

and preservation of historic landmarks. The group received funding and support from corporations, private companies, the Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission, and Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce, as well as from non-profit organizations and citizens groups.

<http://www.restorehunterdon.com>

**RESOURCES**

*Developing Naturally: An Exploratory Process for Nature-Based Community Tourism*, Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service.

<http://www.strom.clemson.edu/publications/Potts/>

*Heritage Tourism*, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

[http://www.nationaltrust.org/heritage\\_tourism/index.html](http://www.nationaltrust.org/heritage_tourism/index.html)

New Jersey Agri-Tourism Events and Attractions, New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

<http://www.state.nj.us/jerseyfresh/agritourismhome.htm>

New Jersey's Great Northwest Skylands.

<http://www.njskylands.com/index.html>

**New Jersey Travel and Tourism.** [www.visitnj.org](http://www.visitnj.org) From this site, order publications including the 2006 New Jersey Travel Guide, the 2005 Eco-Tourism Guide, and the New Jersey Calendar of Events.

Skylands Region Tourism contacts:

[http://www.state.nj.us/travel/contacts\\_skylands.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/travel/contacts_skylands.shtml)

*A Position Paper on Cultural and Heritage Tourism in the United States*, U.S. Department of Commerce and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 2005 U.S. Cultural and Heritage Tourism Summit.

[http://www.nasaa-arts.org/artworks/cultural\\_heritage\\_tourism\\_paper.pdf](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/artworks/cultural_heritage_tourism_paper.pdf)

**Stories Across America: Opportunities for Rural Tourism**, Rural Information Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/stories.htm>

**Warren County Community Profile.**

<http://www.villageprofile.com/states/nj.html>

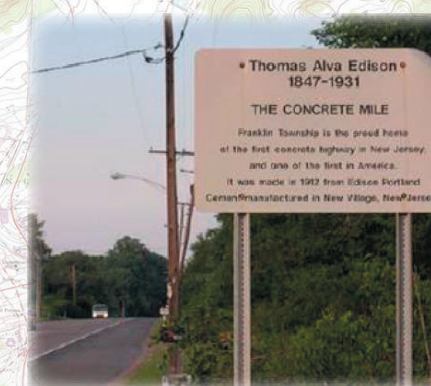
**Warren County, New Jersey Visitor's Guide.**

<http://www.visitwarren.org/>



ROUTE 57  
CORRIDOR PLAN

The Route 57 Corridor is situated in a region of New Jersey that is home to an unrivaled collection of natural, cultural, and historic resources. Warren County already draws tourists with its year-round opportunities for outdoor recreation, antiques shopping, and visits to farms stands, historical sites, golf courses, and theatre. Tourism and lifestyle experts have noted an increasing trend among Americans to travel to "authentic" places where they can experience the beauty of the natural environment—places where they can still discover the "real America" without having to travel too far from home. By exploring a few new programs and policies, the towns and businesses along the Route 57 corridor will be able to capitalize on the economic and community benefits of place-based tourism while sharing with others the unique and extraordinary features of the landscape and preserving a sense of place.



This sign in Franklin Township commemorates the first concrete highway in New Jersey and one of the first in America. It was built in 1917 from concrete manufactured at Thomas Edison's Portland Cement Company in New Village.

*Stories Across America: Opportunities for Rural Tourism* is a publication of the Rural Information Center of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that tells the story of successful tourism programs that have been developed in small towns and rural regions across the country. In

describing what makes certain programs successful, the publication notes,

"These rural communities rely on their most important resources—their people, culture, history, and natural resources. They have found ways to create linkages that tie attractions and visitor services together into a comprehensive visitor experience. Most of these projects involve careful planning, incremental changes, and gradual growth designed to respect local resources and values."

These opportunities exist today along the Route 57 corridor. Efforts should be directed toward creating a greater awareness of the resources, improving access

to them, and developing strategies that enable tourism, nature, dining, and lodging interests to work together in complementary ways.

**HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TOURISM**

According to *Cultural Tourism in the United States*, a white paper written in 1995 by the White House Conference on Travel and Tourism, cultural and heritage tourism can be defined as "travel directed toward experiencing the arts, heritage, and special character of a place. America's rich heritage and culture, rooted in



Children's events cater to locals and tourists. Here, participants in a children's fishing derby learn about that the fish used to stock ponds were raised at the Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery. (Picture courtesy of the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife).

our history, our creativity, and our diverse population, provides visitors to our communities with a wide variety of cultural opportunities, including museums, historic sites, dance, music, theater, book and other festivals, historic buildings, arts and crafts fairs, neighborhoods, and landscapes." In 2005 the U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism Summit convened to develop a national 5-year strategy to expand this type of tourism. According to *A Position Paper on Cultural & Heritage Tourism in the United States*, which resulted from the summit, this type of authentic, place-based tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry:

- 81% of the 146.4 million U.S. adults who took a trip of 50 miles or more from home in the past year can be considered cultural and heritage tourists.
- Historic/cultural travel volume increased by 13% between 1996 and 2002.
- Compared to other travelers, heritage/cultural tourists tend to spend more money and are more likely to stay in a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast.

Additionally, the National Trust for Historic Preservation

has developed comprehensive guidance on heritage tourism, including several publications and case studies to encourage communities to begin assessing their own potential for heritage tourism. The Trust lists five guiding principles for successful and sustainable heritage tourism:

1. Collaborate.
2. Find the fit between the community and tourism.
3. Make sites and programs come alive.
4. Focus on authenticity and quality.
5. Preserve and protect resources.

