



Valley Forge
National Historical Park

National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior

2008 Annual Report





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2008 was a year of steady progress at Valley Forge National Historical Park. We are energized and proud of the accomplishments we've outlined for you in this Annual Report.

You'll see several big priorities reflected over and over in our achievements: more activities for visitors, improved financial sustainability, and strengthened stewardship. I am pleased to report that—again this year—visitation rose, operations were further streamlined to free up funds for visitor services and preservation, and participation in stewardship of the park by volunteers, partners, and donors increased.

Our visitors, volunteers, and partners understand the significance of Valley Forge—the triumph of the encampment, the historic and natural resources of the land, and the opportunities for learning, enjoyment, and renewal.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions, concerns, or ideas. What can we do together?

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Caldwell".

Mike Caldwell
Superintendent

More Choices for Visitors



Photo: NPS

Hundreds of families enjoyed expanded natural resource and history programs through the new Junior Ranger program.

■ The NPS Centennial Challenge, which anticipates the 2016 centennial of the National Park Service, provided five seasonal interpretive staff this summer and allowed us to greatly increase our public programming choices. We increased hours at Washington's Headquarters and Varnum's Quarters, offered more walking tours and living history programs, provided interpretive rangers in evening hours, making numerous contacts during this heavily used period of the day and, for the first time, offered a ranger-led Junior Ranger program.

■ The revitalized Junior Ranger program and workbook served 478 visitors and resulted in more than 240 new Junior Rangers being sworn in during this year's four-month season. The program focuses on both history and natural history.

■ Our third year of a partnership with Once Upon A Nation (OUAN) again expanded programming and visitation. 49,000 visitors were served, an increase of 61% over last year. Story-telling benches were located at the Welcome Center, the National Memorial Arch, Washington's Headquarters, and Varnum's Quarters, with new stories based on the research of historians and park staff. The fee-based evening program, "Valley Forge After Hours," produced in cooperation with The Encampment Store (TES), served 530 visitors, who were transported back as members of a visiting congressional delegation checking on the state of the Continental Army during the encampment. Along the way, actors portrayed soldiers, Martha Washington, George Washington and Lafayette. Each program concluded with a ranger-led campfire and stories near the Grand Parade.

■ Our cooperating association, TES, ran the fee-based trolley tour of the park, working with OUAN to provide guides. Over 10,000 people enjoyed the tours, which ran everyday during the summer and on weekends in the shoulder season, an 18% increase in visitors over the previous year.



■ In the second year of our educational partnership with Montgomery County Community College, rangers taught a course titled *The Unknown American Revolution*. Sixty-one persons took the course this year.

■ Rangers conducted staff rides in the park for nine different military groups in 2008. April 23rd saw the largest concentration of high-ranking US Army field officers at Valley Forge since the 1778 encampment, when 32 colonels and general officers from Fort Belvoir participated.

■ We participated in the History Channel-sponsored project for high school juniors entitled, *Now Debate This*. The project engaged high school juniors from around the country who researched and interviewed community members and created web content based on the themes of leadership and changing ideas of freedom. An interactive website had daily postings from the teens on history, contemporary issues, and their experiences as they visited sites across the country. The group visited Valley Forge for three days and participated in programs on slavery, African American military participation, General

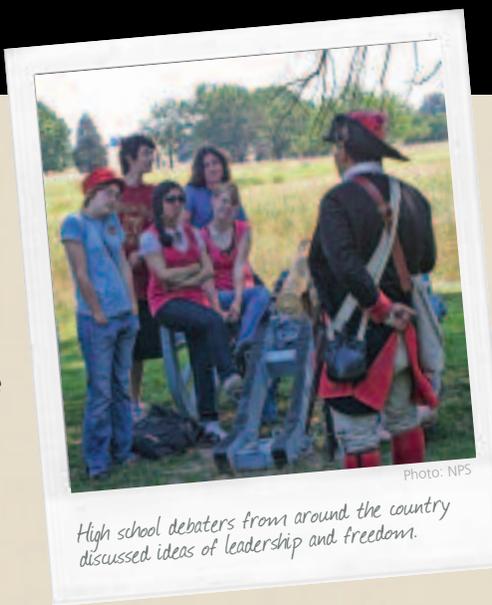


Photo: NPS
High school debaters from around the country discussed ideas of leadership and freedom.

