

# Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park

Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

National Park Service  
Department of the Interior



January 2016



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

Opportunity, innovation, immigration, the American Dream—the ideas and principles that formed the cornerstone of the United States are represented today at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park (Paterson Great Falls NHP or the park.) The stories of our industrial heritage are the stories of America in the 21st century.

The park is located in and serves one of the most ethnically and socio-economically diverse communities in the country. There are over fifty ethnic groups represented in a population of some 160,000. Many of the descendants of older waves of ethnic immigrant groups live in nearby suburban communities which surround Paterson. Today there is a tremendous opportunity to introduce diverse communities to the National Park Service through outreach, on-site programs, youth work programs, and the enhancement of educational and recreational opportunities within the park's boundaries; and to do so in cooperation with both public and private partners.

Paterson Great Falls NHP consists of the natural, cultural, and historic resources that are associated with the Great Falls of the Passaic, the hydropower system it feeds, and a 220-year period of industrial history. The Great Falls is an outstanding example of the country's natural history, formed millions of years ago. The geologic formation created an extraordinary 77 foot fall into a naturally occurring 280 foot chasm that attracted Native Americans and later Colonial-era tourists. By the late 18th century, entrepreneurs, investors and government officials, led by Alexander Hamilton, sought to harness the power of the river through the Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures (S.U.M.). The resulting concentration of 19th and 20th century industrial buildings and structures, connected to a water power system of raceways fed by the

Passaic River just above the Great Falls, illustrates the growth and evolution in industrial planning, architecture and engineering in the nation from 1792-1914.

## A Partnership Park for the 21st Century

Paterson Great Falls NHP is one of many “partnership parks” in the national park system. In a partnership park many parties cooperate to preserve the park's resources and provide experiences for visitors and to accomplish the vision for the park. The majority of land in most national park units is in ownership of the federal government and managed by the National Park Service. Paterson Great Falls NHP represents an evolving idea of a park in an urban setting that brings a national park experience “close to home” and whose ownership and management are shared by a group of partners. This approach has many advantages and brings great flexibility in responding to opportunities and challenges as technology and innovation are quickly moving forward. A description of the partnership framework is provided in Chapter 2, pages 30-35.

The NPS and partners have prepared the park's first general management plan. This plan presents different ways to reach a common vision of preserving resources, telling stories, and revitalizing and sustaining the park and adjacent neighborhoods. Together over the coming years, the NPS and partners would engage local residents, park visitors, and interested groups and organizations to make the plan's vision a reality.

## The Park—Its Boundaries and Resources

On March 30, 2009, under the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, President Barack Obama signed the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park Act (Public Law 111-11) authorizing the national historical park (appendix A). Formal establishment of the park took place on November 7, 2011, when Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and National Park Service Director

Jonathan Jarvis dedicated the park as the nation's 397th park system unit.

The Paterson Great Falls NHP encompasses approximately 52 acres adjacent to the Passaic River in the city of Paterson, west of the city's downtown center (figure 1.1). Paterson, located approximately 15 miles from Manhattan as well as downtown Newark, is within the greater New York-Northern New Jersey Metropolitan Area and is the county seat for Passaic County.

The park is within the Great Falls of the Passaic/Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures National Historic Landmark Historic District (NHL District) in Paterson. The Hinchliffe Stadium National Historic Landmark, significant for its role in the history of Negro professional baseball in twentieth-century segregated America, is within the park. The Great Falls is part of the Great Falls of Paterson-Garret Mountain Natural National Landmark. The landmark designations are described in more detail in a later section, and their relationships to the park boundary illustrated on page 14.

## What are "park resources"?

"Park resources" include all forms and types of naturally occurring and human modified or constructed geographical features, landscapes, ecosystems, species plants, fish and animals, places, structures and objects.

