

Vegetation and Deer Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement

January 2014

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Morristown National Historical Park
New Jersey



Planning Process Update and Next Steps

Dear Friend of Morristown National Historical Park,

As you know, the National Park Service is in the process of preparing a Vegetation and Deer Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS) for Morristown National Historical Park. We want to take this opportunity to update you on the planning process and summarize the next steps in completing the plan/EIS.

The federal planning process requires that we examine a range of reasonable alternatives for the future management of deer and vegetation in the Jockey Hollow and New Jersey Brigade units of the park. Since we last touched base, the planning and science teams have researched and applied the findings of this research to create options that are truly reasonable. Any reasonable alternative must by definition fulfill goals and objectives for the plan itself. At Morristown, the park's long-term goal is to preserve and enhance the mixed hardwood composition of the forest in order to reflect historic character, biodiversity, and natural processes that were present at the site during the Continental Army's 1779–1780 winter encampment.

In addition to this overarching goal, the planning team has solidified the specifics of what the Vegetation and Deer Management Plan must achieve. One of these "objectives" is to reduce nonnative invasive species to minimize competition

for hardwoods to regenerate. To help in achieving this objective, the team has determined that the NPS must address in detail the long-term strategies for managing invasive species in the park. Invasive plant species are some of the greatest impediments to the restoration of the 18th century mixed hardwood forest and promotion of a naturally diverse plant community integral to the cultural landscape of the Jockey Hollow and New Jersey Brigade units. As a result, the scope of the plan/EIS has been expanded to include actions to address effective management of invasive and nonnative plant species. These strategies will be built into the alternatives of the draft plan/EIS. We will share these alternatives with you when we release the draft environmental impact statement for public review, anticipated in the fall of 2014.

I want to thank you for your ongoing support of our efforts to reflect the historic condition of Morristown National Historical Park and manage its resources in a thoughtful and sustainable manner. If you have questions about the planning process, please contact Chief of Natural Resources Robert Masson at 908-766-6841 or via email at Robert_Masson@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Ross, Superintendent
Morristown National Historical Park