Washington and leadership, religious views of the revolutionary period, and soldier life.

■ We held our fourth annual Valley Forge Teachers' Institute in partnership with the Great Valley School District and OUAN. Teachers from around the country participated in this week-long event entitled *Revealing American's Stories Using Art, Literature, and*



Photo: M. Kennedy for OUAN
Martha Washington welcomes visiting "members of Congress" during the Valley Forge After Hours tours.

Science across the Curriculum, receiving Act 48 credits. Park staff and outside experts provided workshops on techniques and tools to use in the classroom. Three additional large groups of teachers visited, funded by grants, to participate in park tours and seminars of historic and contemporary topics.

■ We saw a 28% growth in the number of students participating in our formal education programs over 2007. Last year's pilot program *Riding through History* was added as a regularly available fee-based presentation for school groups, during which rangers board school buses for 90-minute guided tours of the park. 113 groups with 4,310 students took the tour. Our long-time educational program, *Soldiers' Life*, served 38 groups, with 1,008 students.



Photo courtesy of VFCVB
The popular guided trolley tour provides a great way to learn about the history of Valley Forge.

■ In its second year, the ranger-led *Join the Continental Army* education program grew in availability and popularity. 586 recruits "enlisted" and the parents and siblings who came along put the total number of attendees for all five programs at about 800. A program site was maintained on the park's website, with pictures, videos, and other information, and averaged about 1,000 hits per month from January through April. The Friends contributed funds for additional wooden dummy muskets and items for the recruits to "purchase" with their Continental pay. Parents certainly appreciated the hot coffee provided by the Friends and park volunteers.

■ We continued to expand our use of interpretive technology to reach all our visitors, whether present or virtual, with programming about the history and natural resources of the park. The Friends supported the cell phone tour program and the tours were expanded



Photo: NPS

Park rangers recruited hundreds of kids to "join the Continental Army."

from 50 messages to 64. In 2008, 15,663 unique listeners listened to 34,567 messages. The tours also were translated into Spanish.

■ A number of new podcasts were added to our roster, for a total of 51. The scripts were written by a team of park staff and a playwriting consultant.

The team also produced and filmed each podcast, featuring a 5-8 minute program chronicling the events of the Valley Forge encampment. The podcasts are downloadable from both our website and iTunes.

■ The park website underwent significant change and now offers many more informational options for visitors. This year, 952,000 visits to the website were logged.



"Historic Landscape | Contemporary Vision" is a temporary exhibit of powerful images that provide new interpretations of the familiar scene.



■ At the Welcome Center, a temporary exhibit titled *Traditional Landscape / Contemporary Vision* displays enhanced photographs and digital art by local artist, MJ Ticcino, of park landscapes, monuments, and historic personages. Originally planned to be up for six months, its popularity has resulted in an indefinite run.

■ A temporary exhibit titled *They Chose Valley Forge* was installed to coincide with the annual Washington's Birthday encampment of the Boy Scouts in the park. The exhibit described the three enormous national jamborees that took place in the park. In addition to the park's collection of photographs of the events, a number of individuals lent or donated souvenirs, letters, and diaries of their participation.

■ We received a loan of the Don Troiani painting, *The Battle of Oriskany*, for prominent display in the Welcome Center. This large and beautiful canvas depicts the hard-fought up-state New York action, which featured Oneida

warriors. We also hosted a traveling exhibit on Washington and Rochambeau's route to Yorktown.

■ In our largest "exhibit" ever, the beautiful mural *Von Steuben Drilling the Troops*, whose permanent home is the most prominent wall of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, was reproduced to wrap the six exterior sides of the park visitor center.

■ *The American Revolution*, a National Park Service handbook, was completed by park staff with assistance from all Revolutionary War national parks, TES, and Eastern National. This 128-page, full-color book features essays from noted authors and academicians as well as objects and images from national park collections throughout the eastern United States.

■ With the Friends, we announced a new historic research partnership with the McNeil Center for Early American Studies of the University of Pennsylvania. An annual fellowship will be awarded to a PhD candidate to research related topics, develop at least one educational project, develop and present public programming at the park, and collaborate with park staff.