The park's key resources are:

- **The Great Falls of the Passaic River**—including the chasm, waterfall, and the Passaic River as it flows through the park
- **Raceway System**—including the Upper Raceway/Park, Middle Raceway, Lower Raceway, Gatehouse, Ivanhoe Wheelhouse, and spillways
- **Former Mill Buildings**—including the Rogers

Locomotive Building (Paterson Museum), the Colt Gun Mill Ruins, and the Allied Textile Printing (ATP) site ruins

- **Overlook Park**—the primary overlook of the Great Falls, also includes the S.U.M administration building (currently park headquarters) and steam plant foundation
- **Valley of the Rocks**—a natural area downstream of the Great Falls, along the northern bank of the Passaic River
- **Mary Ellen Kramer Park**—community parkland with viewing areas and trails at the top of the falls; also includes the Great Falls Development Corp. building and Pump House
- **Hinchliffe Stadium**—a historic sports stadium adjacent to Mary Ellen Kramer Park

## Planning Challenges

The general public, NPS staff, and representatives from county, state, and city agencies, and various organizations helped to identify issues and concerns about management of the park during the scoping phase (early information gathering) for this GMP/EA (see Chapter 5, "Consultation and Coordination" for more information about the scoping efforts).

Comments were solicited at public meetings, through planning newsletters, and at meetings with agencies and community stakeholders. An issue is defined as an opportunity, conflict or problem regarding the use or management of public lands. The GMP alternatives provide strategies for addressing these issues within the context of the park's purpose, significance, and special mandates.

## Sustaining the Park's Fundamental Resources

Paterson Great Falls NHP's fundamental resources include historic structures and ruins, the raceway system, geologic formations, and hydrologic systems and features that contribute to the significance and character of this special place. Although many studies have been undertaken to address maintenance and preservation issues, there are no long-term resource management



strategies for NPS and partners. In addition, the NPS and partners do not have a formal role in the management of water quality or flow of the Passaic River.

The S.U.M. raceway system is the most significant extant historic resource of the park and its preservation and re-watering is of great interest to both Paterson residents and the broader historic preservation community. The complex raceway system incorporates dams, spillways, gate structures, headraces, tailraces, bypasses, among other structural components and stretches approximately one mile through the park and Great Falls NHL District. The conditions of the upper, middle and lower raceways vary; most of the spillway and raceway features are in poor condition, and are in danger of further deterioration. The upper raceway has been rehabilitated and the path along the raceway upgraded. The middle and lower raceways are generally dry and lack adjacent formalized pedestrian paths. When water enters the raceways, such as during flood events, leakage into adjacent buildings is a problem.

The Allied Textile Printing site (approximately 7 acres) contains portions of the S.U.M. raceways, the ruins of extensive textile dyeing and finishing operations that

occupied a large portion of the property from the 1910s to 1980s, and the ruins of at least five 19th-century mills. After industrial activity at the site ended, a series of fires at the ATP site damaged most of the 30 structures on the site.

The Passaic River flows through the park and the quantity and quality of its water influences the visitor experience. The river segment that flows through the park and the sub-watershed surrounding the park supports its designated uses for agricultural water supply and industrial water supply, but does not support its designated uses for aquatic life, fish consumption, primary contact recreation, or public water supply. Within the park, the river does not meet primary recreational standards due to elevated levels of bacteria. Debris and litter in the river contribute to the water pollution and frequently collect at the base of the falls, in view of from the park's primary overlook. An agreement is in place to ensure water flow over the falls in the summer months, but this agreement does not address water flow during the remainder of the year or "winter drought" issues.

The GMP will explore the best ways to manage the park's fundamental resources and landscapes to ensure their preservation and the role of partnerships to encourage the long-term protection of these places.

### **Experiencing the Park**

Visitors new to the area and unfamiliar with the city of Paterson can sometimes be confused about how to move around the park, what activities there are to see and do, and are concerned about safety.

