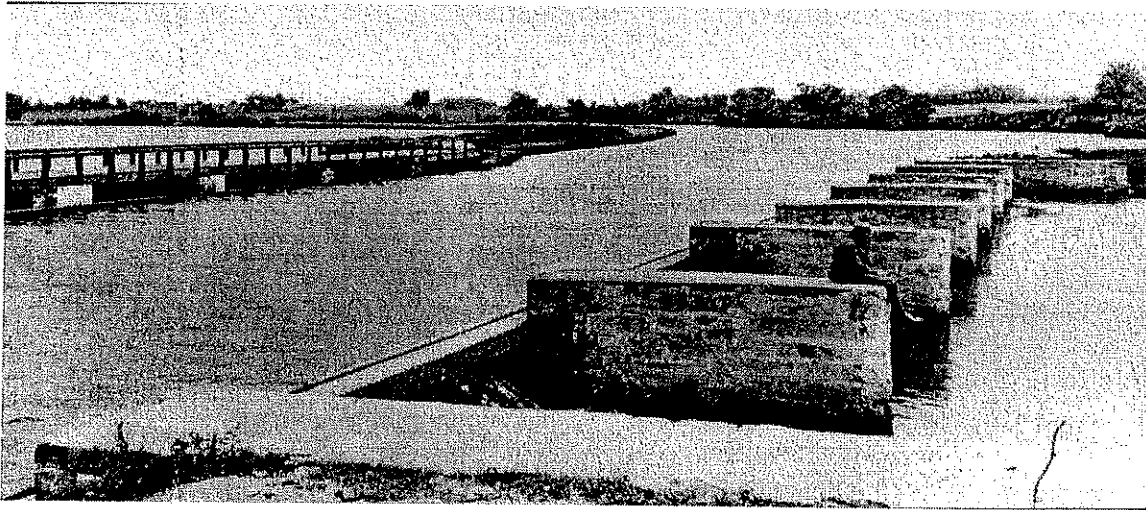


**DEVELOPMENT PLAN
FOR THE
DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL STATE PARK
2003 - 2013**



**Adopted by the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission
February 2003**

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Introduction

The Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park is one of New Jersey's great jewels. The sixty-mile course of the historic canal ties together rural, suburban and urban landscapes. It is a recreational site that boasts of nearly a million visits every year. It is a State and National historic site that provides a connection to the region's 19th century history. It is a water supply system that supplies water to approximately one out of every eight residents of the Garden State. Ask almost anyone in the region about this unique park and the answer is inevitably, "Oh, I love the D&R Canal Park."

It has become everyone's favorite place for many reasons. In a time when much of the loveliness of our countryside is being lost, it remains a place of great beauty. This quality alone is enough to endear the Canal Park to people who encounter it regularly, but the park is also cherished because it is a part of people's daily lives, not a distant preserve visited for two weeks in the summer. Because the park is integrated into so many communities in the region it is accessible for a morning walk with the dog, a quick jog after work or an impromptu canoe ride after the lawn is mowed on a Saturday afternoon. Further, in a region that is changing rapidly, people are finding that familiar landmarks of the region's history are either completely lost or they so thoroughly lose their context that they have become anachronisms. The D&R Canal and its immediate context remain true to their 19th century character. A surprising amount of the canal corridor has retained the same character that it had when barges filled with coal plied its waters.

For twenty-five years the Canal Commission has been producing plans to guide the development of the Canal Park. The Commission's goal has always been to enhance the qualities of the Canal Park without impacting the charm that has made it so beloved. We have striven to develop paths along its entire length—and in as many places as possible on both sides of the canal—so that one section of the park does not attract so many people that the quality of the visit is compromised. We are now on the threshold of having a continuous path for the entire length of the canal. We have tried to develop many relatively small parking lots and access areas so that the park is accessible to all of its communities. We have been vigilant to protect the historic character of the canal's structures—its bridge tender houses, spillways, locks, and even the character of the towpath. We have also recognized the importance of the Canal Park as a nature preserve and we have been careful to protect the natural plant communities in the park. We have also tried to assure that the canal's important role of serving as a water supply system is not impaired by the recreational, historic, or natural preservation roles of the park.

This first development plan of the new century is intended to be in the tradition of its predecessors. It is intended to make the park more accessible and to protect its historic and natural character. It is based upon the best judgements of the Canal Commission including insights and suggestions gained from the approximately 80 people who attended the public meetings the Commission held in December 2002 and the many others who submitted written comments on a draft of this plan.

The first edition of the MASTER PLAN FOR THE DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL STATE PARK was published in 1977. Since then there have been many planning documents envisioning an improved Canal Park and many improvements made in the park. The most recent development plan, a ten-year plan adopted by the Canal Commission in 1996, describes 32 projects, nearly all of which have either been completed or are in the process of being constructed.

As this plan is being prepared, in January 2003, New Jersey is faced with a severe budget deficit and many prognosticators believe that the problem will get worse before it gets better. Already the State Park Capital Improvement budget has been eliminated. No one expects it to be replaced or supplemented soon. It may, therefore, seem a strange time to prepare a development plan. Over the years, however, the Canal Commission has found that it can often find ways to make improvements to the Canal Park with the investment of little or no State money. In fact, the Commission has generated several million dollars worth of improvements without using public funds.

The success of this plan will depend upon the Commission's success at forming partnerships. We will continue to work with the counties and municipalities in the canal corridor, with non-profit environmental and historical organizations, and where appropriate, with corporations and businesses.