## ECOTOURISM AND NATURE-BASED TOURISM

The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.” Nature-based tourism is indeed a very viable option for the Route 57 corridor. Warren County is already home to a variety of scenic and ecologically significant features, including the Musconetcong River, the Highlands, the Morris Canal towpath, and important habitat for trout, migratory birds, and other wildlife. Thus, the purpose of developing a more refined and comprehensive nature-based tourism program would be to build upon the resources that are already there, both for their intrinsic value and for their role in bringing residents and visitors to the area. Nature-based tourism programs and organizations can help provide funds that can be used to maintain and preserve these natural resources, ensuring that they will be enjoyed for generations to come.

## REGIONAL ATTRACTIONS WITH STRONG HERITAGE AND ECOTOURISM COMPONENTS

There are many exciting things happening in the region that could inspire communities along the Route 57 Corridor to build a healthy tourism economy.

**Stephens State Park.** Located in Hackettstown, this park hosts a variety of events, including nature scavenger hunts for children, mountain bike rides, historical reenactments of frontier camping and Lenape crafts, and trail hikes. <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/stephens.html>



The annual crafts festival and 4th of July Parade in Washington Borough are two ways that residents and tourists celebrate the culture and heritage of the community (pictures courtesy of the Washington Borough Business Improvement District website).



**Warren County Farmers’ Fair.** Held annually in Harmony Township, the fair is one of the few remaining authentic agricultural fairs in Northern New Jersey. This event features livestock exhibits, antique car and tractor shows, exhibits of traditional arts and handicrafts, children’s activities, and a balloon festival. <http://www.warrencountyfarmersfair.org>

**Washington BID events.** The Washington Borough Business Improvement District works with local businesses and government to provide a high-quality environment for shopping and civic interests in the Borough. The BID sponsors a variety of events which draw tens of thousands of people to Washington throughout the year. Events include: Annual Car Show (June), Festival in the Borough (July), weekly Farmers Market (summer), Annual Arts and Crafts Festival, monthly Antiques Flea Market, and First Friday entertainment. <http://www.washingtonbid.org>

**Waterloo Village.** A 19th century port town along the Morris Canal, Waterloo Village is a National Historic Site located in Allamuchy Mountain State Park along the Musconetcong River in Sussex County. The site includes a recreated Canal Town, with a blacksmith shop, gristmill, and other buildings; the Rutan Farm, which recreates an early 18th century family subsistence farm; and the Lenape Village, carefully recreated based on archaeological evidence. Special events throughout the year and thematic tours for school groups make history come alive for visitors of all ages. <http://www.waterloovillage.org>

## HERITAGE AND ECOTOURISM INITIATIVES IN THE REGION

Through the Route 57 Conceptual Corridor Plan, the concurrent Scenic Byway study, and other related initiatives, the communities along this corridor are already working with state and local government and non-profit groups both to preserve the land uses that give the area its rural character and maintain the existing transportation capacity of the roadway. Listed below are several projects that have been developed in Warren and nearby counties which serve as good examples of Heritage and Ecotourism. A variety of funding sources are available to assist rural communities in maximizing their heritage and nature-based tourism potential—from private grants to federal Transportation Enhancement funds. Sources of funding and information are suggested below and in the Resources section.



From fly fishing in the Musconetcong River to taking in the scenery and birding at the Merrill Creek Reservoir, there are many ways to enjoy the natural environment in Warren County.

**Skylands of New Jersey Tourism Council.** This organization supports a variety of tourism endeavors in Morris, Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon, and Somerset Counties by promoting member businesses at trade shows and fairs, distributing brochures, producing quarterly newsletters, and developing geographically-based travel guides and itineraries (including *Eco-Trips: Nature Based Activities and Recreation*: <http://www.skylandstourism.org/Press/EcoTrips.pdf>). This non-profit group plays a valuable role in helping this region make the most out of its tourism potential. <http://www.skylandstourism.org>

**Belvidere Victorian Days.** Each September, Belvidere, the county seat of Warren County, hosts the two-day “Victorian Days” festival. The celebration includes vintage fashion shows, house tours, a 19th century vintage baseball game, and other events that celebrate the area’s heritage and draw many visitors. The event fosters community pride, and proceeds are used to fund preservation initiatives and scholarships. <http://www.victorianbelvidere.com>

**Heritage Alliance for Tourism (HAT).** This initiative of the Great Swamp Watershed Association works to promote heritage tourism in the Morris County region by fostering the effective collaboration of businesses, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. In addition to increasing awareness, HAT tracks site attendance and applies for grants to improve heritage tourism in Morris County. <http://www.greatswamp.org/HAT/hat.htm>

**Morris County Heritage Destination CD-ROM.** With funding from the Morris County Park Commission and a grant from the NJ Office of Travel and Tourism, the Morris County Visitor’s Center (MCVC) developed a 6-minute CD-ROM featuring Morris County’s four national historic landmarks. <http://www.morris-tourism.org>

**Restore Hunterdon.** Inspired by the nationwide movement “Restore America” (aimed at preserving the nation’s historic treasures), a volunteer committee has formed in Hunterdon County. Restore Hunterdon: Historic Preservation in Progress aims to use public education and awareness to encourage the appreciation