The American Revolution handbook provides new insights on the Revolution and describes the roles of each of the scores of Revolutionary War national parks.



Preserving History



It's a tight squeeze working in historic buildings, yet Knox Quarters was fully stabilized and readied for the next two centuries.

Photo: NPS

■ This year's program of stabilization and restoration reached a number of historic buildings. Work was performed by park staff, volunteers, an AmeriCorps crew, and through contract. Encampment-era Knox' Quarters received structural stabilization of its interior and a new roof, gutters, and downspouts. Masonry repair was completed at the Maurice Stephens House, the School House, and Varnum's Springhouse. Exterior woodwork and window repair and painting were completed at the Steuben Memorial, the David Potts House, and Varnum's Springhouse. The springhouse also received a new roof, gutters and downspouts, and repairs to the interior. At one of the historic

Horse Shoe Trail houses, the non-contributing interior was gutted and new insulation, walls, ceilings, and floors, and windows were added, as well as upgrades to electrical and plumbing.

■ The second year of the three-year historic rehabilitation of the Washington's Headquarters Area was completed, with the removal of a large parking lot and re-contouring of the landscape, and the restoration of the historic Valley Forge train station. Construction of a smaller, screened parking lot and an accessible comfort station was begun, and the first of a planned major planting of trees were installed.

■ The rehabilitation of Inner Line Drive—a historic tour road that is a key component of the park's cultural landscape—was completed. Over 17,000 linear feet of original stone gutter along Inner Line Drive were restored, including demolition of overlying pavement and removal of dirt and debris. An additional parking lot was removed and the landscape restored to its historic contours and reseeded. Two other parking lots were reduced in size.

■ Park staff worked with the NPS Harper's Ferry Center to digitally photograph 300 objects from the park's collection. With completion of the descriptive text, the images will be added to the NPS collections website and the park's website.

■ Cultural resource interns provided valuable research into topics the park wants to include in future interpretive programming. Interns used primary resources to produce content on topics including the presence of enslaved persons during the encampment; the experience of civilians during the encampment; and the history of the reclamation of the Schuylkill River—structures from which remain in the park. Some of the research already has been used in new cellphone tours.



Six acres of parking lots have been removed, recontoured, and the land restored to its historic appearance - here near Washington's Headquarters.

Implementing a New Business Model



■ We continued to make substantial progress in pursuing the strategies and actions identified in the 2005 Business Plan. Again this year we reduced the park's fixed cost ratio—to 87.3% from 90%. The budget for FY 2008 was \$5,894,600, which comprised 82% labor and 18% non-labor.

■ We reduced the cost of the fleet by another 30%, also resulting in a reduction of fleet maintenance staff from two to less than one. We now use these staff toward higher priority needs within the park.

■ Through the Centennial Challenge, 20 summer staff members were brought on. They worked with our regular facility management and interpretive staff to keep the park clean during heavy visitation, preserve historic

buildings, and increase public programming. Staffing also was increased by interns from the Student Conservation Association. Two interns joined the Superintendent's staff; two joined interpretation; two joined natural resources; and two joined cultural resources. Additionally, an experienced biologist came on detail from the Army Corps of Engineers.

■ We completed a two-year \$150,000 project to upgrade our 12-year-old telephone system to a voice over internet protocol system. The new system provides the necessary infrastructure that will allow for future wireless connectivity through the park.

■ We continue to take a proactive approach to cost recovery for special uses. We issued 148 Special Use Permits, which resulted in cost recovery of \$12,724—a 33.9% increase over 2007.



Reduction in the size of the fleet frees up funding for preservation and visitor services, our highest priorities.



Photo: NPS

Last summer's crew of seasonal workers greatly advanced the care of the park.

Building a Network of Support

In cooperation with our key partners, the park was awarded three Centennial Challenge projects in FY2008, totaling \$425,000:

■ Expansion of Once Upon A Nation. We received \$125,000 to expand the very successful storyteller program started here last year. We purchased an additional storytelling bench, developed three new stories, hired two additional storytellers, and hosted interpretive training for both OUAN and NPS employees. All of this resulted in a 61% growth in the number of visitors served.