The first stage in forming these kinds of partnerships is to have a clear vision of what we think should be done to improve the park. This plan provides those goals, beginning the often lengthy process of park development.

A companion plan for land acquisition projects that will enhance the park is also being prepared but it will not be published because advance public knowledge could hinder the process of acquisition. This plan identifies properties for acquisition based on several criteria. First, we have recommended several properties because if they are developed they inevitably will have a harmful impact on the character of the park. Second, some parcels are recommended to promote recreational activity in the Canal Park or associated with it. For example, we recommend the acquisition of corridors along several streams that connect to the park because they will extend the Canal Park's reach into surrounding neighborhoods or they will connect the park to other resources. Third, some properties are recommended because they possess important natural qualities that would enhance the park's ability to function as a habitat for a diverse array of plants and animals.

The Canal Commission remains open to public input on this plan. Those who wish to contact us can come to one of the Commission's monthly meetings—all of which are open to the public, or by contacting the Commission office. The Commission's web site can be visited at www.dandrcanal.com.

Proposed Development Projects

There are thirty projects in this plan, arranged geographically. The first project listed is upstream of Bulls Island, where Delaware River water enters the canal. Subsequent projects follow the flow of water from Bulls Island through Lambertville and Trenton, on to Princeton, South Bound Brook and New Brunswick. For those people who would like to consider the projects by category, the same 30 projects are grouped at the end of the plan according to the following categories:

- Access to the Canal Park
- Expansion of the Canal Park Path System
- Links to Neighboring Natural and Historic Places
- Preservation of the Canal Park's Historic Structures
- Development of the Canal Park as an Urban Park in Trenton

No priorities have been assigned to these projects at this time.

Although there is no intention of addressing management issues in this plan, it must be noted that the Canal Park Office must have more staff and greater amounts of money for operation of the park. This is an area that has been ignored for too long. The present funding for operations and the present number of rangers, maintenance workers and other staff are inadequate for the job that must be done. Realization of the plans produced here will only make this bad situation worse unless funding is increased. The people of New Jersey have been coming to the Canal Park in ever greater numbers and they expect the park to be well taken care of and appropriately policed. The park staff is doing a heroic job, but even heroes have limits.

Milford to Scudders Falls

(Illustrated on Maps 1,2 & 3)

1. Complete the path to Milford's Bridge Street.

At present there is an uninterrupted path from downtown Trenton to a field that is mid-way between Frenchtown and Milford. This path should be extended to Bridge Street in the center of Milford.

Tasks:

- Acquire easements from the Black River & Western Railroad and from Curtis Papers Company. (Both are underway.)
- Determine how to cross the creek at the northern end of the paper company's property.
- Build a fence separating the path from the railroad and the paper company's operations.
- Clear, grade and surface the path right-of-way.

Public Benefit:

Extending the path to the center of Milford will allow more of a path for people to use, it will allow easier access to the park for people in the Milford area and it will provide one more connection to the Delaware Canal in Pennsylvania because of the bridge across the Delaware River in Milford.

2. Promote loop trips that include PA's Delaware Canal State Park.

There are six bridges across the Delaware River that link the D&R Canal State Park and Pennsylvania's Delaware Canal State Park. The goal is to have signs on both sides of the bridges that give information about making a loop trail involving both parks.

Tasks:

- The Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor is preparing these signs. It remains to be seen if they will erect them or if that will be our task.

Public Benefit:

People who use the D&R towpath for a walk, jog or bike ride must go up and back on the same path. That is not really a bad thing, because the path is so pleasant, but greater variety can be added to a recreational outing by crossing the river and taking the Delaware Canal towpath for the return trip.

3. Develop Prallsville Saw Mill for mixed use.

The Prallsville Saw Mill is presently an unused shell. There is widespread agreement that it should be rehabilitated so that it can be used jointly by the Delaware River Mill Society (who leases the mill site) as an extension of their programs and by the Canal Park as a visitors' center to interpret the Canal Park's historic and natural features.

Tasks:

- The Delaware River Mill Society has approved of this dual use and have raised half of the money needed to do the work. Construction-ready plans and specifications have been prepared and approved by everyone.

- Half of the cost of construction must be raised to match the money raised by the Mill Society.

Public Benefit:

The Prallsville Mill Site is one of the major access areas for the Canal Park. Having an interpretive center at this location will allow large numbers of people to increase their knowledge of the history of the D&R Canal and of the importance of the Canal Park. This development will also add greater life to the mill site, contributing to as well as benefiting from the dynamics of this beautiful historic district.

4. Restore and interpret the Lambertville Outlet Lock.

This jewel of a historic structure lies in a wooded area and is filled with debris. The goal is to restore it and erect a sign explaining its role in the history of the canal systems of eastern America.

Tasks:

- Clear all debris and interfering vegetation from the lock and its immediate surroundings.
- Rebuild the portions of the lock walls that have fallen.
- Erect a sign explaining the history and importance.

Public Benefit:

The Lambertville outlet lock was the D&R's connection to Pennsylvania's Delaware Canal. The story of how boats were hooked to a cable connecting the two sides of the Delaware River and crossed from one canal to the other captures people's imaginations. It also helps them to see the bigger picture of a canal network that was vital to transportation in 19th century eastern America.

5. Increase parking capacity at Lambertville Lock area.

There is a road from Lambertville's Bridge Street to the outlet lock but it is badly rutted and not marked. A good, well-marked road and an adequate parking area are needed.

