



State of New Jersey
DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL COMMISSION
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STAFF REPORT

DRCC #: 26-1858I

DATE: October 7, 2026

PROJECT NAME: Washington Crossing State Park -- George Washington Memorial
Arboretum Restoration

Latest Submission Received: October 6, 2026

Applicant:

Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Parks, Forests & Historic Sites
401 East State Street
Trenton, NJ 08606
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Engineer:

Jeffrey A. Derosier, PE, LEED AP
Derosier Engineering, LLC
35 Gates Avenue
Warren, NJ 07059
Jeff.Derosier@derosierengineering.com

Project Location:

Road	Municipality	County	Block(s)	Lot(s)
355 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road (Mercer County Route No. 514)	Hopewell Township	Mercer	121	3

Jurisdictional Determination:

Zone A	Major	Governmental

Subject to Review for:

Drainage	Visual	Traffic	Stream Corridors
X	X	X	X

Documents Received: Arboretum Master Plan (1 sheet) dated July 1, 2025, prepared by John Morgan Thomas Landscape Architects, PC; Construction Plans (16 sheets) dated June 1, 2026, revised July 10, 2026, prepared by John Morgan Thomas Landscape Architects,

**THIS STAFF REPORT IS ISSUED AS A GUIDE TO APPLICANTS IN
COMPLYING WITH DRCC REGULATIONS. IT IS NOT AN APPROVAL. NO
CONSTRUCTION SHALL BEGIN UNTIL A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL
HAS BEEN ISSUED.**

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PC; Stormwater Management Report (175 pages) dated July 2026, revised October 2026, prepared by Derosier Engineering, LLC.

The application is complete and shall be presented to the Commission for their action with a staff recommendation of approval at the October 21, 2026 meeting based upon the following analysis:

Existing Conditions: The project area is a 233-acre lot located in Hopewell Township, Mercer County, which at its closest point is approximately 115 feet from the Delaware and Raritan Canal and within Commission Review Zone A. The project area is located within the southwestern portion of the larger Washington Crossing State Park in the Titusville neighborhood of Hopewell Township east of the Delaware River, and is generally bounded to the north by Church Road, to the south by Washington Crossing-Pennington Road (Mercer County Route No. 546), and to the west by New Jersey State Highway Route No. 29 (River Road/Route 29).



The Commission has issued certificates of approval to the park for the construction of a maintenance facility building in 1990 (DRCC #90-1858), the installation of a diesel fuel tank and associated concrete pad in 2006 (DRCC #06-1858A), and the installation of ADA-accessible ramps at the park riverside parking area and at the historic Nelson House, which created 4,000 square feet of impervious surface coverage in 2008 (DRCC #08-3609). Most recently, the Commission issued a certificate of approval for the demolition of the former visitors' center and the construction of a new visitors' center that resulted in the creation of 2.6 acres of impervious surface coverage onsite (DRCC #23-1858B).

Proposed Project: The George Washington Memorial Arboretum is an 8.0-acre collection of trees showcasing New Jersey native species, located in south corner of Washington Crossing State Park. It was designed and dedicated in 1932, and many of the original tree

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specimens planted that year remain today. However, what was once an open lawn with scattered specimen trees has grown into a mostly forested condition, resulting in limited access to the arboretum's native tree collection.

The applicant, therefore, proposes a restoration of the arboretum, which would consist of the following design elements:

- Creation of a network of bituminous surface “Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990” (ADA) (42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq.) accessible paths in a loop trail configuration based upon the arboretum's 1925 original design (See background information below), with slight adaptations to reflect current site conditions;
- Establishment of an area in the center of the arboretum that would become a central lawn to be known as “Washington's Green” that would be defined by a perimeter path, and a border of native shrubs;
- Planting of 22 native canopy trees, 44 ornamental trees, 1 evergreen tree, and native deciduous shrubs;
- Reforestation of the arboretum using two types of meadow mix and an extensive planting plan of 60 native canopy and 15 understory trees;
- The creation of a new entrance that would provide access to the arboretum from the new visitors' center (under construction pursuant to DRCC #23-1858B), and the installation of informational kiosks with wayside, informational and specimen tree marker signage;
- Removal and trimming of dead and hazardous trees within the arboretum area and selective invasive species removal;
- Construction of a bio-retention basin best management practice (BMP); and
- Relocation of an existing 1932 commemorative dedication stone and plaque.