Although there are mass transit connections to downtown Paterson, access to Paterson Great Falls NHP is predominately automobile dependent. Major interstate and state roads provide vehicular connections to the park. Connections to these routes facilitate vehicular access; however, proximity to the interstate access ramps and other regional roadway connections creates a greater flow of traffic on narrow neighborhood streets that were not built to accommodate such volumes. Traffic congestion near the park, in particular during the three peak periods (morning and evening



View of the S.U.M. Hydroelectric Plant

rush and after school) is a concern both for easy vehicular circulation and for pedestrian safety. Sidewalks are available on the streets surrounding the park but many segments are narrow, or in disrepair in some places. There are limited bicycle paths around and within the park as there are currently no designated bicycle lanes in Paterson.

Access to the river for recreational activities, both within and adjacent to the park, is limited. Access to the park on the river is not possible without a portage around the Great Falls; currently there is no formalized portage access around Great Falls and any informal access is dependent on water levels that allow for bridge clearances.

The GMP will explore ways to move and direct visitors to and throughout the park and the NHL District and address roles for NPS and partners in improving park experiences.

### **Improving Facilities and Infrastructure**

Interest in the new national historical park is increasing visitation to the city and falls area. The city's former visitor contact station was recent rehabilitated as the park's Welcome Center and currently provides limited visitor amenities such as restrooms, or interpretive exhibits. The recently rehabilitated Mary Ellen Kramer Park will provide new opportunities to enjoy and view the falls, but most other park areas are in need of repair, maintenance and improvements to create safe and useable space for both new visitors and local residents. There is a need for more user comforts— benches, bike racks, picnic areas, water fountains, restrooms and space for large family groups or community events. The GMP will explore options for creating appropriate spaces for orientation, education, community gatherings and user comforts.

## Overview of Management Alternatives

### Alternative A—Establishing a New National Park (no action)

In alternative A, NPS and partners would continue working together to preserve resources, engage visitors and cooperatively manage park areas generally as they do today. The primary visitor experience would be through self-guided tours, independent park exploration and passive recreation. Mary Ellen Kramer Park, Overlook Park—with views of the Great Falls and the Passaic River—and the nearby Welcome Center and the Paterson Museum would continue to be the primary destinations in the park. Some visitors would explore the park on trails above the falls and in Raceway Park, using self-guided interpretive materials or on NPS and partner-guided tours. Some visitors would also explore the adjoining NHL district and participate in cultural events.

Interpretive and educational programming, facilities and staffing would generally continue at current levels. Collaboration with partners would facilitate ongoing programs and activities related to interpretation and education, visitor services, and protection of the park's cultural and natural resources. New projects would include those that are already approved and funded by the partners at Overlook Park, the S.U.M. Hydroelectric Plant, the ATP Site and Hinchliffe Stadium.

### Alternative B—Landscape Exploration

In alternative B visitors would actively explore the entire park, enjoying its natural resources and cultural landscapes for contemporary recreational pursuits while learning about how those resources fueled America's early industrial development. A multisensory experience would highlight connections among the natural world, the power of the falls and the Passaic River, and Paterson's innovative role in the evolution of American industry and manufacturing. Natural and cultural landscapes would offer enhanced opportunities for scenic views, recreation, learning through interpretive and educational programs, and community building through special events.

Expanded visitor facilities and interpretive programming within the scenic falls and river area would encourage a wide range of visitor activities focused on actively exploring the Passaic River corridor. The park's primary visitor contact station would be located in a rehabilitated historic structure in Overlook Park. The setting and exteriors of historic structures associated with hydropower production would be preserved and maintained in good condition. Natural resource management would focus on water quality management, protection of geologic resources, preservation of the riparian forest, and protection of scenic views. Learning about the raceway system that delivered water from the Passaic River to power Paterson's industrial complex would be the focus of the visitor experience in the historic immersion area. The upper, middle and lower raceways would be preserved and re-watered for interpretation. Preservation of building exteriors and the historic district landscape would retain the historic character of the area.