Tasks:

- Acquire land from Black River & Western Railroad
- Improve the road to the parking area
- Enlarge and landscape the parking area
- Erect signs telling the public how to reach this area

Public Benefit:

Lambertville is a magnet for tourists, including those who come to Lambertville just to gain access to the Canal Park. At present there is inadequate parking along the canal for the large number of people who drive to Lambertville and expect to enjoy the Canal Park as part of their visit.

6. Develop a new access area at Moores Creek.

This is potentially a major access area for the Canal Park but the existing (rather messy) parking area is not connected to the canal path. Further, the parking area needs to be connected to Mercer County's Baldpate Mountain Park.

Tasks:

- Either construct a new pedestrian bridge across the canal or rehabilitate the railroad bridge for park use.
- Grade, resurface and landscape the existing parking lot for park use.
- Construct a composting sanitary facility.
- Work with Mercer County to develop a path and directional signs to Baldpate Mountain Park.

Public Benefit:

There is a parking area at Fireman's Eddy, a mile south of Lambertville, and then a three-and-a-half-mile stretch of the Canal Park before the next (very small) parking area at Titusville. At about the mid point of this section is Moores Creek, where another parking area would provide additional park access without being too close to existing access areas.

7. Increase Parking Capacity at Scudders Falls.

Scudders Falls is one of the most popular access areas along the Canal Park. There are two parking areas here now but they are inadequate for the demand. There is an opportunity to expand one of them without destroying the lovely character of the area.

Tasks:

- The area below the canal—north of the bridge—needs to be graded, surfaced and landscaped for new parking spaces.
- A sign should be erected which explains that the dam here was the start of the Trenton Water Power Canal, an important part of Trenton's 19th century industrial history.

Public Benefit:

Twice the parking area at Scudders Falls has been enlarged and still there is not enough room for the people who come here to start their park visit. A dozen more spaces for people who now park along the road would be welcome.

Trenton and Hamilton

(Illustrated on Maps 4 & 5)

One of the most important goals of this plan is to examine the entire Trenton section of the Canal Park and make it into the urban State Park that New Jersey's Capital City deserves. The most important key to success with this goal is to establish a Trenton office for the rangers and maintenance workers. Urban parks must be more carefully maintained than parks in the countryside. Areas that are not regularly mowed, for example, in the countryside can be seen as part of the park's natural landscape; in cities, areas that are not mowed look messy. Further, because they often attract larger numbers of visitors, urban parks need more vigilant patrolling. Neither of these can happen if the rangers and maintenance workers operate out of an office that is twenty miles outside the city as is presently the case.

The projects that are listed here represent a portion of the things that should be done to make the Trenton section of the Canal Park into the urban park that we envision. Greater attention to the interface between Cadwalader Park and the Canal Park is needed. The juncture of the Main Canal and the Feeder Canal, an area known in its day as Coal Port, needs to be interpreted and improved to reveal its historic importance. The Trenton Battle Monument area needs to be expanded and further improved. The Canal Park could be better integrated into the City if directional signs were erected informing visitors to the park of the important places in Trenton such as the Capitol, the State Library and Museum, and the Trenton Museum in Cadwalader Park.

The Commission would also like to note that there is approximately 3 miles of the "abandoned" canal between the southern boundary of Trenton and the Crosswicks Creek—all of which is located in Hamilton Township—but it is treated here as part of the "Trenton Urban Park" area. The marsh and Duck Island are definitely Hamilton resources but they are treated here as southern termini for the continuous Trenton section of the park. A history of the Hamilton Township section of the Canal Park can be found on page 24 of this plan.

8. Restore and use the Calhoun and Hanover Streets Canal Houses.

These two canal houses must be made attractive and useful parts of the Canal Park. One of them should be considered for use as an interpretive center for the historic and natural features of the Canal Park.

Tasks:

- Hire an architect to prepare plans for the renovation of these two houses.
- Obtain the capital improvement funds to reconstruct them.
- Find appropriate tenants to use them in ways that promote the goals of the Canal Park and of the community.

Public Benefit:

The Canal houses are anchors for the Canal Park, especially in urban areas where the presence of the canal can be overwhelmed by other elements. By restoring the Calhoun and Hanover houses, the canal's route through downtown Trenton will be marked by attractive structures. Further, restoring these buildings will help in the overall restoration of the Trenton canal corridor.

9. Develop a landscape in Trenton's canal corridor that demonstrates the interface between the natural world and urban areas.

It is often believed that once man has impacted an area all natural systems are lost forever. There is no doubt that the plant communities of central New Jersey developed at a time when the entire region was a deciduous forest. But even then, before Europeans came to America, there were plant communities that developed at forest edges. Over the last two hundred years, however, these edge species have been losing the battle for space with alien species that are aggressive colonizers. The canal corridor in Trenton is filled with these alien species. Purple loosestrife, Japanese honeysuckle, Knotweed, Norway maple, and stilt grass have claimed large areas of the park. A plan for the re-introduction of native plant communities needs to be developed and implemented.

Tasks:

- Develop a master plan for the eradication of the invasive plants and the establishment of native plant communities. This plan must reflect the importance of preserving the quality of the water in the canal.
- Implement this plan, starting at the nine bridges that cross the canal in the City of Trenton.

Public Benefit:

This project will bring the natural landscape of rural areas into the heart of Trenton. People who live or recreate in Trenton would have the opportunity to enjoy the natural world without travelling to a rural county. Native plant communities will also provide more desirable habitat for birds and other wildlife.

