



**MORRIS CANAL WORKING GROUP
FINAL Meeting Minutes**



**Thursday December 4, 2014
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Allamuchy Fire Hall; Allamuchy, NJ**

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:15 a.m. David Behrend, NJTPA Director of Communications and Government Affairs introduced Warren County Freeholder Deputy Director Richard “Rick” Gardner, who welcomed the Working Group and made brief opening remarks.

Freeholder Gardner said the Morris Canal is “one of the greatest historical achievements” in the state. He said Warren County has been working since the 1980s to protect and preserve its Canal assets. Freeholder Gardner then thanked the NJTPA for its involvement in the effort to create the Morris Canal Greenway; he then turned the meeting over to Megan Kelly, NJTPA, who prompted introductions around the room.

II. Committee Reports

Brief reports from the MCWG’s two committees (Planning & Implementation Committee, or PIC; and Education, Events & Marketing, or EEMC) were then presented by PIC co-chairperson Elizabeth Roy, Warren County Planning and EEMC co-chairperson Joe Macasek, Canal Society of New Jersey. Both committees held their inaugural meetings back-to-back at the NJTPA on Sept. 30, 2014.

Roy said the PIC meeting’s featured speaker was John Manna, Grants Specialist at Wharton Borough. She said Manna’s presentation focused on the borough’s project to restore the Canal’s “Lock Two East,” which was then used as a focal point for Wharton’s popular annual Canal Day. Roy said the PIC meeting also included a map discussion and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (or SWOT) analysis to help advance Greenway implementation on a local and regional scale.

Macasek said the EEMC’s meeting was used to start dividing up some of the work that needs to be done to help brand and promote the Greenway. Macasek said the EEMC talked about ongoing efforts to “create an identity” for the Greenway through promotional materials, fact sheets, and newsletter articles, as well as participation in relevant conferences, meetings, and other events. In addition, the Committee reviewed recent improvements to the MCWG’s website (hosted by the NJTPA) and got an update on Greenway video that is now being produced by the NJTPA.

III. Featured Speaker

Dorothy Guzzo, Executive Director of the New Jersey Historic Trust was the meeting's featured speaker; she conducted a PowerPoint presentation focusing on the economic benefits of heritage tourism in New Jersey.

Guzzo emphasized that cultural heritage tourism represents a key part of New Jersey's economy, given the state's rich history including Native American archaeological sites, agricultural and industrial buildings, museums, three centuries of residential buildings, schools and halls, parks, and theaters. Guzzo said a key goal is to authentically represent past and present resources by preserving, protecting, and communicating to make sites come alive.

Released in 2010, the NJ Historic Trust created the Heritage Tourism Master Plan for the state of New Jersey. The plan focused on state-owned, visitor ready sites and offered marketing materials and trainings on how to help attract visitors and tell the story. An inventory was conducted along several themes central to celebrating New Jersey's history such as NJ in Conflict.

From the master plan findings, Guzzo said while the heritage tourism industry promotes the state's numerous historical destinations and opens many cultural doors to the public, it also plays an important economic role by generating spending by millions of visitors to these attractions. She noted the spending by tourists sustains thousands of jobs and generates millions in economic activity and state and local tax receipts. For example, Guzzo said, for every 160 tourists that visit an area, one job is created and there is a \$350 return for each local dollar spent. The plan also found that of nearly 2,000 historic sites, 18% were found to be visitor-ready. Visitor surveys revealed most people travel to historic sites on weekends, however a large portion of historic sites are closed on Sundays. Heritage tourism travelers spend three times more than other tourists. In NJ, 8% of visits are by heritage tourists. And local tourists (who traveled less than 50 miles) tend to spend more money per visit than the out-of-town visitors.

Guzzo explained the New Jersey Historic Trust was created by law in 1967 to preserve historic resources across the state. Referencing one example of the Historic Trust's work to provide access and funding, Guzzo said the "Discover NJ History" License Plate Fund for Heritage Tourism, established in 1995, provides small grants to municipalities, counties, or nonprofit organizations to promote interpretation, marketing and linkages among heritage sites.

Guzzo said the Morris Canal Greenway projects "seems like it needs a heritage tourism grant" (perhaps for an app to help navigate the Canal/Greenway); however, she said it can be difficult to know where the Canal's path is located, what portions have been preserved for the Greenway, and how to access. Guzzo said wayfinding signs would help, as would identifying connections and potential sites to preserve, plus

an inventory of Canal resources. In addition, she suggested Greenway marketing needs to focus on making sure people don't get lost in the large scope of the project.

Guzzo said more information is available at njht.org. A question-and-answer period followed Guzzo's presentation.