The former ATP site would be rehabilitated as a community recreation area and provide greater access to the Passaic River for activities such as fishing. Green space, gardens, paths and innovative interpretive areas would be developed for fun, physical activity, relaxation and events. The Colt Gun Mill would be preserved and select features of remaining structures would be made safe and preserved as landscape features reflecting the site's industrial history.

### Alternative C—Industrial Heritage Immersion

In alternative C visitors would be encouraged to start their experience in the national historic landmark district and then actively explore the entire park with a focus on learning about its industrial history. The learning experience would highlight the national significance of Paterson's history beginning with the city's founding as part of Alexander Hamilton's vision for American economic independence and innovation, and continuing through today. Rehabilitated historic structures and cultural landscapes, together with the

Great Falls and the Passaic River, would provide the setting for expanded interpretive experiences, educational programs, visitor services, and special events that celebrate history.

Interpretive programming in the scenic falls and river area would encourage visitors to explore the site in its historic context as a source of water power harnessed by technology to fuel American industry, beginning with the raceway technology to support Alexander Hamilton's vision for America's first planned industrial city and evolving to today's hydro-electric plant. Historic structures would be preserved and opportunities to tour interior spaces and explore the industrial setting would be expanded.

The raceway technology that supported Alexander Hamilton's vision for America's first planned industrial city would be the focus of the visitor experience in the historic immersion area. NPS and partners would explore options to rehabilitate and re-water all elements of the raceway system as a functional historic raceway landscape, where feasible. Visitors would explore the raceway system via a new landscaped raceway walk, beginning at the upper raceway gatehouse intake on the Passaic River and continuing to the lower raceway tailrace discharge into the river. Natural areas in Upper Raceway Park and in areas adjacent to rehabilitated elements of the raceway system would be enhanced through removal of invasives and replanting with native plant species.

Collaborative efforts of NPS and partners would rehabilitate the former ATP site as an industrial history park—a destination for experiencing the continuum of industrial uses and Paterson innovation. The Colt Gun Mill would be rehabilitated and portions of select mill factories and ruins would be stabilized, where possible, for interpretive purposes and other visitor uses. New areas for picnicking, scenic viewing and other compatible recreation activities as well as visitor amenities such as a café, gathering space, and parking would be explored.



## Next Steps in the Planning Process

The GMP/EA will be made available for a 60-day review and comment period to federal, state, and local agencies and all other interested parties, including organizations, businesses, interested individuals and stakeholders, and the general public. The availability of the GMP/EA will be announced to agencies and the public will be notified through local papers, the park's website and the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website. Comments will be accepted electronically through the PEPC website or in the form of written letters that must be postmarked by the due date shown on the PEPC website. During the review period, the NPS will hold public meetings where the public will have additional opportunities to provide comments on the management alternatives and impact analysis presented in the GMP/EA.

Once the comment period has closed, the NPS will evaluate all comments received, after which a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be prepared and released for a 30-day no action period. The FONSI will report on the results of agency and public comments on the draft GMP/EA and will identify the alternative that the NPS intends to select as the approved GMP for Paterson Great Falls NHP including any changes that

may have been made as a result of agency and public comment. The availability of the FONSI will be announced to agencies and the public through the same media used to announce the availability of the draft GMP/EA. No sooner than 30 days after circulation of the FONSI, the Northeast Regional Director may sign the FONSI, selecting an alternative for implementation as the approved GMP for Paterson Great Falls NHP. A copy of the GMP/EA will be transmitted to Congress as required by the park's enabling legislation. Regional Director signature of the FONSI will complete the planning and compliance process, after which the NPS will proceed to implement the approved GMP.

## Implementation of the Plan

Once the GMP has been approved, implementation will begin immediately. Implementation of the approved plan will depend on funding. The approval of this plan does not guarantee that the funding and staffing needed to implement the plan will be forthcoming. Full implementation of the actions in the approved general management plan could be many years in the future. The implementation of the approved plan could also be affected by other factors, such as changes in NPS and partners staffing, visitor use patterns, and unanticipated environmental changes.