10. Complete path between Old Rose and Mulberry Streets.

This is the one section of the Canal Park that does not have a path. Plans and specifications are complete for making the path but some land must be acquired and there is no money for construction.

Tasks:

- Obtain necessary land
- Obtain funds for construction

Public Benefit:

Since the first Canal Park Master Plan was published in 1977 there has been a goal of establishing a continuous path along the canal's entire 60-mile length. A "get on anywhere—get off anywhere" path will be created with the completion of this segment.

11. Establish a link between Calhoun Street and Lock Two.

Lock Two, located at the southern boundary of Trenton and Hamilton Township is separated from the rest of the canal. An effort is underway to connect the lock with the canal at Calhoun Street *via* a trail along the edge of the Delaware River.

Tasks:

- The NJ DOT is participating in some of this trail planning. They and the City of Trenton's planners need to be brought together to resolve the differences and chart a course for completion.

Public Benefit:

People in Trenton would be able to have off-road access from the center of town southward to Bordentown if this link is built. There is also a larger plan to have a loop trail on both sides of the Delaware River between Trenton and Philadelphia. This segment is critical to that plan which would provide great public use and enjoyment.

12. Excavate filled-in portion of the canal between Locks One and Two and restore Locks One and Two.

A canal without water and without locks defining its sections is more like a ditch than a canal. This section of the canal is partially filled (Lock Two and the area around it) and cluttered with silt, debris and vegetation.

Tasks:

- Plans will have to be prepared for the excavation and the restoration of the locks.
- Funds are needed for construction.

Public Benefit:

Over the last ten years there has been a developing awareness of the ecological value and beauty of the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh. Removing the silt, debris and fill that has accumulated in this section of the canal since it was abandoned in 1933 would reassert the canal as one of the jewels of this valuable area. It would also provide boating and fishing opportunities to nearby residents. The restoration of the locks would result in the creation of a section of the historic canal that is fully reminiscent of the 19th century structure.

Lawrence to Kingston Lock

(Illustrated on Maps 4, 5 & 6)

13. Increase parking capacity at Whitehead Road.

A few years ago the State acquired a parcel at the northwest corner of the intersection of the canal and Whitehead Road. This property needs to be landscaped and developed as an access area.

Tasks:

- Prepare plans and specifications for this project.
- Obtain funding for construction.

Public Benefit:

The southern portion of Lawrence Township is very densely developed but has few suitable access areas for the Canal Park. Developing an access area at Whitehead Road will enhance access for these people.

14. Improve the path on both sides of canal between the Route One crossing and Whitehead Road.

We expect to have a pedestrian bridge across Route One by 2003. That will open the section of the park south of Route One to much more recreational use. Having usable and attractive paths on both sides of the canal can accommodate this increased use better.

Tasks:

- A new culvert is needed to connect the turning basin near Carnegie Road with the canal and the basin needs to be cleared.
- Clear limbs, brambles & etc. from the right-of-way for both paths where necessary.
- Grade where necessary.
- Resurface.

Public Benefit:

Wherever possible, paths are being developed on both sides of the canal in order to accommodate the ever-increasing number of visitors to the Canal Park. An informal path presently exists in this section but it is so overgrown that it does not encourage use.

15. Develop greenway corridor along the Assunpink from D&R to Mercer County Park.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission has prepared a terrific plan for this project. It details the land that needs to be acquired, who should acquire it, and how a recreational trail can be a part of the greenway corridor.

Tasks:

- Use the structure recommended in the plan to make sure that each player accepts the responsibility recommended for it.

Public Benefits:

As walking, hiking and bicycling have increased in popularity in recent years there has been an increased realization that having corridors between parks is valuable for public

use. Mercer County's park is a very popular place for all of these activities. Providing a greenway connection to the Canal Park would give people a greater range of options.

16. Create link to Institute for Advanced Studies property and expand the preserved area to connect with Lawrence's conservation lands.

The six hundred-acre Institute property is a nationally renowned habitat for migrating warblers. A conservation easement has been put on the land. Its connection with the Canal Park is made difficult by a channel of water that is sometimes a barrier. Further, one property owner separates the Institute land from the four hundred-acres of conservation lands in Lawrence. If that property can become part of the preserved land in this area there will be a 1300-acre natural area in the heart of the Route One corridor.

Tasks:

- Obtain permission from the Institute for Advanced Studies to bridge or ford the channel.
- Obtain any other necessary permits.
- Find way to bridge or ford the channel.
- Help Green Acres acquire the property that separates the conservation areas.

Public Benefit:

Both the Lawrence Conservation Area and the Institute for Advanced Studies land are important natural areas and both enjoy widespread popular support. Large numbers of people visit the Institute lands to birdwatch or to enjoy its natural charms. By connecting this area to the Lawrence conservation lands it will enhance the ability of both places to serve as a habitat for plants and animals, and by connecting both to the Canal Park it will make it easier for people to use both the Canal Park and the nature preserves.

17. Increase parking capacity at Washington Road and Harrison Street in West Windsor.

Princeton University maintains a small parking area at Washington Road, and the Canal Park has a parking lot for about 4 cars at Harrison Street. More parking space is needed at both places.

Tasks:

- Determine best location and approximate size needed for additional parking.
- Work with Princeton University officials to gain permission for the Canal Park to share the use of their land.
- Construct parking lots.

Public Benefit:

Access to the park in these areas is limited but highly desirable. Providing more parking here will allow people to come to this part of the park.

18. Improve Kingston Lock area as major access point (more parking, picnicking, expanded interpretive display, landscape for beauty and to enhance wildlife habitat).