■ Creation of a New Multimedia Show at Washington's Headquarters. We received \$200,000 to develop a new interactive multimedia program for the newly renovated train station at Washington's Headquarters. We began work with a design/build firm and the new exhibit will be installed and open next summer. The Friends of Valley Forge Park and the Encampment Store are the private partners.



■ Expansion of the Joseph Plumb Martin Trail. We received \$100,000 to build a connector trail near Washington's Headquarters, which will extend the existing Joseph Plumb Martin Trail to connect with the Valley Creek Trail. This connector is a short but vital link in the park's trail network. The project will provide a much safer solution for visitors to cross Route 23. Again, the Friends were the private partner.



■ The park teamed with the Fairmount Water Works, Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area, and John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum on a three-day Eco Youth Summit that brought together 40 school students and 40 educators and environmental professionals to promote environmental leadership among youth. Students participated in a watershed project at the park and networked with peers and resource management professionals.

■ A new natural resource partnership was initiated with the Open Land Conservancy, the largest owner of open space within the Valley Creek watershed outside the park. The conservancy funded one natural resource intern for 12 months and the park provided interns to the conservancy for one day per week over the summer. Interns conducted conservation activities such as removal of invasive plants, trail maintenance, and marking preserve boundaries.

■ A natural resource partnership was initiated with Cabrini College and the Stroud Water Research Center. The park hosted a field trip to Valley Creek for high school biology teachers participating in a Stroud workshop. Park staff then worked with these partners to identify four ideas which will be developed and implemented in 2009 and beyond, including a stream school, environmental film festival, watershed science and citizenship teachers institute, and cooperative work on a National Science Foundation/Informal Science Education Grant focused on watershed science and citizenship.



■ The volunteer program grew again this year. Over 2,000 individual volunteers and 59 organizations donated 43,469 hours, for an increase of 15% over 2007.

■ A new website devoted to volunteers is now in place. It has become a source for content on park history and natural resources, events, schedules, and training. There also is a blog for volunteer communication.

■ For the third year, the park hosted an Americorps Crew. The crew spent six weeks here, most notably restoring Varnum's Springhouse and also removing non-native/ invasive vegetation.

■ For a second year, the park hosted a Public Land Corps crew: six high school students and their two leaders spent three weeks in the park working on trails and non-native/invasive removal.

■ The park once again held a large National Public Lands Day event. Over 300 volunteers participated in 15 natural, cultural, and visitor facility projects. REI-Conshohocken and Unilever/Lipton Tea were the primary sponsors.

■ On National Trails Day, 24 environmental, conservation, trails, and heath organizations provided education, information, and demonstrations. Guided hikes, clinics, and games were offered. 150 volunteers participated in trails maintenance projects. Unilever/Lipton Tea-Healthy Parks/Healthy Living was the primary sponsor.

The Encampment Store, the park's 501c3 cooperating association, continues to be a critical partner in improving the quality of the visitor experience. TES works closely with the park on all our special events, development of interpretive and educational programming, and creation of educational products for our visitors.

■ In addition to expansion of the Trolley Tour, TES worked with park staff and a contractor to produce a very popular new 60-minute Audio/CD Tour of the park—the first in over 20 years.

■ TES produced General Washington's annual birthday celebration. With help from Mrs. Washington, TES served over 1,000 visitors complimentary pieces of Martha Washington's own recipe of cake. Free craft activities helped children exhibit their creativity in making and presenting to the General custom birthday cards with personal greetings.

■ Over 90 children enjoyed the store's free December program *Make Your Own Log Cabin*. Held during the park's annual March-In activities, children and parents made colorful and extremely creative "cabins" using pretzel logs, candies and cake decorations.

■ Despite the downturn in the economy TES held steady with sales equal to 2007 and returned \$87,000 in donations to the park, which supported



the growth and expansion in interpretive and educational programming. TES also was a key contributor to the new Multimedia Show at Valley Forge Train Station.

■ The park benefits from the strong interrelationships among its partners. TES provided ongoing support and services to the Friends of Valley Forge Park in membership sales, program development and implementation and special event management.