As actions in the approved GMP are implemented, additional feasibility studies and more detailed planning, environmental documentation, and consultations would be completed, as appropriate, before certain actions could be carried out. For example:

- Site-specific planning and environmental review may need to be completed.
- Appropriate permits may need to be obtained before implementing actions.
- Appropriate federal and state agencies may need to be consulted concerning actions that could affect threatened and endangered species.
- The New Jersey State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) may need to be consulted, as appropriate, on actions that could affect cultural resources.

## How to Comment on This Plan

Comments on this GMP/EA are welcome and will be accepted during the 60-day review and comment period. During this period, comments may be submitted using one of the methods noted below.

Online: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/pagr>

We prefer that readers submit comments online through the park planning website identified above so the comments become incorporated into the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment System. An electronic public comment form is provided through this website.

### Mail

Superintendent

**Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park**

72 McBride Avenue

Paterson, NJ 07501

### Hand Delivery

Comments may be dropped off at park headquarters (address above) or at public meetings, which will be announced in the media, following the release of this plan.

### Note to Reviewers

Before including your address, telephone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time.

Although you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.





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## Acronyms

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ATP	Allied Textile Printing
ATS	alternative transportation system
BMPs	best management practices
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CSO	combined sewer outflow
DO	director's order
DOI	Department of Interior
EA	environmental assessment
EO	executive order
EOA	ethnographic overview and assessment
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FACA	Federal Advisory Committee Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FFRMS	Federal Flood Risk Management Standard
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FR	Federal Register
FTE	full-time equivalent (staff positions)
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
GMP	general management plan
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LPSRA	Lower Passaic and Saddle River Alliance
MOA	memorandum of agreement
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHL	national historic landmark
NHP	national historical park
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NJCDC	New Jersey Community Development Corporation
NJDEP	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
NJSHPO	New Jersey State Historic Preservation Officer
NJT	New Jersey Transit
NNL	national natural landmark
NOI	notice of intent
NPCA	National Parks Conservation Association
NPS	National Park Service
ONPS	Operations of the National Park System
PEF	Paterson Education Fund
PEPC	NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment System
PL	public law
PMUA	Paterson Municipal Utilities Authority
ROD	record of decision
S.U.M.	Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures
UHI	New Jersey Urban History Initiative
USC	U.S. Code
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VIP	NPS Volunteers in the Park program
WMA4	Watershed Management Area 4

## How to Read This Plan

The National Park Service (NPS) has developed this Draft GMP/EA to guide management decision-making at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park. The public and many local, state, and federal agencies have assisted the NPS with preparing the Draft GMP/EA. This Draft GMP/EA is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1—Foundation for Planning describes the proposed action and reasons why the GMP/EA is being prepared. Chapter 1 presents the park's purpose and significance statements and describes the fundamental and other important resources and values that are critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance. This section also describes the planning process and issues addressed in the Draft GMP/EA.

Chapter 2—Alternatives describes, evaluates, and compares the continuation of current management alternative and two action alternatives. The no action alternative provides a baseline from which the two action alternatives can be evaluated. Desired resource conditions, opportunities for visitor experience, as well as levels of development intensity necessary to accomplish each alternative are presented.

Chapter 3—Affected Environment describes the existing conditions of the natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources that could be potentially affected by implementing either one of the alternatives.

Chapter 4—Environmental Consequences describes the potential impacts to the park's resource values that could result from implementing any of the alternatives and the relative importance of those impacts in the context of the affected resources.

Chapter 5—Consultation and Coordination describes the public involvement and agency consultation and coordination processes that occurred during the GMP/EA planning process.

References and Legal Citations are cited from which background and supporting documentation was obtained.

Appendices provide additional supporting technical data and relevant background material cited throughout the plan.