Kingston is one of the most important focal points along the canal. It is located amid dense development; it is a place where many National Register of Historic Places districts overlap (two Kingston districts, the canal district, Lake Carnegie district and the Kings Highway district); there is a bus line that connects it to Princeton and New York City; there is a lock, a lock tender's house and a lock tender's station, a turning basin and a long cobblestone spillway; there are paths on both sides of the canal in both directions; there is a path to the nearby Cook Natural Area; and many other resources.

As rich as this area is at present, however, there is the potential that it could become an even better place along the Canal Park. The path to the Cook preserve should be extended eastward to the community of Monmouth Junction. There is a lot of unused space that should be considered for either recreational use or allowed to become part of the natural area. Links to other nearby resources need to be examined.

Tasks:

- Hire a planner to develop a master plan for this area.
- Assign priority to the parts of the plan.
- Obtain funds to undertake the development of the plan in accordance with the priority assigned to the tasks.

Public Benefit:

One of the goals for the Canal Park is that "major" access areas are developed at selected areas. These are locations with a confluence of several important resources. Kingston has just such a combination of resources. It contains historic structures, the Millstone River and Lake Carnegie, a canal lock, natural areas, a linking path to the Cook Natural Area, and enough space for people to congregate. Add to this the fact that Kingston is right next to a bus stop that connects Princeton with New York City and it is obvious that this should be a major access area.

Rocky Hill to 10 Mile Lock

(Illustrated on Maps 7, 8 & 9)

19. Make link to Montgomery greenway path system (pedestrian bridge across the Millstone River).

Montgomery has developed an extensive greenway path system throughout the township. Connection with the Canal Park path is difficult, however, because the Millstone River is between the canal towpath and the Township's paths.

Tasks:

- A location for a pedestrian bridge across the Millstone has been selected. Plans for the bridge need to be made.
- Funds for construction must be found.

Public Benefit:

This would greatly increase access to the Canal Park and link the park to other natural and community resources. It would further have the advantage of access without building parking lots.

20. Restore and preserve cluster of houses at Griggstown Causeway as planned.

The buildings on all four corners of the intersection of the canal and the Griggstown Causeway are flood prone and in need of restoration. Despite these problems this cluster has enormous charm as the core of a 19th century village. The historic character of this little community is extremely important to the Canal Park, so it must be restored, protected and used. Prior to Hurricane Floyd in 1999, the Griggstown Longhouse (also known as the Muletenders' Barracks) was an interpretive center for the history of the canal and an information center for the Canal Park. Those uses should be restored.

Tasks:

- A general development plan has been prepared.
- This is a project that cannot proceed without a significant amount of money to develop the concept plans into construction plans and then to carry out the construction.
- The long-term key to saving the historic character of this area is to have the causeway closed as a through road between Canal Road and River Road. This cannot be done unless Somerset County agrees to it. We should work with Somerset County to seek an alternative crossing so that this one can be closed.

Public Benefit:

People will be able to experience a 19th century canal community.

21. Increase parking capacity at Griggstown and Blackwells Mills.

Demand for parking spaces in this area now exceeds the supply. It is sensible to assume that the demand will increase. We need to have more parking spaces without creating inappropriately large parking lots.

Tasks:

- Locate and design the additional parking areas.
- Find funds or another way of getting them built.

- Look for ways to develop parking at other locations that might reduce the demand at these locations.

Public Benefit:

This project will provide parking that is badly needed to accommodate those wishing to use this part of the park.

22. Improve link to Six Mile Run Reservoir trails.

Six Mile Run Reservoir is a 3600-acre property that will probably never host a reservoir. It is presently under the jurisdiction of the Canal Park and a network of paths has been made here. The reservoir property adjoins the Canal Park but there are no directional signs available that show the connection. Trail maps also need to be more easily obtained.

Tasks:

- Erect a sign informing the public of the connection and make Six Mile Run trail maps more readily available.

Public Benefit:

This project will greatly increase the number of people who can enjoy the beauty of this rural countryside.

23. Restore and use the East Millstone and Weston Canal Houses.

These canal houses are vital landmarks for the Canal Park and they must be preserved, restored and used or they will be lost.

Tasks:

- Restoration of the Weston house is supposed to be done by a developer of a nearby senior housing complex. He must be directed through the process.
- Data on the frequency of flooding for the East Millstone house should be gathered.
- A qualified prospective tenant who would restore and maintain the house in lieu of rent should be found.

Public Benefit:

These two bridge tender houses are important parts of the canal's history. Their restoration and use will allow the public to appreciate the canal as a historic resource.

24. Establish link to Colonial Park.

Somerset County's Colonial Park is a popular and beautiful park. It is next to the Canal Park but the towpath is on the opposite side of the canal and it is impossible to go from one park to the other.

Tasks:

- The most likely source of funds for a pedestrian bridge is the Federal DOT's T-21 funding. The County has been seeking these funds with help from the DRCC. Keep pursuing this route.

Public Benefit:

Colonial Park is a very popular park but the towpath is on the opposite side of the canal from the park. This project will allow recreation use of both parks.

South Bound Brook to New Brunswick

(Illustrated on Maps 9 & 10)

25. Focus on South Bound Brook.

The little community of South Bound Brook is bordered on three sides by the D&R Canal. The connection between the borough and the park is tenuous, however, and the portion of the park that is near the borough needs to be improved in many small ways.

