



Valley Forge
National Historical Park

National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior

2009 Annual Report

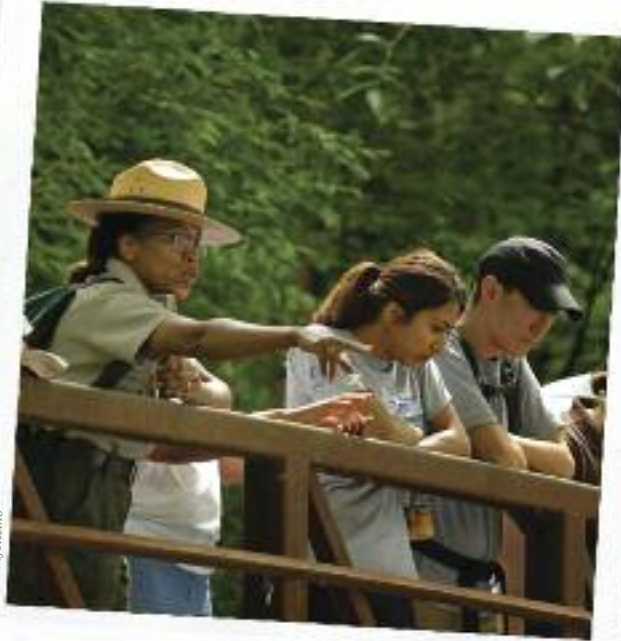


Photo: M/Ticino

Valley Forge—always a place for pleasure, personal renewal, and life-long learning.



Valley Forge National Historical Park

1400 North Outer line Drive
King of Prussia, PA 19406

www.nps.gov/vafo

Follow us on:



Concept & Design: Ticcino Creative





2009 was a busy year at Valley Forge National Historical Park. Over 1.4 million visitors—a continually growing number—came here to understand fundamental American ideals and to enjoy themselves. Park staff, volunteers, and partners continued to work hard to achieve our core priorities: enhancing the visitor’s experience, preserving historic resources, and increasing natural biodiversity. Change is visible everywhere in the park.

Please come take part. Don’t hesitate to contact me if you have ideas, questions, or concerns. What can we do together?

Mike Caldwell

Mike Caldwell
Superintendent

Enhancing the Visitor Experience

The Washington’s Headquarters area and the historic Valley Forge Train Station were reopened to the public in May 2009 after three years of construction and six months of complete closure to the public. As part of this \$6.2 million rehabilitation project, we developed and installed exhibits in the train station focusing on Washington as a leader. A series of waysides was installed that details the natural, historical and commemorative

significance of the site. New ranger-led tours of Headquarters have become the main interpretive offering. We now offer at least two tours per hour, seven days per week.



Photo: M/Ticino

New exhibits were added to the train station, focusing on General Washington's leadership.



Photo: M/Ticino

Exhibits on the life and work of Continental soldiers were installed in the huts.



Photo: M/Ticino

The newly restored train station is now a welcoming orientation point for visitors.



Photo: NPS

The park's most popular trail was rebuilt.

We oversaw the \$400,000 Phase 2 rehabilitation of the park’s primary loop trail: the Joseph Plumb Martin Trail. A new trail segment between it and the Horseshoe Trail was built, connecting two major trail systems for the first time.

We participated in the NPS program, “Teacher-Ranger-Teacher,” for the second year. Teachers from Great Valley and Tredyffrin/Easttown school districts represented the elementary and secondary levels. They reviewed all of our formal education programming, including work with partners, and produced an analysis that will enable us to make changes that will enhance our service to schools.



Photo: M/Ticino

The new Revolutionary Shuttle provided transportation around the park.

The Valley Forge Convention and Visitors’ Bureau continues to be a strong partner. Through an agreement with the park, staffing is provided by the bureau to assist in orientation for visitors, and to provide public relations assistance, graphic design help and connections with the business and tourism community. This year, the bureau established a group tour

website for the park and multiple partners to use. This website is a “one-stop shop” for anyone bringing in groups to the area. For the park and its partners, this also is quite helpful in scheduling and tracking groups and determining what kinds of programming are in demand.

Working with the Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association, and using a Transportation Scholar provided by the Ford Motor Company through the National

Park Foundation, we experimented with a free transportation shuttle around the park called *The Revolutionary Shuttle*. There were over 20,000 boardings during the 10-week season. The service will continue in summer 2010.

We continue our successful partnership with our cooperating association, The Encampment Store (TES). TES’ 90-minute guided trolley tours through the park had an occupancy rate of over 80% over this summer.

Valley Forge National Historical Park



The Friends of Valley Forge Park merged with the Valley Forge Historical Society and now serves as steward of the Valley Forge Historical Society archives. The Friends continued to grow in membership and provided numerous services to park resources and visitors, including sponsoring the annual Revolutionary Run, the *Lock, Stock and Barrel* symposium, the *Lunch and Learn* lecture series, and the cell phone tour. They helped to fund the Crayfish Corps, new exhibits at Washington's Headquarters, new trail work, and the new Bruce A. Baky fellowship.