The Friends of Valley Forge Park continues to grow and change as an organization. New board leadership and a revitalized mission statement is transforming the park's oldest partner.

■ The park and Friends funded and completed a fundraising feasibility and capacity study that provides an action plan for further strengthening the Friends as the park's primary non-profit partner. As a result of the study, the Friends hired their first paid staff member and the board has been expanded to include more business and community leaders.

■ The board of the Valley Forge Historical Society voted to merge with the Friends of Valley Forge, and the transaction is now in progress. The society has a century-long association with Valley Forge as a historic place and

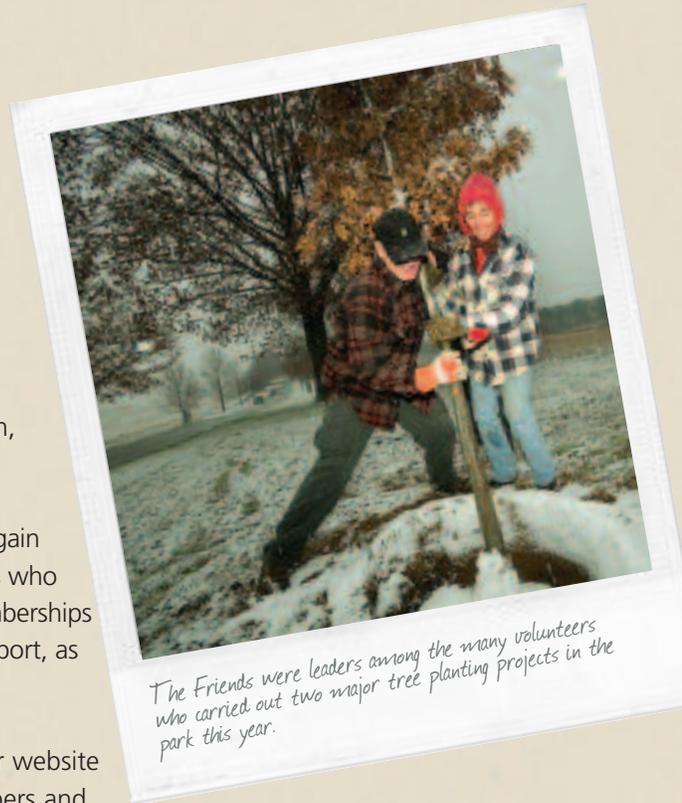
a park, and the merger opens many opportunities for research, programming, and advocacy.

■ Membership in the Friends again increased. Most of the members who have renewed their annual memberships have increased their level of support, as they continue to see results.

■ The Friends overhauled their website and it is now a place for members and the wider public to learn more about the organization and all of their activities. The site is linked with those of the park and the CVB.

■ The Friends work with park staff to electronically publish *The Continental Chronicle*, the park's newsletter, four times a year and distribute it by email and on the web.

■ Friends contributed time, talent, and funding to the park throughout the year. The Friends were key supporters of the 3rd Annual Revolutionary Run, which garnered \$31,000 for ongoing trail improvements. The Friends now support the 24/7 cell phone tour service, which benefits visitors to the park throughout the year.



The Friends were leaders among the many volunteers who carried out two major tree planting projects in the park this year.

The Friends also were key financial supporters for two Centennial Challenge grants for improvements in the Washington's Headquarters area.