Tasks:

- Restore the South Bound Brook Lock
- Retrofit the South Bound Brook Spillway to make it possible for safer pedestrian and bicycle use.
- Remove or bury the gas pipe that crosses the canal just above the water line.
- Remove or greatly improve the pump station.
- Establish the railroad bridge as a pedestrian crossing.
- Restore towpath downstream of GAF.
- Assure that the development of the former GAF plant is suitable as a neighbor to a State park.

Public Benefit:

The people who live in South Bound Brook are ardent supporters of the Canal Park. Unfortunately the towpath is on the opposite side of the canal from the town. Improving this section—including the addition of better access to the path—will allow the park to become better integrated into the lives of the residents of this community.

26. Increase parking capacity and enhance 5-Mile Lock access area.

The existing access area is inadequately sized, dangerous to drive into and out of, and very unattractive.

Tasks:

- Remove existing house and interpret the historic lock tender's house
- Install a sign that Interprets the Fieldsville Dam and its relationship to the inlet and outlet system between the Raritan River and the canal
- Design new access area
- Fund construction

Public Benefit:

This access area is on a very busy street in a densely developed residential neighborhood. Its development will serve a large population.

27. Develop Freda Marden Common.

Plans for the development of this access area have been sitting on a shelf for several years because the park staff did not believe they could maintain what is proposed.

Tasks:

- Work with the park administrators to determine what aspects of the plan could be maintained if developed.
- Find funding for those portions that are appropriate.

Public Benefit:

Like the 5-Mile Lock access area, this area is on a busy road and adjacent to a densely settled residential area. Its development will result in significant use.

28. Strengthen link between Canal Park path and the New Brunswick path to the outlet lock.

There is a path connecting the New Brunswick outlet locks to Landing Lane but it is not a strong feature.

Tasks:

- Determine how to strengthen this path
- Work with the New Brunswick Parks and Recreation Department, Rutgers University and others to achieve the goal of creating a strong and useful path

Public Benefit:

The City of New Brunswick, including Rutgers University, lies downstream of the Canal Park's official terminus of Landing Lane. Many people make the connection now, but the connecting path could be greatly improved and serve more people.

Projects Applicable to the Entire Canal Park

29. Erect mile markers along the Feeder Canal path.

Every mile of the Main Canal is marked with a concrete obelisk. Each marker records the distance to the New Brunswick Outlet Lock on one of its faces and the distance to the Bordentown Outlet Lock on the other. Since the path on the Feeder Canal was formerly the Belvidere-Delaware Railroad right-of-way there were once railroad mile markers along its length. Some of those markers remain but not enough of them to really provide the information that Canal Park users need. The railroad-style markers should be placed along the entire length of the Feed Canal path, from downtown Trenton to Milford.

Tasks:

- Prepare a measured drawing of the historic railroad mile markers
- Identify the location where these markers should be put.
- Identify source of funding for the project

Public Benefits:

Walkers, joggers and bicyclists all like to know how far they have gone. Marking the miles will make it easier for them to do so.

30. Undertake a comprehensive directional and interpretive sign program.

There are a number of informative and beautifully designed signs in the Canal Park at present. Most of these interpret the history or technology of the canal and its various structures. What is needed, however, is a comprehensive examination of the existing signs and a plan for the development of the signs that are needed to help park visitors understand their recreational options and the full story of the canal and its technology.

Tasks:

- Prepare an inventory of the existing signs
- Prepare a set of goals for a comprehensive signage project and a scope of work to hire a consultant to determine how those goals can be met
- Locate the funding to hire a consultant to carry out the planning work
- Locate the funding to implement the plan

Public Benefits:

People want to know more about the history of the canal, how it related to the history of central New Jersey and how the canal actually worked. They also want to know how far it is to nearby points of interest and where they can find parking lots, picnic areas and lavatories. This project is designed to provide all of that information.

Thematic Summary of Development Projects

Access to the Canal Park

It is a great joy to everyone who manages the Canal Park that it has become so popular. Estimates for how many visits a year the park experiences range from a very conservative 700,000 to a million. People come to the Canal Park on foot, by bicycle, by bus and by van. Most people, however, seem to come by car. It is therefore necessary to have a place for those cars to be parked. The over-all goal for the park is to have a large number of relatively small parking areas, spreading people out over the entire length of the park. What seemed like a relatively small but sufficient parking area in the 1970's, however, now seems like an inadequately sized lot. More parking areas are needed and many of the existing ones need to be enlarged.

- X **Increase parking capacity at Lambertville Lock area**
- X **Develop a new access area at Moores Creek**
- X **Increase parking capacity at Scudders Falls**
- X **Increase parking capacity at Whitehead Road**
- X **Increase parking capacity at Washington Road and Harrison Street in West Windsor**
- X **Improve Kingston Lock area as major access point (more parking, picnicking, expanded interpretive display, landscape for beauty and to enhance wildlife habitat)**
- X **Increase parking capacity at Griggstown and Blackwells Mills**
- X **Increase parking capacity and enhance 5-Mile Lock access area**
- X **Develop Freda Marden Common**

Expansion of the Canal Park Path System:

The canal, of course, is the heart of the Canal Park. Without it there would be no park. Nearly everyone who uses the Canal Park, however, uses the path. There are canoeists and fishermen, but the overwhelming number of people in the park are walking, running, on horseback or bicycling. There are several opportunities to add to the Canal Park's path system, which is presently about 75 miles long. Additional paths can be created within the park, or as a means of linking the park to near-by natural or historic resources. Path that link the Canal Park to other resources are listed in the next category. The following projects are proposed to either extend or enhance the existing path.