According to the applicant's submission, the project would result in the creation of square feet 0.37 acre of impervious surface coverage, and the disturbance of 1.825 acres of land.

Stream Corridor: The project site is located within the Alexauken Creek/Moores Creek/Jacobs Creek Watershed Area and within the Central Delaware Watershed Management Area. There are two mapped watercourses on the site: namely, Steele Run, a tributary of the Delaware River, which runs along the northwestern boundary of Block 121, Lot 3, approximately 1,760 feet from the project site, and a tributary of that stream, located approximately 1,900 feet to the northeast. Additionally, a tributary of the Delaware and Raritan Canal is located approximately 320 feet to the southeast running generally parallel to Washington Crossing-Pennington Road and is conveyed under River Road to the canal.

The unnamed tributary to the Delaware and Raritan Canal is situated approximately 320 feet south of the proposed limits of disturbance. Based on the distance of the subject regulated waters from the limits of disturbance and based on the topographic difference in elevations between the stream location and limit of disturbance, it can be concluded that a stream corridor does not exist within the proposed limits of disturbance, and that the project is not subject to a stream corridor impact review pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:45-9.1(a).

Stormwater Runoff Quantity: The project site generally slopes to the south. There are no surface stormwater management retention systems within the proposed limit of

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disturbance in the existing condition. As noted hereinabove, the land cover of the arboretum site is primarily that of an overgrown woodland with natural understory and lawn areas that are maintained through periodic mowing. Individual trees are also dispersed throughout the lawn area.

Discharges have been analyzed at one point of analysis, located along the southern property limit near the intersection of Route 29 and Washington Crossing-Pennington Road. The drainage areas are an even mix of woods and grass, with Hydrologic Soil Group Type "B" soils in the existing and proposed conditions. The submitted design proposes to address stormwater runoff flow and volume in these drainage areas by planting trees throughout the site, and by constructing a surface bio-retention system. The post-construction peak runoff rates for the 2-, 10- and 100-year storm events will be no greater than 50, 75 and 80 percent (%), respectively, of the pre-construction peak runoff rates, for each point of analysis.

The submitted calculations utilized the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Title 210 National Engineering Handbook Part 630 hydrologic methodology, Standard unit hydrograph rainfall distribution and current New Jersey 24-hour rainfall frequency data for Mercer County to compute peak runoff flow rates and volumes. Therefore, this project design includes acceptable stormwater management measures that will provide sufficient attenuation to comply with the specific runoff quantity standards at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.6(a)1.

Water Quality: As noted above, the applicant proposes the construction of ADA-compliant recreational paths. This area is not a type of impervious surface coverage which generates a load of total suspended solids, since it is not intended to support vehicle traffic. As a result, the applicant is not subject to the specific water quality standards at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.7.

Groundwater Recharge: The Commission regulations require that stormwater management measures maintain 100% of the average annual pre-construction groundwater recharge volume for the site, or that any increase of stormwater runoff volume from pre-construction to post-construction for the 2-year storm is infiltrated. A groundwater recharge analysis calculation (NJDEP GSR-32 spreadsheet) has been submitted, which demonstrates that the annual groundwater recharge deficit for the entire site is 12,063 cubic feet. To infiltrate the post-development recharge deficit, the applicant proposes to construct an aboveground bio-retention basin. According to the spreadsheet, a BMP area of 744 square feet with a BMP effective depth of 12 inches is proposed. As a result, the proposed BMP will yield 13,377 cubic feet of annual groundwater recharge pursuant to the GSR-32 spreadsheet. Therefore, the project is in compliance with the specific groundwater recharge requirements at N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.5.

