

Capital Investments This Year at Valley Forge National Historical Park

Valley Forge National Historical Park's recently completed *General Management Plan* laid out a twenty-year strategy for protecting and restoring historic resources, restoring the environment, and broadening opportunities for meaningful experiences for visitors.

Major strides in achieving these goals will be made this year. In recognition of the historic and natural significance of the park and the contribution it makes to the regional economy, the President and the United States Congress have announced that major capital investments will be made. The park will receive \$2,182,000 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 and \$1,332,000 in appropriated funds for important preservation and mobility projects.

ARRA funds will be used in the restoration and rehabilitation of significant historic structures and landscapes at Valley Forge. \$1.3 million will be invested to complete the Washington's Headquarters area rehabilitation project, including completing the restoration of the adjacent Valley Forge train station. The historic train station canopy along the rail platform will be restored, a new, safe entrance to the site for drivers will be provided, and historic landscape restoration will continue.

\$726,000 will be invested in preservation of Lord Stirling's Quarters and the Maurice Stephens House, augmenting earlier investments and bringing the buildings closer to future use by the public. These historic houses will be used to bring to the public new stories and themes about the encampment experience of both soldiers and the civilians who lived here.

Additional ARRA funds will be invested throughout the park for much-needed improvements on other historic structures including window replacement, masonry repairs, installation of modern heating systems, and painting.

Projects to restore the natural environment include the continuing replacement of trees in the historic landscape, continuing removal of exotic invasive species, and implementation of the deer management plan.

This year's federal appropriation includes funding for projects that directly benefit visitors and regional neighbors. \$1,000,000 was received to begin the planning and design for an expansion of the park's visitor center, including more museum, activities, and retail space. \$142,500 was received for the "Missing Link" Trail, which will provide a safe connection across Valley Creek between the Knox trailhead and the park's Valley Creek and Mount Misery trail systems and also the future Chester Valley regional trail. A 20% match for these funds will be provided by the Friends of Valley Forge Park. The reconstruction of the Joseph Plumb Martin Trail, the popular loop trail used by almost one million visitors each year, will continue with a \$402,418 investment this year. \$237,000 also was appropriated to PennDOT to continue work on the River Crossing Complex of projects intended to reduce congestion on US 422 at the Schuylkill River.

Because congestion is a serious problem for Valley Forge, the park participates in a federal/state/local partnership that already has had early success in reducing this regional problem.

“The projects are a strategic investment in the future of Valley Forge, affirming the high value that the public places on the park. They enable us to reach preservation and interpretive objectives and to continue to provide an even better experience for visitors” said Superintendent Mike Caldwell.