- X **Complete the path to Milford's Bridge Street**
- X **Improve the path on both sides of canal between the Route One crossing and Whitehead Road**
- X **Focus on South Bound Brook**

Links to Neighboring Natural and Historic Places:

The canal's corridor is rich with historic districts, municipal and county parks and nature areas that are open to the public. The Canal Commission is working to link these resources to the Canal Park, creating a continuous network in central New Jersey of resources for public enjoyment. The Commission sees the Canal Park as a spine for the

region, with public resources of many types and many sizes connected and thereby enlarged and given more meaning. The following are prominent examples of the linkages that are part of this goal.

- X **Promote loop trips that include PA's Delaware Canal State Park**
- X **Develop greenway corridor along the Assunpink from D&R to Mercer County Park**
- X **Create link to Institute for Advanced Studies property and expand the preserved area to connect with Lawrence's conservation lands**
- X **Make link to Montgomery greenway path system (pedestrian bridge across Millstone)**
- X **Improve link to Six Mile Run Reservoir trails**
- X **Establish link to Colonial Park**
- X **Strengthen link to New Brunswick path to outlet lock**

Development of the Canal as an Urban Park in Trenton:

Developing urban parks is greatly rewarding because cities lack open space with trees and wild flowers. Unfortunately, the development of new urban parks is also greatly expensive; it usually must include the purchase and razing of many buildings and often also includes cleaning contaminated sites. Trenton is fortunate to have a wonderful urban park in place. The Canal Park provides a swath of green as a refuge from the hard edges of the city, it is a favorite fishing spot and a much-used path for walking, jogging and bicycling. The Canal Park is also a habitat for songbirds and ducks—welcome visitors to the urban scene. The following projects will burnish the Canal Park's urban role, allowing it to fully enhance the Capital City.

- X **Restore and use the Calhoun and Hanover Streets canal houses**
- X **Establish a link between Calhoun Street and Lock Two**
- X **Develop a landscape in Trenton's canal corridor that demonstrates the interface between the natural world and urban areas.**
- X **Complete path between Old Rose and Mulberry Streets**
- X **Excavate filled-in portion of the canal between Locks One and Two and restore Locks One and Two**

Restoration of the Canal Park's Historic Structures:

The Delaware and Raritan Canal and sixteen of its canal houses are on both the State and the National Registers of Historic Places. In addition, the Canal Commission has worked over the years to register or encourage registration of a number of the communities that adjoin the Canal Park. This wonderfully preserved corridor of 19th century New Jersey is part of the Canal Park's great charm. Interpretation of the historic structures and restoration where needed is as important as preservation.

- X **Develop Prallsville Saw Mill as interpretive center**
- X **Restore and interpret the Lambertville Outlet Lock**
- X **Restore and preserve then cluster of houses at Griggstown Causeway as planned**
- X **Restore and use the East Millstone and Weston Canal Houses**

A Broader Vision for the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park

This is principally a short-term planning document. Its main purpose is to identify projects that can be completed over the next ten years. This short-term plan, however, is part of the Canal Commission's broader vision of what the Canal Park can become. We wish to discuss key elements of that vision here for two reasons. First, we want to be sure that by focusing on the projects identified as appropriate for a ten-year plan we do not obscure a larger vision of the Canal Park. Second, an understanding of this broader vision of the park will provide context for the individual projects listed in this plan.

Linkages

Seven of the projects in this plan are for the creation of links between the Canal Park and neighboring resources. The Canal Commission has been working for several years on a project that we call "Linkages." This project began with the understanding that one of the Canal Park's great assets is its sixty-mile length. That means that the park is a part of a large number of the communities in central New Jersey. From this understanding it was easy to conclude that an even more significant integration between park and communities would be achieved by viewing the Canal Park as a spine and adding a number of appendages to it. An examination of the Canal Park's corridor revealed that there are a number of natural and cultural resources that could be linked to the park, thereby extending accessibility to the park and—at the same time—providing greater accessibility to the neighboring resources.

A number of linkage projects are important but are not listed in this plan for a variety of reasons. The New Jersey Conservation Foundation and the Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance are undertaking preservation of corridors along Hunterdon County's Wickecheoke and Lockatong Creeks. Similarly, the Delaware & Raritan Greenway is working to preserve corridors along the Stony Brook and the Upper Millstone. Another exciting linkage project is the work by the Delaware River Greenway Partnership to establish paths along both sides of the Delaware from Trenton to Philadelphia and from Milford to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Each of these projects has been under way for several years and each will require many more years to be completed.

An effort is just starting to preserve corridors following the routes that the American Revolutionary Army took in marching to various battles. This effort might eventually produce a corridor of preserved land that reaches from the Delaware River across the Sourland Ridge and on to Monmouth Battlefield. That will certainly be more than a ten-year project but it would link to the Canal Park twice, once along the Feeder Canal in Hunterdon County and then to the Main Canal in Somerset County.

For twenty years the Canal Commission has promoted the romantic idea of reconnecting the cable link across the Delaware River that once allowed boats to go between the D&R and the Delaware Canal. In the 19th century a cable was strung across the Delaware, connecting outlet locks in New Hope and Lambertville. The Lambertville Outlet Lock has fallen into terrible disrepair in the ninety years since it was last used. This plan calls for its stabilization but what really should be done is to fully restore the lock and establish some kind of connection with the New Hope lock.