Non-Structural Methods: The applicant has provided sufficient nonstructural stormwater management strategies into the project design since the project will maintain existing drainage patterns and maintain the volume of stormwater generated from the site. Therefore, the project is designed in accordance with the specific nonstructural stormwater management strategy standards of N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.4.

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Stormwater Management Maintenance Plan: The applicant has submitted a stormwater management maintenance plan for the site. The submitted plan has been prepared in accordance with the specific requirements of N.J.A.C. 7:45-8.8.

Visual, Historic & Natural Quality Impact: N.J.A.C. 7:45-10 directs that the Commission shall review all projects in Zone A to determine if the project is in accord with the goals for the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park as defined in the park Master Plan. The visual, historic, and natural quality impact review is intended to assure that development within Zone A is not harmful to the character of the environmental types identified in the Master Plan as comprising the park. The environmental types are based upon the character of the section of the park and its adjoining corridor.

The proposed project is located in a “Transportation” canal environment, which is defined at N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.2(a)5 as an area in which the canal park is squeezed between roads, railroads, and river or stream. The Master Plan at Page 14 and the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic and Recreational Development Plan at Page 97 recognize that the well-developed recreational and historic resources of Washington Crossing State Park complement the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. Nothing with respect to the proposed project conflicts with the proposed recommendations set forth in the Master Plan for this section of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. Accordingly, the project is in compliance with this requirement.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.3(a) directs that major projects are discouraged from those portions of Zone A that comprise the Transportation canal environment of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. Where major projects are proposed for the Transportation canal environment, the Commission shall not grant approval unless specific compensatory measures that mitigate the project’s potential for harmful impact on the park are provided. The regulations further specify that examples of such compensatory measures might include, but are not limited to:

- Increased setback distances from the park;
- At least 40% of the total project site be made available for open space for recreation or conservation purposes, and location of that open space be as near the park as possible;
- Extensive landscape development;
- Development of circulation patterns that direct traffic away from the park;
- Noise abatement measures;
- Improvements to adjoining portions of the park; or
- Signs or other means of interpreting any historic structures or districts relating to the site.

The applicant has arguably proposed three compensatory measures from those listed above. Upon completion, the entire project site will be made available for open space for recreation or conservation purposes, and location of the arboretum is near the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and accessible from the park by means of the existing pedestrian bridge over Route 29. By its very nature, the proposed project would result in extensive landscape development and would also provide a new and improved method of interpreting Washington Crossing State Park by establishing a network of paths based on the

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arboretum's original design. Therefore, Commission staff determines that the project is in compliance with this requirement.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.3(b), which discourage minor projects in certain canal environments and authorize the Commission to require mitigation for their adverse impacts, are inapplicable to the proposed project, which is a "major project."

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(a) directs that projects in Zone A shall be set back from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park sufficiently far so that the winter visual and natural quality of the park are not adversely affected. In the Transportation environment, all structures shall be located 200 feet or more from the park unless the Commission approves an alternative. The project does not propose any structures within 200 feet of the park. Therefore, the project is in compliance with this requirement.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(b) directs that projects in Zone A shall maintain a reasonable height and scale relationship to nearby structures or vegetation. In the Transportation canal environment, structures shall be limited to a height of 40 feet above existing grade where existing vegetation does not provide adequate winter screening. The proposed interpretive signage would be a maximum of 7.0 feet in height. Therefore, the project is in compliance with this requirement.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(c) directs that for projects in Zone A, the exterior appearances of a project shall be in keeping with the character of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Park's individual environments. Specifically, colors used shall harmonize with the man-made or natural surroundings of the project and shall be typical of colors found in the park environment. Building materials and textures shall harmonize with the surrounding man-made and natural materials.