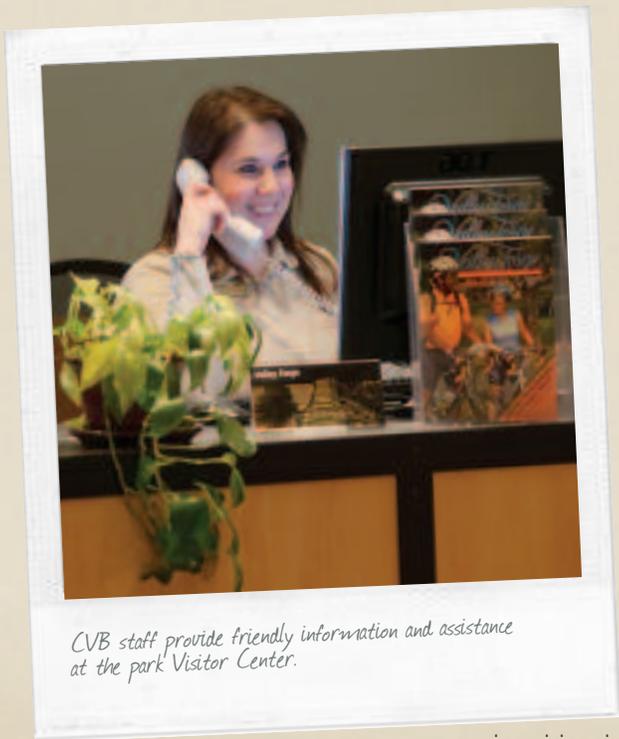


Photo: Jonathan Kolbe for the Valley Forge CVB

Partners like the Friends are essential to the success of the annual Revolutionary Run



The Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) continued to serve as an invaluable partner in promoting the park to visitors and opinion-makers, and helping us to understand, provide services to, and manage our visitors. The CVB serves as an excellent liaison to hotels and other components of the vibrant regional tourism industry.



CVB staff provide friendly information and assistance at the park Visitor Center.

■ Last year, the CVB started a program to track motor coach groups visiting the park. This year, an additional 231 discrete groups registered, bringing the total to over 600. The CVB follows up by conducting targeted mailings and establishing relationships to better serve the groups. The data base will be invaluable for future reservation-based visits to Washington’s Headquarters.

■ The CVB facilitates extensive news coverage and exposure for park events and programs. The CVB provided two full-time and one part-time staff persons who logged more than 100

hours weekly in support of the park and visitors to the region. Staff handle the park’s incoming group inquiries and assist visitors in the Welcome Center, maintain the brochure rack, train, schedule, and manage all Welcome Center volunteers.

■ The CVB amplified the park’s web presence by updating program information for many tourism websites. CVB staff handled the park’s incoming media

inquiries, including requests for filming, and interviews from radio, TV, and newspapers. CVB staff represent the park at local and national events for meeting planners, tour operators, schools, scout troops, and regional tourism partners.

■ The CVB worked with park staff and oversaw the creation of visitor services publications for the park, including the Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter Program Guides, Welcome Center signage, the “Today at Valley Forge” rack card, the Cell Phone Tour rack card and the Annual Calendar of Events. In addition to use by visitors at the park, many of these publications are distributed to area hotels, business concierges, local government buildings, chambers of commerce, attractions and regional visitor centers.



The CVB’s visitor services and information publications are used extensively at the park and also distributed to local and out-of-town lodging and tour operators.

Caring for the Environment



Photo: NPS

Volunteers and park staff mounted an aggressive campaign against the invasive Rusty Crayfish

■ Nearing the end of a long road toward management of the park's white-tailed deer herd, the public draft plan and EIS was published at the end of the year, including an expansion to deal with the potential of chronic wasting disease, and a 60-day public review was initiated.

■ Our ongoing effort to manage non-native invasive plants was expanded, primarily through the use of volunteers and coordination of volunteers and the Mid-Atlantic Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT). One field on the north side of the park was completely cleared of Autumn Olive through the combined efforts of the Public Lands Crew and EPMT. 1,550 gross acres (57 canopy acres) were treated park-wide this year.

■ This summer, an aggressive, non-native crayfish species moved from the Schuylkill River into Valley Creek. Park staff responded immediately by setting

up a trap and removal program using interns and volunteers and requesting technical assistance from agencies more familiar with the threat. The team removed over 250 rusty crayfish and, for the time being, successfully suppressed this population within the park.

■ Primarily funded through outside sources, two natural resources interns, one teacher, and a biologist on detail from the Army Corps of Engineers completed an outstanding field season. They documented a new species to the park, removed invasive crayfish, maintained riparian buffer fencing, removed invasive plants, developed a chronic wasting disease surveillance protocol, and led visitor programs.

■ We continued our partnership with the Garden Club of America through the Partners for Plants program to determine whether six plant species of special concern that occurred in the park historically are still present today. The survey showed that two species have been extirpated from the park, but four species remain. Plant species inside the park's largest deer enclosure were inventoried for comparison with species present in 1998. A total of 52 plant species were documented within the

fenced area in 2008, an increase of 41% over the number of species present in 1998.