Linkage projects along Lawrence Township's Shabakunk and Shipetauken Creeks, alongside Route 129 linking the abandoned portion of the canal to the junction of the Feeder and the Main Canals, and linking the canal in South Bound Brook to Middlesex Township by using an abandoned railroad trestle that crosses the Raritan are all exciting projects that need more study to determine their feasibility.

Canal Boat Ride

The canal era seems very distant to 21st century Americans. Today it is possible for people to wake up in central New Jersey, have breakfast that might include fruit that was grown in South America, drive to the airport, and catch a flight that allows them to go to bed in Asia. The 8 MPH speed limit that was imposed by the Canal Company for all boats on the D&R was not just a speed limit. It is a reflection of a way of life that was totally different from how people live today. A ride—at 8 MPH or less—on a mule-pulled canal boat can help evoke that long-gone era.

The Commission has worked on this project for several years but we have not succeeded in finding an appropriate ride that is not perceived to threaten the quality of the canal water. We do not wish to give up on this idea but we must recognize that it is not likely to happen soon. At this time we are not sure of where on the canal it should be established, but we remain steadfast advocates of a canal boat ride on the D&R that would include a trip through a working lock and past a functioning swing bridge.

Locks

There are a number of wonderful structures in the Canal Park that look today very much the way they looked when the canal was opened for business in 1834. The Water Supply Authority has beautifully rebuilt many of these structures over the last 30 years. It is possible to see hand-built stone-arched culverts carrying streams under the canal. Cobblestone spillways to allow excess water to escape from the canal look very much like they did when they were first built. Several of the lock tender and bridge tender houses have been restored to their 19th century appearance.

All of this great restoration work makes it glaringly evident that the locks should be considered for similar treatment. Restoring the locks is not an easy project. The locks are presently critically important water control structures. Every lock contains a concrete dam and gates to control the flow of water. As long as the Water Supply Authority believes that this kind of control structure is necessary for the delivery of water to its

customers there is no opposition to the use of locks for this purpose. The Commission believes, however, that there may be a way of controlling water at the locks without as much destruction of their historic character as presently exists. The easiest change would be to remove the gunnite that was sprayed over the stone walls of the locks in the mid-twentieth century. In addition, some exploration is needed to find structures that are more like lock gates to replace the concrete dams.

The locks—like the culvert and spillways—are great pieces of sculpture adorning the park and speaking of 19th century technology and craftsmanship. They should be allowed to fill this roll with fewer impediments.

Abandoned Section of the Main Canal

When the State took ownership of the canal it was the height of the Great Depression—1937. Consequently, the portion of the Main Canal from the juncture with the Feeder to the southern border of Trenton was given to Trenton. The city obtained a Federal Grant from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to fill it as a way of helping out-of-work Trentonians get a paycheck. Later, this filled-in section passed into the hands of the NJ Department of Transportation and today Route 129 sits on the bed of the old canal.

This little history lesson is provided to explain how there came to be an “abandoned” section of the D&R Canal. The portion of the main canal north of the juncture continued to be a water conduit. Southward, the portion in Hamilton Township between the southern border of Trenton and Lock One on the Crosswicks Creek was isolated. This section had no water flow except what was provided by tidal changes in the Delaware River. No maintenance or repairs were ever made here since it was not part of the water supply system. The legislation that created the Canal Park refers to this section as the abandoned section of the canal and that name—while not technically accurate—has stuck.

The canal prism, which fills with a little water when the tide is in, remains from Lock One most of the way to Lock Two (about 3.5 miles). Lock Two and a few hundred feet of canal south of Lock Two lie beneath dirt that was brought here to be disposed of. A path is being built from Lock One to Lock Two. The Canal Commission ardently wants to see Lock Two and the canal leading up to it excavated. The rest of this section of the canal needs to be cleared of silt, debris and vegetation, and the gates rebuilt on Lock One so that the water that comes in with the tide can be mostly kept.

Further, this section of the Canal Park adjoins one of central New Jersey’s great natural jewels, the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh. Paths should be built from the Canal Park along the bluffs that overlook the marsh near Bordentown and a path should be built across the marsh to Mercer County’s Roebling Park.

Bridges in Trenton

Canal boats stopped navigating the Feeder Canal in the mid-1920's. Shortly afterward concrete bridges with very little clearance over the canal water were built in Trenton. Today these bridges are looked upon as barriers to the recreational use of the canal in the City of Trenton. Most of them are so low that no boat can get under. They should be replaced with bridges that are a few feet higher and would allow canoes and kayaks to ply the canal in Trenton just as they do in all other parts of the canal.

Eradicate Invasive Species

In many cases the way to enhance a natural area is to leave it alone. A forest will benefit more from neglect than from almost any form of human intervention. Unfortunately this is not the case with areas that have already experienced high levels of disturbance. There are many invasive species that are quick to colonize disturbed areas and persistently hold their ground, denying habitat for a more diverse palette of native species

The war against invasive species can never be won. Japanese Honeysuckle, Knotweed, Stiltgrass, Purple Loosestrife, Norway Maples and the ubiquitous Multiflora Rose are too well established in the region to ever be eradicated from the Canal Park. Furthermore, they are so pervasive that the only way to effectively combat them is with herbicides and these poisons must be used very carefully—if at all—in the Canal Park because of the risk of polluting the canal water.

If these invasives—along with the native but annoying Poison Ivy—are left alone they will so dominate the park that it will be degraded as a natural habitat and as a place for people to visit. The Department of Environmental Protection has experts in dealing with these problems and they need to be consulted and encouraged to work with the park staff to assert some control over the landscape.