The applicant's submission indicates that the proposed informational kiosks with wayside, informational and specimen tree marker signage would be fabricated from 0.25-inch aluminum panels and attached to 8.0-inch diameter black locust palisades of varying heights not to exceed 7.0 feet. Since the design of the informational kiosks with wayside, informational and specimen tree marker signage have not been finalized, Commission staff recommends that approval be conditioned upon compliance with the provisions of New Jersey State Park Service Policy 2.40, NJ State Park Service Sign Manual, entitled "GUIDELINES: Interpretive Wayside Exhibits (Waysides) and Signs" dated September 2020.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)1, which direct that any electric, telephone, cable television, and other such lines and equipment shall be underground or otherwise not visible from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, are inapplicable to the proposed project.

The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)2, which direct that exposed storage areas, outbuildings, exposed machinery service areas, parking lots, loading areas, utility buildings, and similar ancillary areas and structures shall either be completely concealed from view from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park or designed to minimize their visual impact on the park, are inapplicable to the proposed project.

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The provisions of N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)3 and 4, respectively, which regulate the dimensions and location of commercial signage and outdoor advertising structures, are inapplicable to the proposed project, which proposes no commercial signage.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)5 directs that wherever possible, natural terrains, soils, stones, and vegetation should be preserved, and that new vegetation, stones, and soils should be native to the environment in which they are placed. With respect to trees and shrubs, the applicant has submitted a planting plan for both the new planting areas and the proposed reforestation area.

The following species are proposed for the new planting areas:

Botanical name	Common name	Quantity
Canopy trees:		
<i>Acer saccharum</i> 'Green Mountain'	Green Mountain Sugar Maple	3
<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'Red Sunset'	Red Sunset Red Maple	3
<i>Betula nigra</i> 'Heritage'	River Birch	3
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Hackberry	1
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip Tree	1
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Tupelo, Black Gum	1
<i>Quercus bicolor</i>	Swamp White Oak	1
<i>Quercus falcata</i>	Red Oak	1
<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Burr Oak, Mossycup Oak	1
<i>Quercus montana</i>	Chestnut Oak	1
<i>Quercus phellos</i>	Willow Oak	1
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	Bald Cypress	3
<i>Tilia americana</i>	American Basswood	1
<i>Ulmus americana</i> 'Valley Forge'	Valley Forge Elm	1
Evergreen tree:		
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Southern Magnolia	1
Ornamental trees:		
<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Serviceberry	2
<i>Asimina triloba</i> 'Golden Pennsylvania'	Common Pawpaw	1
<i>Asimina triloba</i> 'sunflower'	Common Pawpaw	1
<i>Asimina triloba</i>	Paw Paw	2
<i>Cercis canadensis</i> 'Alba'	White Flowered Eastern Redbud	3
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud	2
<i>Cercis canadensis</i> var. <i>texensis</i>	Oklahoma Redbud	3
<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	White Fringe Tree	3
<i>Cladrastis kentukea</i>	American Yellowwood	3
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Pagoda Dogwood	2
<i>Corylus americana</i>	American Hazelnut	2
<i>Cornus florida</i> 'Cherokee Chief'	Cherokee Chief Dogwood	5
<i>Cornus florida</i> 'Cherokee Princess'	Flowering Dogwood	7

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<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	American Persimmon	2
<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>	Cucumber Magnolia	2
<i>Magnolia fraseri</i>	Fraser's Magnolia	1
<i>Magnolia macrophylla</i>	Big Leaf Magnolia	1
<i>Magnolia tripetala</i>	Umbrella Magnolia	1
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Sweetbay Magnolia	1
Deciduous shrubs:		
<i>Aesculus parviflora</i>	Bottlebrush Buckeye	9
<i>Aesculus pavia</i>	Red Buckeye	6
<i>Calycanthus floridus</i>	Sweetshrub	6
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Chokecherry	1
<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>	Black Haw Stagbrush	11