To expand our operational flexibility, Valley Forge NHP grew the seasonal staffing program park-wide this year, with a total of 30 seasonals. Providing much-needed jobs for local youth, the program also ensured satisfied visitors during the busiest season.

Preserving Historic Resources

Restoration of the cultural landscape continued with plantings of specimen trees associated with historic structures, trees re-establishing the allées along Outer Line Drive, and trees to screen incompatible views beyond park boundaries. Over 350 trees were planted, mostly by volunteers.

The park's first public archeology program in six years took place adjacent to Washington's Headquarters.

The excavations revealed evidence of 18th and 19th century occupations, including artifacts clearly related to the encampment, and gave 68 volunteers the chance to participate in uncovering the past.



Photo: NPS

Among dozens of tasks, seasonal staff helped to build new exhibits in soldiers' huts.



Photo: NPS

Volunteers worked directly with park seasonal archeologists during the dig at Washington's Headquarters.

We entered into a 40-year lease of the 19th-century David Walker Farmstead with the Montessori Children's House of Valley Forge. Renovations of the property began during the summer, with an expected completion in February. The school has invested over \$4 million in rehabilitation of the house and barn and necessary site work to transform the derelict property into a pre-school and kindergarten.

Increasing Natural Bio-Diversity

Initiated in 2006, the park completed development of the *White-tailed Deer Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)*. This plan provides for the long-term protection, preservation and restoration of native vegetation and other cultural and natural resources. Valley Forge also is the first NPS unit to incorporate a response to chronic wasting disease into a deer management strategy—the response would be implemented if the disease is identified within range of the park. The Draft Plan/EIS was available for a 60-day public review and comment period in late 2008. The Final Plan/EIS was released to the public for the 30-day no action period



Photo: M/Ticino

The David Walker house, spring house and barn were rehabilitated using private funds.

in August 2009. The Record of Decision was signed on October 1, 2009. The park will begin implementing the plan in winter 2009/2010.

Ranger presence on the park's trails was increased over the summer months by three seasonal staff who hiked and interacted with visitors every day. They provided interpretation for visitors and enhanced the efforts of enforcement and maintenance by daily monitoring of cultural and natural resources.

The Volunteer-in-Parks program experienced 15% growth this year. Donated hours from over 2,800 volunteers topped 50,000. The increase is due to the expansion of several well received new opportunities including the Crayfish Corps, a new project which gets kids in the water removing non-native invasive crayfish from Valley Creek; the revitalized Friends of Valley Forge Park, who contributed over 5,000 hours to many park programs; and the growth

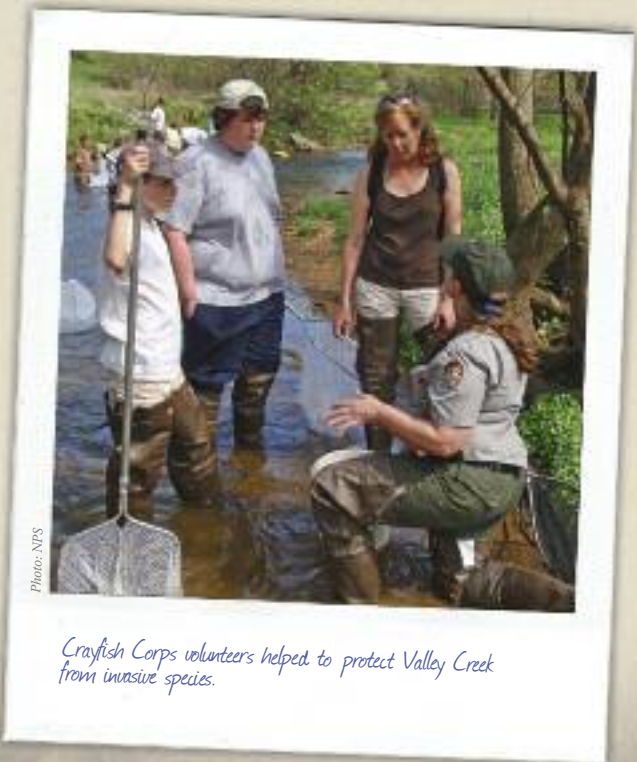


Photo: NPS

Crayfish Corps volunteers helped to protect Valley Creek from invasive species.

of community volunteer days such as National Trails Day and National Public Lands Day.



Photo: M/Ticino

The Lock, Stock, and Barrel symposium brought together scholars, enthusiasts and the public.

Valley Forge National Historical Park

Looking Ahead to 2010



Plans for Fiscal Year 2010 include significant projects aimed at achieving the park's primary objectives, as outlined in the 20-year General Management Plan. As always, the work and contributions of partners and volunteers will be essential to carrying out this work.

Enhancing the Visitor Experience

We will continue to improve the existing trail system, including rebuilding the popular Joseph Plumb Martin trail. We will build the new Yellow Springs Trail,

which will connect the extensive existing trail systems east and west of Valley Creek.