IV. Open Discussion/Stakeholder Updates

Working Group members participated in an open discussion featuring updates from a variety of stakeholders and organizations. Highlights from this discussion included:

- The NJTPA discussed MCWG website improvements, its recent federal certification review (which included a presentation on the MC Greenway), and participation in relevant conferences, including the potential to include the Greenway in a trails/greenway session at the annual TransAction transportation conference in April 2015 and a potential panel at the June 2015 NJ History & Historic Preservation Conference.
- Freeholder Gardner noted that he is excited to be a part of the MC Greenway effort, especially from a historic preservation perspective.
- Morris County Freeholder Kathy DeFillippo (an NJTPA Board member), said it is energizing to see so many people involved in the Greenway effort. She suggested pursuing marketing/education efforts that are relatively cheap and easy to implement, such as giving children a doll, toy, or similar project to create in school that could help explain the Canal/Greenway and tie-in to the school's curriculum. She also emphasized the importance of public/private marketing partnerships.
- The Lake Hopatcong Foundation has acquired and will renovate a historic train station on the path of the Morris Canal Greenway that will be used as the Foundation headquarters and as an information/environmental education center.
- The Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy reported that work in Berry Lane Park is progressing, including the planned excavation of a section of the Morris Canal.
- The Canal Society of NJ has been awarded Morris County Open Space grant funding to acquire two pieces of land in Roxbury and Shippenport to further connect the Greenway, and preserve Morris Canal artifacts.
- Bloomfield reported its designation of a Canal section for preservation, plus walking tours have been held and plans are in the works to stabilize a historic Canal-related building (the Collins House) that could someday host exhibits, meetings, etc. However, it was noted that Canal assets through Bloomfield are not continuous, so a plan will be needed to "connect" these assets.

- The Borough of Wharton said its Canal section has become a great tourism attraction, drawing 5,000 people for its annual Canal Day event. In addition, new, operable lock gates have now been installed at the Wharton Lock. There are also plans to restore the lock tender's house.
- Andrea Proctor, NJDEP Waterloo, noted that Waterloo provides ongoing education for hundreds of children who visit the site. In addition, Proctor did a presentation at the recent NJEA conference that featured the Morris Canal and a lesson plan to teach children how to create model inclined planes and locks. Waterloo also is participating in the Clean Communities Exchange, bringing more than 500 school children to Waterloo's Morris Canal site.
- Boonton Historical Preservation Commission suggested a site that overlooks the Rockaway River (where a Canal section, inclined plane, and former ironworks are still visible from Main Street) could be converted into a boardwalk area with interpretive information that tells the story of the Canal and the surrounding area. This site is privately owned at present, but the owner is willing to sell and Boonton would like to make this property part of the MC Greenway.
- A Creative Skylands conference is planned for Feb. 16 and 17.
- NJ Bike and Walk Summit is set for Feb. 21 at Rutgers. The deadline for submitting presentation ideas has been extended to all MCWG members.
- Clifton's Historical Commission touted its asset: Morris Canal Park. Clifton's Friends of Morris Canal Park will share MCWG website and is willing to partner.

V. Next Steps

Megan Kelly noted the next full Morris Canal Working Group meeting will be held on March 30, 2015 at the Little Falls (Passaic County) Civic center from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:00 noon.

Note: following the meeting, approximately 20 Working Group members participated in an optional trail connections tour organized by Warren County at the Saxton Falls site in Allamuchy State Park.

MCWG Meeting Attendance (alphabetical)

Bob Barth, Canal Society of New Jersey
 Dave Behrend, NJTPA
 Erin Bowen, Waterloo Village, NJ DEP
 Cheryl Burket, Warren County Morris Canal Committee
 Tom Callari, Deputy Mayor, Greenwich Township
 Daniel Callas, TransOptions

Glenn Ceponis, New Jersey Historic Trust
Christina Cortis, Warren County
Nick Cosimano, Warren County Morris Canal Committee
Michael Davidson, Greater Newark Convention & Visitors Bureau
David Dech, Warren County Planning
Kathy DeFillippo, Freeholder, Morris County
Erik DeLine, VHB
David Detrick, Warren County Morris Canal Committee
Dick Draper, Canal Society of New Jersey
Tom Edmunds, NCPC, Morris County Parks
Zenobia Fields, NJTPA
Charlie Fineran, Allamuchy Township
Kathy Fisher, Montville Township Historical Society
Richard Gardner, Freeholder Deputy Director, Warren County
Doug Greenfeld, NJTPA
Dorothy Guzzo, Executive Director, New Jersey Historic Trust
Eliza Haburay-Herrling, NJTPA
John Hallanan, Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy
Nigel Hetherington, Past Preservers
Suzanne Ishee, Center for Creative Placemaking
Marty Kane, Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum
Joyce Kanigel, Rockaway Borough Council
Judy Keith, Canal Society of New Jersey
Megan Kelly, NJTPA
Christina Kotlar, Clifton Historical Commission
Steven Lauf, Canal Society of New Jersey
Jim Lee, Warren County Morris Canal Committee
Donna Macalle-Holly, Lake Hopatcong Foundation
Joe Macasek, Canal Society of New Jersey
John Manna, Wharton Borough
Jeanette Morenski, Richard Grubb Associates
Miriam Morris, Roxbury Historic Trust
Robert Morris, Township of Roxbury Historic Advisory Committee
Russ Nee, Morris County Park Commission
Anita Norris, Canal Society of New Jersey
Carlos Pomares, Councilman, Bloomfield Township
Andrea Proctor, Waterloo Village, NJ DEP
Ted Ritter, NJTPA
Jerry Rohsler, Morris County Planning
Elizabeth Roy, Warren County Planning
Helene Rubin, NJDOT Division of Statewide Planning
Elliott Ruga, Town of Boonton
Gerry Scharfenberger, New Jersey Office for Planning Advocacy
Annette Schultz, RBA Group
Jason Simmons, Passaic County Planning
Myna Snook, Warren County Morris Canal Committee

Eric Snyder, Sussex County Planning
Cyndi Steiner, NJ Bike and Walk Coalition
Corey Tierney, Warren County
Andrea Tingey, NJDEP
Genie Wiss, Township of Roxbury