The following species are proposed for the reforestation area:

Botanical name	Common name	Quantity
Canopy trees:		
<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Sugar Maple	12
<i>Carya ovata</i>	Shagbark Hickory	12
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip Tree	12
<i>Quercus alba</i>	White Oak	12
<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Burr Oak, Mossycup Oak	12
Understory trees:		
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	American Hornbeam	5
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud	5
<i>Cornus florida</i> 'Cherokee Princess'	Flowering Dogwood	5

Commission staff observes that majority of the listed species appear on the Commission Lists of Native Trees and Shrubs, while others are listed as being native to Mercer County on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) PLANTS database. However, Commission staff notes that to take such a restrictive view in the case of the project application would misapprehend the purpose of an arboretum; which is to create a place that serves as a "living museum" of trees and shrubs. In addition to their natural beauty, they provide resources to the public for personal wellness, environmental education, ecological conservation, and scientific research.

If the above cited justification is not sufficiently compelling, Commission staff observes that N.J.A.C. 7:4512.7(a)2.i. provides that a project may obtain a waiver of strict compliance from the visual, historic, and natural quality impact review standards if the topography of the land screens the entire project from the view of a person in the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. The arboretum is entirely screened from the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. Therefore, Commission staff recommends that a waiver be granted in this case.

N.J.A.C. 7:45-10.4(d)6 directs that projects that are located in any officially designated Federal, State or local historic district or site shall be assessed for their impact upon that

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district or site. Recommendations to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate the impacts of a project on a listed property shall be made in consultation with the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and based upon the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings. As noted hereinabove, the project is located within the boundaries of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District, the Washington Crossing National Historic Landmark Area, and the Washington Crossing State Park Historic District and includes several historic buildings.

With respect to impacts to the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District, the arboretum lies mostly outside the boundaries of the district, which encompasses the canal bed and all structures within 300 feet of the centerline of the canal. The project area is part of the Washington Crossing National Historic Landmark area, designated in 1961 and added to the National Register of Historic Places based upon its significance in the Revolutionary War, and features historic lands and several historic buildings, including the Johnson Ferry House, a stone barn and other farm buildings, a tavern, and the site of Washington's "Crossing of the Delaware" at Johnson's Ferry.

An approximate 1.0-acre portion of the arboretum lies within the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Historic District, generally located in the southwest corner south of the pedestrian bridge and encompassing the stone staircase that was part of the original 1932 design that formerly provided access to the park from then-River Road. A review of the submitted plans indicates that none of the proposed design elements of the current project, namely, the ADA-accessible paths, the bio-retention basin, the signage, or the proposed "Washington's Green" lawn area, would be located within the boundaries of the district.

Commission also notes that the arboretum was created in the year that marked the end of the period of historic significance of the canal and has existed alongside the canal for the ensuing 94 years. The reestablishment of the arboretum in a manner that corresponds to its historic dimensions and landscaping would be consistent with what existed when the canal closed for navigation. Finally, Commission staff notes that the Commission Master Plan, specifically the 1984 Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Historic and Recreation Development Plan, recognized at item 6(d) on Page 97 that while the installation of interpretive signage related to the canal would be desirable in this section of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, but that beyond this measure, major interpretation of this area would remain part of Washington Crossing State Park [Emphasis added].

With respect to the Washington Crossing State Park Historic District, Commission staff notes that the SHPO determined in correspondence dated February 4, 2026, that the project met the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties-Rehabilitation and pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.4(b)2, and that it did not constitute an encroachment on the Washington Crossing State Park Historic District (See HPO Project # 25-1593-3).

Based upon these considerations, Commission staff determines that further consultation with SHPO is not warranted, and that the project is in compliance with this requirement.

