



# Foundation Document Overview

## Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail

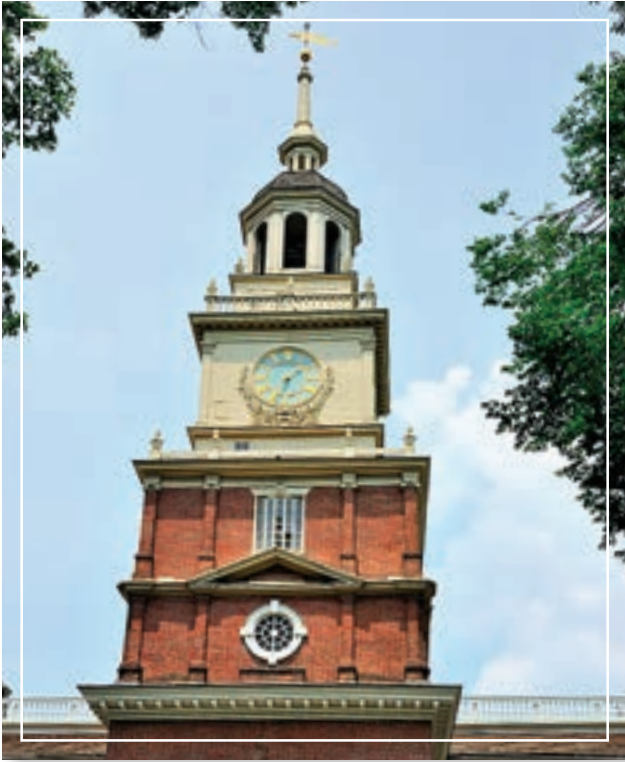
MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, VA, and DC



### Contact Information

For more information about the *Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail Foundation Document*, contact: [waro\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:waro_superintendent@nps.gov) or (215) 597-1581 or write to: Superintendent, 200 Chestnut Street, 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19016

## Purpose



*The purpose of the WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL is to preserve and interpret the routes taken by American and French troops from 1780–1783 and to commemorate the role of the critical French-American alliance in the victory over British forces at the siege of Yorktown, Virginia.*

*The National Park Service will assist in the protection of historic resources and the commemoration and interpretation of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail in collaboration with a broad range of private organizations and local, state, and federal agencies.*

## Significance

Significance statements express why Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- The joint action taken by Washington's and Rochambeau's allied armies is the longest and most complex march / military maneuver of the Revolutionary War. The national historic trail corridor connects publicly accessible sites associated with the routes of the French and American troops on their way to Yorktown, Virginia, and their victorious return north.
- The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail provides an outstanding opportunity to place the Revolutionary War within the context of the broader global struggle and to highlight the essential role of the French-American alliance in the success of the American Revolution.
- Traversing some of the most densely populated areas in the country, the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail provides trail users with recreational and educational opportunities and connects communities through a network of organizations and public agencies to other parks, sites, and trails related to the American Revolution.



## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Historic Routes, Encampments, and Related Sites**
- **Historic Documents, Artifacts, and Collections**
- **Partnerships**

Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Scenic Vistas and Interpretive Views and Opportunities for Recreation**



## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

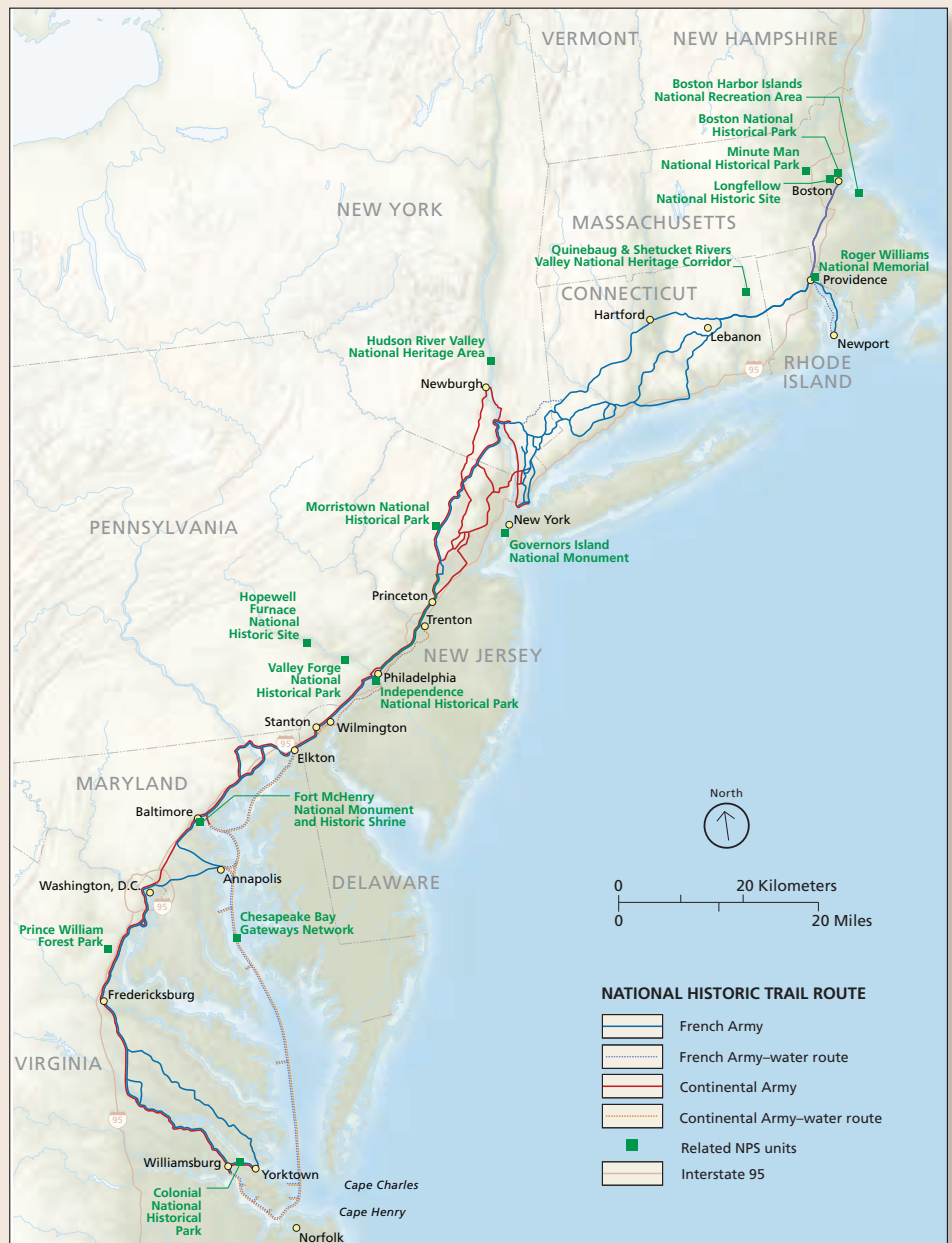
- **The French Alliance and its Global Context.** The alliance between the United States and France during the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783) helped achieve American independence and was part of a larger geopolitical strategy for influence (in Europe, Africa, India, the West Indies), international trade, and for control of North America.
- **The Yorktown Campaign.** The Yorktown Campaign (June to October 1781), culminating in the American and French victory over the British Army at Yorktown, Virginia, marked “the beginning of the end” of the Revolutionary War that guaranteed independence for the United States.



# Description

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail (referred to herein as the Trail) includes more than 700 miles of land and water corridors that follow the routes taken by American and French armies under the commands of General Washington and General Rochambeau to and from the siege of Yorktown, Virginia—a pivotal event in America’s War for Independence or the Revolutionary War. The national historic trail traverses nine states—Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia—plus the District of Columbia. The main trail and its multiple side routes pass through the major metropolitan areas in the Boston-New York-Washington megalopolis. The national historic trail corridors connect parks, historic sites, natural preserves, and other public open spaces crossing a number of historic trails, scenic trails, and tour routes.

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail recognizes those places that still mark the passage of French and American troops. The route offers a variety of experiences as it follows the steps taken by American and French soldiers. In a number of cities along the route—such as Boston, Massachusetts; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Alexandria, Virginia—historic buildings, roads, and open spaces remain despite tremendous growth since 1781. In addition, more rural areas along the route, such as New York’s Hudson River Valley and Virginia’s rural farmland, the route of the historic road, broad landscape patterns, and portions of the older communities still remain from the Colonial period. The national historic trail moves through a transportation corridor used from Colonial times to the present. Some of the roads maintain their 18th-century character and continue to connect large and small towns along the way. In other segments, the original Revolutionary-era road has since been replaced by modern two-lane roads and interstates, and the campsites and associated military resources have been covered over by modern development.



The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail has an intangible quality as well as a physical location. The national historic trail provides the framework to support preservation activities, interpretation efforts, and celebrations of this remarkable achievement. It is a living collaboration between the French and American governments, participants and supporters, and hundreds of communities, 50 counties, and nine states along the route.