A project to rehabilitate the park's 1976 visitor center was initiated in 2009. The purpose is a visitor center that better prepares visitors to experience and understand the park and its significance.

Preserving Historic Resources

The Friends of Valley Forge Park is sponsoring the restoration and digitization of 42 encampment-related documents and manuscripts.

The Friends' annual appeal matches a Save America's Treasures grant, for a total of \$124,000, to preserve these irreplaceable documents. Once digitized, they will be available to everyone online.

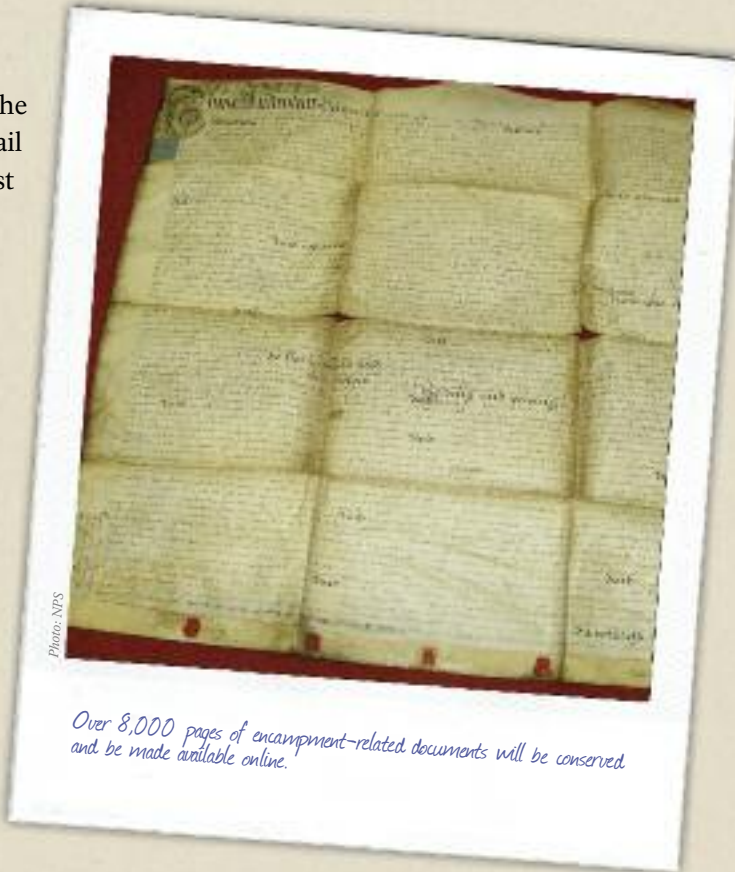


Photo: NPS

Over 8,000 pages of encampment-related documents will be conserved and be made available online.

Archaeologists will continue excavation around Washington's Headquarters. Last year, excavation gave 68 volunteers the chance to participate in uncovering the past.

We will continue preservation and maintenance work on several historic buildings, including the Philander Chase Knox house, Lord Stirling's Quarters and the Maurice Stephens House. Projects include replacing windows and doors, stucco work and roof replacements.

Increasing Natural Bio-Diversity

Implementation of the Deer Management Plan will bring us closer to the day when reforestation can begin, restoring critical habitat for all park species.

We will continue new tree planting, adding to the several hundred native trees that have been planted in the last two years.



Photo: U.S. Army

Meadow restoration will provide habitat for an endangered species.

We will work with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard to restore meadowlands and promote the introduction of the rare Regal Fritillary Butterfly to the park. The Regal Fritillary has nearly disappeared from its natural habitat east of

the Mississippi, and we hope to encourage population growth through the re-establishment of the native meadowlands the butterfly requires.

The Crayfish Corps will continue work to eradicate invasive species from Valley Creek.



Photo: M. J. Ticeano

Restoration of historic structures, including the Philander Chase Knox house, will continue.

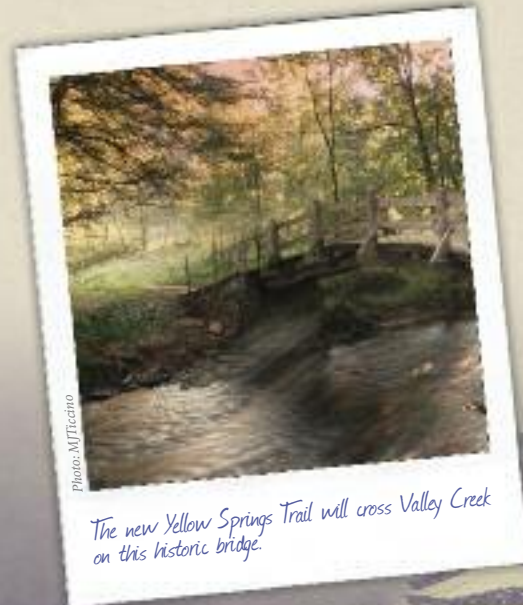


Photo: M. J. Ticeano

The new Yellow Springs Trail will cross Valley Creek on this historic bridge.