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Washington Crossing State Park Background: The first official effort to create a park at the site of Washington's Crossing of the Delaware occurred in 1910, when the Legislature authorized the creation of the Washington Crossing Commission, which was tasked with selecting lands for the creation of a State park and maintaining the park. The Legislature failed, however, to appropriate any funding for the endeavor they endorsed. In 1912, the Legislature passed another bill that established Washington Crossing State Park and granted the reconstituted park Commission the power to purchase 100 acres of land for the park, to erect a memorial and fencing, and otherwise undertake improvements to the property, and appropriated \$25,000 for those purposes.

On January 4, 1913, the Washington Crossing Park Commission secured the title to the Blackwell farm, a 100-acre tract containing a farmhouse and outbuildings bordered by the Washington Crossing-Pennington Road on the south, the right-of-way currently occupied by Route 29 on the west and Brickyard Road on the east, for \$18,000. The Washington Park Commission hired a city planner, a civil engineer, and landscape architect Charles W. Leavitt (1871-1928), who had previously designed gardens for wealthy clients and parks in Cuba, New York, and New Jersey, to develop a comprehensive design. Leavitt and the Commission identified properties in addition to the Blackwell farm for acquisition, though this went beyond their mandate. The boundaries of Washington Crossing State Park remained unchanged for the next eight years.

Between 1921 and 1929, the State of New Jersey dramatically expanded the park's size through a series of land acquisitions. The most important of these acquisitions occurred in 1922 and 1923, when the State of New Jersey purchased two tracts of land north of the Blackwell farm from Dr. Isidor Strittmatter (who also donated the land for St. George's Roman Catholic Church). These parcels included the most important historic structure associated with Washington's Crossing, the Johnson Ferry House, the Harvey stone barn, and a farm lane, along which early 20th century historians believed the Continental Army had traveled to Bear Tavern. The lane became known as Continental Lane. The State also expanded the park's boundaries to the Delaware River shoreline where the Continental Army had landed. The heirs of Alexander Nelson deeded Nelson's Hotel (the Nelson House) and the surrounding lands, which included additional shoreline, to the park in 1924. By 1929, the State of New Jersey owned most of the properties deemed necessary to undertake Leavitt's original 1913 design, and Washington Crossing State Park comprised 292 acres.

Ultimately, the Leavitt plan was never adopted, and the Department of Conservation and Development (predecessor agency to the Department of Environmental Protection), which had assumed responsibility for Washington Crossing State Park in 1915 after the Washington Crossing Park Commission was disbanded, engaged a new landscape architect. Washington Crossing State Park was established in 1925 by the New Jersey Department of Conservation and Development, based predominantly on plans developed by landscape architect Howard B. Fiske from Passaic County.

Although Fiske's vision for the park was not entirely adopted, his plans shaped the development of the park through the 1930s. Many of the major features that he proposed were completed, including a formally landscaped memorial park at the western end of the park with an overlook providing views of the Crossing site and the Johnson Ferry House,

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the expansion of the State Forest Nursery, which had been established in 1924 on the upslope of the former Blackwell farm (near the demolished visitors center), an extensive landscaping effort to transform a predominantly open agricultural landscape into woodlands, a new park entrance with stone walls and a stone staircase at the northeastern corner of Washington Crossing-Pennington Road and Route 29, and three picnic groves.



The Department of Conservation and Development formally dedicated the re-landscaped Washington Crossing State Park on June 4, 1927. Despite the formal dedication, work on park infrastructure and landscape continued into the 1930s. To commemorate the bicentennial of George Washington's birth in 1932, the George Washington Memorial Arboretum was created and the Colonial Gateway located at the northwestern corner of Washington Crossing-Pennington Road and Route 29 was constructed (See detailed description of arboretum background below).

Additional construction was provided by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s to complete Fiske's final park plan. WPA workers planted trees, demolished a Victorian addition to the Nelson House, built bridges and roads, laid out footpaths, and installed facilities such as picnic areas, fireplaces, campgrounds, and restrooms. One additional tract of land to the north of the park was added in September 1941. With the onset of the Second World War, the WPA era at the park ended, and the park entered a relatively quiet period in the 1950s during which no major construction projects or property acquisitions occurred.

