by those here to discover this City's successful accomplishments. Lowell National Historical Park is a frequent host to gatherings of such visitors and the outcomes from their inquiries here speak volumes. Recently, the esteemed Second Century Commission on the Future of National Parks released their observations and recommendations in the publication “Advancing the National Park Idea” (www.visionfortheparks.org). Lowell impressed the Commission in ways that challenged their traditional views of national parks. A chapter specifically on Lowell, “Weaving a Park Into the Fabric of a City,” highlighted ways in which Lowell has blended community and national park values through cultural identity, preservation, and heritage-based development. Commissioner John Fahey stated, “Our spirits need the experiences that the national parks offer. They help us fully understand what it means to be human.” Most impressively, the report noted the alignment of the many organizations, institutions, businesses, and the City they found to be critical in redefining Lowell. The Park itself is considered to be a showcase for how national parks can increase relevancy of our nation's heritage for a wider audience, developing a diverse and youthful workforce, and preserving historic resources through strong community stewardship. This year's report, “The Revolution Continues,” demonstrates ways in which Lowell continues to innovate and provide a great service to our community and our nation.


Michael Creasey, Superintendent

Cover Photo: Spindle City Corps team members plant trees along West Meadow Conservation Land as a partner with Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust.

Inside Cover: A view of Park resources integrated throughout the City includes Lower and Swamp Locks, as well as the Hamilton, Pawtucket, and Eastern Canals.



Development: Revolution and Evolution

Trolley Expansion Feasibility Study

Lowell's trolley system has served park visitors since 1984. The query of whether the current system can expand into commuter service rang in many ears, and is now being addressed through a study being conducted by the Park and The Lowell Plan. Can Lowell become the next Portland, Oregon or Tampa, Florida to develop an integrated system? Connections are under consideration to the Gallagher Transportation Terminal, University of Massachusetts Lowell East and South Campuses, and through the developing Hamilton Canal District.

Hamilton Canal District

The theme "Old Walls, New Possibilities" reflects the opportunity presented by the development plans and progress in the Hamilton Canal District. Over the past several years the City of Lowell has accumulated 15-acres of land in the Hamilton Canal District (HCD) for redevelopment. The HCD redevelopment will create a dense, transit oriented, mixed use neighborhood at Swamp Locks. Most recently, progress is evident in the careful undertaking of the Appleton Mills rehabilitation. With the HCD as an urban development project located immediately adjacent to the Park's visitor center and at the gateway to the city, it will significantly impact visibility and access to the park. In response to the changing landscape of the city, the park visitor experience is being reexamined.



Planning for the Future

The Park has undertaken a General Management Plan Amendment to evaluate the impacts of the City's HCD development on the Park visitor entry and orientation experience and to conceptualize a visitor orientation experience that will serve as the gateway to the Park and City and create a sense of arrival for visitors. Four alternatives for visitor orientation were evaluated. Following a 9-month study process, the Park has recommended Alternative 4—*Retain existing Market Mills Visitor Center and expand visitor contact points and program facilities through new partnerships*. Alternative 4 is the most flexible of the alternatives evaluated and allows the park to proceed in concert with the Hamilton Canal District development process, whose detailed timeline is, by nature, difficult to predict. This alternative also allows the park to extend and strengthen its outreach in a way that is both consistent with its strategy to date and is also very cost-effective. The draft GMP Amendment has been completed and at this time a 30-day public comment period is pending.

Western Canalway

Lowell's complex canal system once carried the water powering the textile mills. Today, the preserved historical system not only continues to produce power as hydroelectricity, it also offers an enjoyable respite from urban stress via the canalways that allow access to and feature these unique water structures. Recent and pending construction on the Western Canalway, spanning from Dutton Street to Father Morrissette Boulevard, expands the availability of pleasant walking routes through the City. Area I of the Western Canalway, which extends from Broadway to Dutton Street, was completed in 2009 through a partnership with the City of Lowell and applying state and federal funds. Area II, from Broadway to Moody Street will be constructed in 2011 through a cooperative agreement with the City. Area III, from Moody Street to Father Morrissette Blvd. is under construction and will be completed in fall 2010.

The heart of the park's transportation system is situated on the Pawtucket Canal at Swamp Locks, the main transfer point between canal boats, trolleys, and canal walkways.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Projects supporting Park goals in sustainability, preservation, and youth engagement have received funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Construction projects are underway for an alternative energy system at the maintenance shop, enhanced security and fire alarms at Boott Mills, a new cooling system at Mogan Center, and the replacement of the sill at the Francis Gatehouse. There is also planning for expanding the youth employment program with element that emphasizes preservation skills training and development.

Alternative Transportation Projects

The 'Concord to the Merrimack' is a multi-faceted transportation infrastructure improvement project along the historic Pawtucket Canal, the spine of the Park's transportation system connecting the Concord River with the Merrimack River. The heart of the Park's transportation system is situated on the Pawtucket Canal at Swamp Locks, the main transfer point between canal boats, trolleys, and canal walkways. This area is now at the forefront of the City's Hamilton Canal District revitalization program. 'Concord to the Merrimack' project components include:

- The Swamp Locks area will see new docks and a multi-modal transportation shelter at this transportation hub.
- Installation of a new secure docking facility at the Merrimack River Boathouse and construction of a new river boat will enhance public programming along the river.
- The engineering necessary to re-establish the Lower Locks for operation into the Concord River is under study.