■ The park continues to maintain approximately three acres of fenced areas along Valley Creek to promote the growth of a healthy forested riparian buffer. This year, we replaced much of the posts and fencing, and through contribution of over 150 volunteer hours were able to make necessary repairs and maintain these structures.

■ The final report for the inventory of park meadows was completed by the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. A total of 325 plant species were documented, with 60% native to Pennsylvania. The survey also identified four species of special concern. This information is the foundation for development of desired meadow conditions and revision of the field management plan.



Photo: NPS

Our cooperating Ranger-Teacher developed natural resources curricula and led discovery tours.

■ We participated in the NPS Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program, which develops relationships with teachers from inner city schools. Our teacher, from a middle school in the Philadelphia district, worked with park staff and partners on projects including curriculum development and the invasive rusty crayfish in Valley Creek. He will continue to provide support by training volunteers on crayfish removal, participating in environmental events, and making final revisions to completed natural resource lesson plans.

Protecting Visitors and Resource



■ We continued to reduce deferred maintenance and improve the condition of structures and landscapes throughout the park, including progress on the \$6.2 million renovation and rehabilitation of Washington's Headquarters, completion of the \$500,000 rehabilitation of General Knox' Quarters, and completion of \$490,000 rehabilitation of the Visitor Center.



Photo: NPS

Sierra Club volunteers from around the country spent a week in the park renovating trails.

■ Over the past two years the park has secured \$4.8 million for deferred maintenance. Deferred maintenance has been reduced 30% since 2006 through projects, and by an additional 15% through better data management.

■ We obligated funds for eight major construction, rehabilitation, and hazardous materials remediation projects in 2008, including extensive exterior repairs on Stirling's Quarters, the Mordecai Moore House, and the Knox-Tindle House.

■ Over the past two fiscal years the park has successfully planned, contracted, and managed over \$3 million in project funds for preventive maintenance and to enhance contract support.



Photo: NPS

Clean-ups on the Schuylkill River that flows through the park are a big part of each year's work.

■ Work to keep visitors safe resulted in the removal of over 150 tires from the banks of the Schuylkill River and the Waggoner Farm; the replacement of damaged brick pavers at the Visitor Center; the removal of rotted reproduction huts in a highly visited area; removal of lead-contaminated soil from the perimeters of five structures; removal of toxics from the banks of Covered Bridge Run; trimming of hazardous limbs from major trees that overhang hiking trails, and regular monitoring and sampling of the Asbestos Release Site.

■ The trails program remains vibrant. The first phase of renovation of the popular Joseph Plumb Martin loop trail was accomplished with \$482,000 of NPS funds. With support from the Friends, we received \$100,000 in NPS Centennial Challenge funds for a connector trail near Washington's Headquarters. The Sierra Club Volunteer Vacation group again spent a week here rebuilding trails on Mount Misery. And this was the second year of a three-year Public Lands Crew program at the park, in which a team of six young workers contributed several weeks to trails projects.

■ The original 1976 green roof of the Visitor Center was removed to allow replacement of the waterproof membrane and new HVAC was installed. The roof was repaired and replanted with sod.

■ Rehabilitation was performed for the Theater and Administration buildings, with new roofs and HVAC. Both buildings were painted.

■ Thanks to the NPS Centennial Challenge, 14 seasonal maintenance employees made a big difference in the condition of facilities this summer. They mowed lawns and fields, performed custodial services, collected trash and debris, removed deteriorated huts, removed over 25 hazardous trees, removed tires from the banks of Schuylkill along the River Trail, installed fencing to prevent soil disturbance from errant vehicles, demolished damaged fencing, and increased invasive species control park-wide. Their contributions also freed staff to increase the level of regular and preventative maintenance on park buildings.

■ Rangers worked with local police agencies and the U.S. Secret Service to investigate a series of thefts from motor vehicles that began in 2006. Five suspects were identified, arrested, and indicted this year on charges of credit card fraud and theft from motor vehicles.



Valley Forge - always a place of quiet beauty and personal renewal



Valley Forge National Historical Park

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www.nps.gov/vafo