Following the creation of the State Green Acres program in 1961, the park more than doubled in size (from 372 acres in 1963 to 848 acres in 1978) as the State purchased adjoining properties to the east and north of the original park. Two new recreational resources for park visitors were established during this period: the Nature Center, which opened in a former single-family residence in 1966, and the Open Air Theater, which was created in 1964 and expanded during the ensuing years. Nature trails were created in the northeastern section of the park in the 1960s and 1970s.

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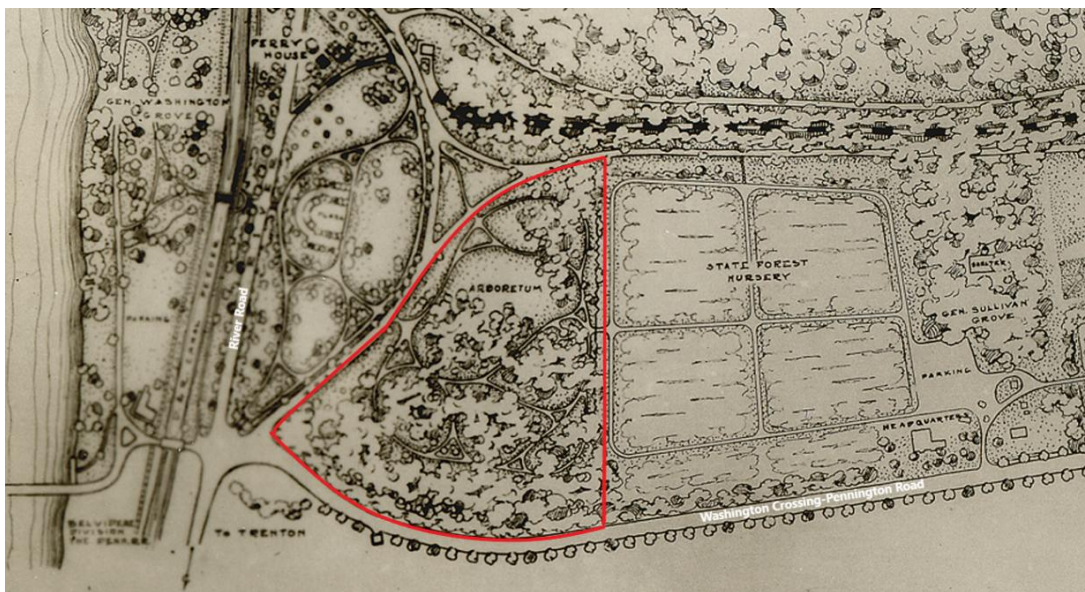
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As the 1976 Bicentennial approached, the DEP moved the main entrance to the park northeastward along Washington Crossing-Pennington Road to ease traffic flow and make entry and exit to the park safer than that along New Jersey Route 29. All the other automobile routes into the park that were part of Fiske's plans were closed. A new pedestrian bridge across Route 29 next to the overlook was constructed to provide visitors with pedestrian access to the riverbank, eliminating any need to use Fiske's original stairway leading from the overlook down to the road.

The former park visitors' center (demolished pursuant to DRCC #23-1858B) opened to the public on September 11, 1976, and was dedicated on December 25, 1976. The center's exhibits were designed to provide visitors to the park with background information on the Crossing and the ensuing Battle of Trenton. Additional changes to the park landscape occurred with the establishment of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park in 1974, and the abandonment of the former Belvidere-Delaware rail line in 1976 and the removal of the tracks in 1979-1980 to create the present multiuse trail.

