



NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY 2013



VALLEY FORGE, PA – On National Public Lands Day Saturday, September 28th, a record number of volunteers, 466 to be exact, the largest in history, turned out to help with 20 projects that helped preserve and protect the natural, cultural and recreational resources at Valley Forge National Historical Park.

Now celebrating its 20th year, National Public Lands Day is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to help care for public lands across the country. The day's events were kicked off with an opening ceremony featuring a performance by the Youth Ambassador Program members (YAP!) of New Bedford. They got the crowd energized with a hip-hop style performance about Sustainability; Superintendent Hammond welcomed and thanked the park partners and volunteers for supporting the park. With great excitement she spoke about the construction of a new pedestrian bridge that has been anticipated for almost 20 years. "The bridge could only be built because of very strong partners – the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service, PennDot, Montgomery County, Upper Merion Township, and West Norriton Township. Some couldn't join us but many are with us today. Let take a moment to thank them with your applause" Hammond stated.

She then introduced Senator Rafferty and Montgomery County Commissioner Josh Shapiro who have supported the bridge project for many years. The pedestrian bridge will cross the Schuylkill River to make both sides of the park accessible to the public which will effectively connect trails in Montgomery County for runners, walkers, bikes and horses. The Friends of Valley Forge Chairman Don Naimoli, announced the winners of the bridge naming contest with the help of volunteers and staff, the winning name, Sullivan's Bridge, selected from many contest entries as a tribute to George Washington's General Sullivan, who led the bridge construction in 1778 to provide river crossings for soldiers and supplies. After the ceremony, Volunteer Program Manager Ernestine White announced the work teams for those who were eager to roll up their sleeves to help with the various different projects. At noon, the festivities continued with a block party featuring an encore performance by the Youth Ambassador Program, games and a barbeque sponsored by the Young Friends of Valley Forge with support from The Encampment Store and the Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau. Other activities include an Environmental Expo and guided nature and history hikes.

Volunteers Accomplished:

- Planted, mulched and fenced 36 trees
- Added wood chips to about 2,000 feet of trail tread to the recently developed Chapel Connector Trail
- Repaired 656 feet of riparian buffers fencing along Valley Creek
- Removed oriental bittersweet, porcelain berry, autumn-olive, multiflora rose, Japanese stiltgrass, and wineberry from along the creek
- Removed 20 bags of invasive Zebra grass from four acres in the field above Stirlings Quarters.
- Removed 40 bags of Oriental bittersweet, autumn-olive, multiflora rose, and wineberry from the field above Stirlings Quarters.
- Removed 20 bags of mile-a-minute from the Chapel Trail Connector
- Remove 14 invasive crayfish.
Eighty-five native crayfish were caught and returned.



- Repaired 4 water diversion features in front of the Bottling Plant and clear drains on 1 miles of unpaved trails along the Horse-shoe and Mount Misery Trail systems.
- Removed about 10 ton of litter from park boundary and trails corridors
- Painted Washington Headquarters stable doors.
- Mulched 40 trees at selected areas in the park that include the Visitor Center and National Memorial Arch.
- Painted 20 cannons
- Cleaned exterior wood work and windows at Knox’s Estate and the Bake House
- Repair gullies for storm water damage to gravel walk way near Commander and Chief Guard Huts at Washington’s Headquarter
- Weeded garden beds at Washington’s Headquarters and the Visitor Center



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Villanova University
National Park Service Staff
And countless individual volunteers



**We look forward to 2014 National Public Lands Day, Saturday,
September 27th.**