Design of the projects is underway through an agreement with the US Department of Transportation. "Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program" will fund the fabrication and installation of the Swamp Locks docking facility, purchase the riverboat, and construct the Swamp Locks multi-modal shelter.

Canal boats and historic replica trolleys are established components of the Park's transportation system. Projects to enhance these modes of transportation are complemented by the addition of an alternative fuel bus in 2010. This 31-passenger bus will be incorporated into park interpretive, cultural, and special events programming.





Noting Community Engagement



Above, top: Public Matters 2009 rafting on the Concord River (Photo by Zoar Outdoor). Above, bottom: Members at the program's concluding session in June. (Photo by Megpix Photography).

Public Matters

The park, in partnership with The Lowell Plan, launched a new leadership program oriented at recruiting emerging leaders to become the next generation of stewards for the Park and community. The program is designed to engage members through a six month hands-on and experiential learning program. Participants are immersed in their community's heritage, physical structure and governance. They will be encouraged to explore their own personal stories, observe leadership styles of others and their own, and develop the art of visioning. Our goal is to ensure that the Lowell of tomorrow will be served by inspired stewards of our history, environment, social and cultural capital and economic and government institutions.

Community Awards

A partnership of the Park and Lowell Heritage Partnership continues to acknowledge the revolutionary efforts in Lowell representing distinction in these two fields. The 2010 Excellence in Historic Preservation and Cultural Heritage Awards recognizes the accomplishments of:

- *Anne Cavanaugh*: for her initiative and energy with the *Friends of Rogers Fort Hill Park*, as well as her involvement with the study of Lowell's Public Art.

- *Ed Walsh and Bob Delhomme* of *Mira Development*: for recent \$44 million rehabilitation of deteriorated historic Lawrence Mills buildings #12 and #14 along Perkins Street into residential apartments.

- *Coalition for a Better Acre*: as a nonprofit community organization that has undertaken historic rehabilitation of several significant structures making them available to support CBA's mission.

- *Spindle City Corps*: A partnership summer youth employment program of *Community Teamwork, Inc.* and the Park that assists in accomplishing national and community park maintenance projects and also offers youth leadership development opportunities.

Lowell Photography Contest

Many responded to the invitation, "Use your camera and capture the essence of the City of Lowell, the heritage within the National Park,

or the character of the Historic District." The first Lowell Photography Contest shook the shutterbug branches and images poured in. With selections by judges representing the public and professional realms, the grand prize winner is Edward DiCroce, for his photo "Evolve." Contest images appear on the facing page. These and others will aid in deepening the Park's opportunities to illustrate Lowell's unique historical and cultural character.

An Appreciative 'Thank You' to Volunteers

The Park benefits from the efforts of an amazing corps of volunteers throughout the year. In April, several of these community members were recognized for their continuing contributions.

- Lifetime Achievement Awards: *Louise Sweet*, *Pauline Golec*, and *Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society*.

- Volunteers of the Year are: *Miriam Perkins* and *Barry Green*.

Lowell National Historical Park is grateful for the dedication and enthusiasm of these and every volunteer who has offered their time and energy for the Park.

Looking Anew at the Mogan Cultural Center

The new vision for the Mogan Cultural Center is to engage Park visitors and more of greater Lowell's immigrant and ethnic populations by offering a robust variety of culturally-relevant public programs year-round. Special exhibits and interactive presentations of craft, foodways, performing, and expressive traditions will be developed based on both previous and new folklife field research within the region's many diverse communities. By collaborating with individual artists and cultural organizations in the community, we strive to present the best in ethnic and traditional arts, while promoting cross-cultural understanding within the context of the Park. Through a unique partnership with the Massachusetts Cultural Council, state folklorist Maggie Holtzberg has been temporarily assigned to the Park to support the development and expansion of traditional arts programming serving the public. Holtzberg brings a depth of experience and statewide connections to ethnic and immigrant communities gained through a decade of work with Massachusetts folk arts and heritage.

Facing Page: 2010 Lowell Photography Contest winners and finalists from top to bottom, left to right: "Evolve" by Edward DiCroce, "Smokestack" by Lily Mangkhalakhill, "Swamp Locks Reflection" by Vera Kaufman, "Canal Block" by Rich Beaubien, "Sunburst" by Nicole Roscoe, "Shadows of Red" by Janice Lind, "Reflection in Canal" by Pascal Chea, "Morning Fog" by Lee Fortier, "MCC Sculpture" by Peter Lee, "The Good Ol' Merrimack" by Kyle Rees, "Trolley Motorman" by Fred Rosenthal, and "Appleton Mills" by Jurgen Kedesdy.

All other photos in this report by James Higgins.