Construction and infrastructure improvement projects continued through the end of the 20th century. The John W. H. Simpson Observatory was constructed in 1977. In the 1980s, the Open Air Theater facilities were upgraded, and the New Jersey State Forest Nursery was closed. In the 1990s, a substantial renovation of the Open Air Theater was begun, and the restoration of the Blackwell House, and the construction of a new Nature Center and horse and mountain bike trail were completed. In 1995, the purchase of additional land brought the park's size to 869 acres.

George Washington Memorial Arboretum Background: The George Washington Memorial Arboretum was once a farm field owned by the Johnson family (of the Johnson Ferry House). The 8.0-acre arboretum was created by Howard Fiske in 1925 as part of his master plan for the park (See area highlighted in red below superimposed on the 1925 Fiske plan).



Charles Lathrop Pack (1837-1857), a prominent timberman from Lakewood, New Jersey, and his son Arthur Newton Pack (1893-1975) founder of the American Nature Association

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and the periodical Nature Magazine, donated the arboretum on the occasion of George Washington's Bicentennial birthday celebration, and the dedication was held on May 19, 1932. One thousand trees and 1,400 shrubs consisting of more than 130 species native to New Jersey were planted. A bronze plaque commemorating the creation of the arboretum was placed within a large stone in a shady spot in the southeast corner of the site. Many of 1932 trees still exist, including the surviving Northern red oak and Sugar maple trees. Also surviving along Sullivan's Drive are several White oak trees planted in 1931 and 1932, including the Amos Scudder tree. (Amos Scudder was a guide for Washington's troops on their march to Trenton.)

Traffic Impact: N.J.A.C. 7:45-11.1 directs that the Commission shall review major projects in Zone A of the Review Zone for their traffic impact on roads that enter the Delaware and Raritan Canal Park or any part of Zone A. The applicant shall submit a traffic impact study that shows the amount of additional traffic generated by the project and the directions in which this traffic will move. If the Commission determines that the additional traffic will have an adverse impact on the park, the applicant shall use any feasible planning techniques that will direct any additional traffic away from the park. If the Commission is satisfied that there are no feasible planning techniques other than as set forth in the project proposal that can direct any additional traffic away from the park, the project shall be approved for traffic impact review.

Commission staff observes that the project is unlikely to generate additional traffic that would have an adverse impact on the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. The traffic analysis submitted for the visitors' center project (DRCC #23-1858B) noted that traffic volumes destined to Washington Crossing State Park originated to the north along Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, while the remaining 45% of the traffic volumes destined to Washington Crossing State Park originated to the south along Washington Crossing-Pennington Road. Much like the visitors' center project, the arboretum restoration would not significantly increase visitation to the site but rather enhance the experience for current visitation levels. Commission staff also notes that no additional vehicular access driveways are proposed by the project that could impact the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park or the surrounding Titusville neighborhood.

Commission staff, therefore, determines that that the project would not generate additional traffic that would have an adverse impact on the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, that the implementation of feasible planning techniques to direct additional traffic away from the park are not necessary, and that the project is in compliance with this requirement.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval conditioned upon:

1. All proposed informational kiosks with wayside, informational and specimen tree marker signage shall be subject to the review and approval of the Superintendent of Washington Crossing State Park, who shall review such signage for compliance with the provisions of New Jersey State Park Service Policy 2.40, NJ State Park Service Sign Manual, entitled "GUIDELINES: Interpretive Wayside Exhibits (Waysides) and Signs" setting forth the current design guidelines and development procedures for the creation of interpretive waysides and dated September 2020.

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PROJECT NAME: Washington Crossing State Park -- Arboretum Restoration (cont.)

Sincerely,



John Hutchison
Executive Director

c. Mercer County Planning Board

Hopewell Township Planning Board

Robin Madden, Chief of Operations, Division of Parks, Forests & Historic Sites

Mark Texel, Administrator of State Historic Sites, Division of Parks, Forests & Historic Sites

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Please refer to the Commission project number (DRCC #) when making a submission, a resubmission, or transmitting project correspondence or documents.