



# PUBLIC SCOPING

Your participation will help shape this plan



The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing a Vegetation and White-tailed Deer Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS) for Morristown National Historical Park (the park). The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), along with other laws, NPS policies, and related regulations, will guide the process in developing the plan/EIS. Through the planning process, the NPS will analyze alternatives for managing vegetation and deer browsing in the park. Following an evaluation of environmental impacts of the alternatives and additional opportunities for public comment, an alternative will be selected for implementation.

Your participation is vital to the development of the plan/EIS, so there are a number of ways to be involved throughout the planning process. The first step in the process is called scoping. Scoping is an information gathering process, and we invite you to express your views on the information, issues, and alternatives that need to be addressed in the plan/EIS. The scoping period for this plan/EIS is currently underway and

extends through August 14, 2011. You can participate in the scoping process by attending the public open houses planned for July 27 and 28, 2011 or you can submit comments to the park as indicated in this newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you!





# Park Mission and Purpose

The mission of Morristown National Historical Park (the park) is to preserve, protect, and maintain the landscapes, structures, features, archeological resources, and collections of the Continental Army winter encampments, the headquarters of General George Washington, and related Revolutionary War sites at Morristown, New Jersey for the benefit and inspiration of the public.

## BACKGROUND

The park's General Management Plan (GMP) directs the NPS to manage the park to:

- Reflect the 18th century landscape pattern of field, forest, orchard, and clearings present during the encampment of the Continental Army under General George Washington; and
- Protect and foster the landscape to include a broader cultural and ecological context rather than an exact replica of the encampment period. An important component of this landscape is a naturally regenerating mixed hardwood forest that reflects historic character, natural diversity, and natural processes.

## RESEARCH

Studies and ongoing monitoring show that the lack of naturally regenerating native trees and the resulting inability to meet the goals of the GMP to be primarily due to the following:

- Competition from a variety of woody and non-woody invasive plant species. Over much of the forest, nonnative invasive plant species are out-competing native species and depressing or eliminating native tree seedling regeneration rates.
- Pressure on forest regeneration from a large deer population. Although there have been repeated increases and decreases in deer population estimates over the last 10 years, in general the deer population density levels have been between 50-60 deer/sq.mi.
- Consumption by deer of the more palatable species and increases in populations of less palatable species resulting in changes to the forest understory. Ongoing monitoring indicates that the park has an average cover of invasive nonnative plants that is considerably greater than the cover of native plants.



The nonnative plant Japanese Barberry replaces native vegetation in the forest understory.

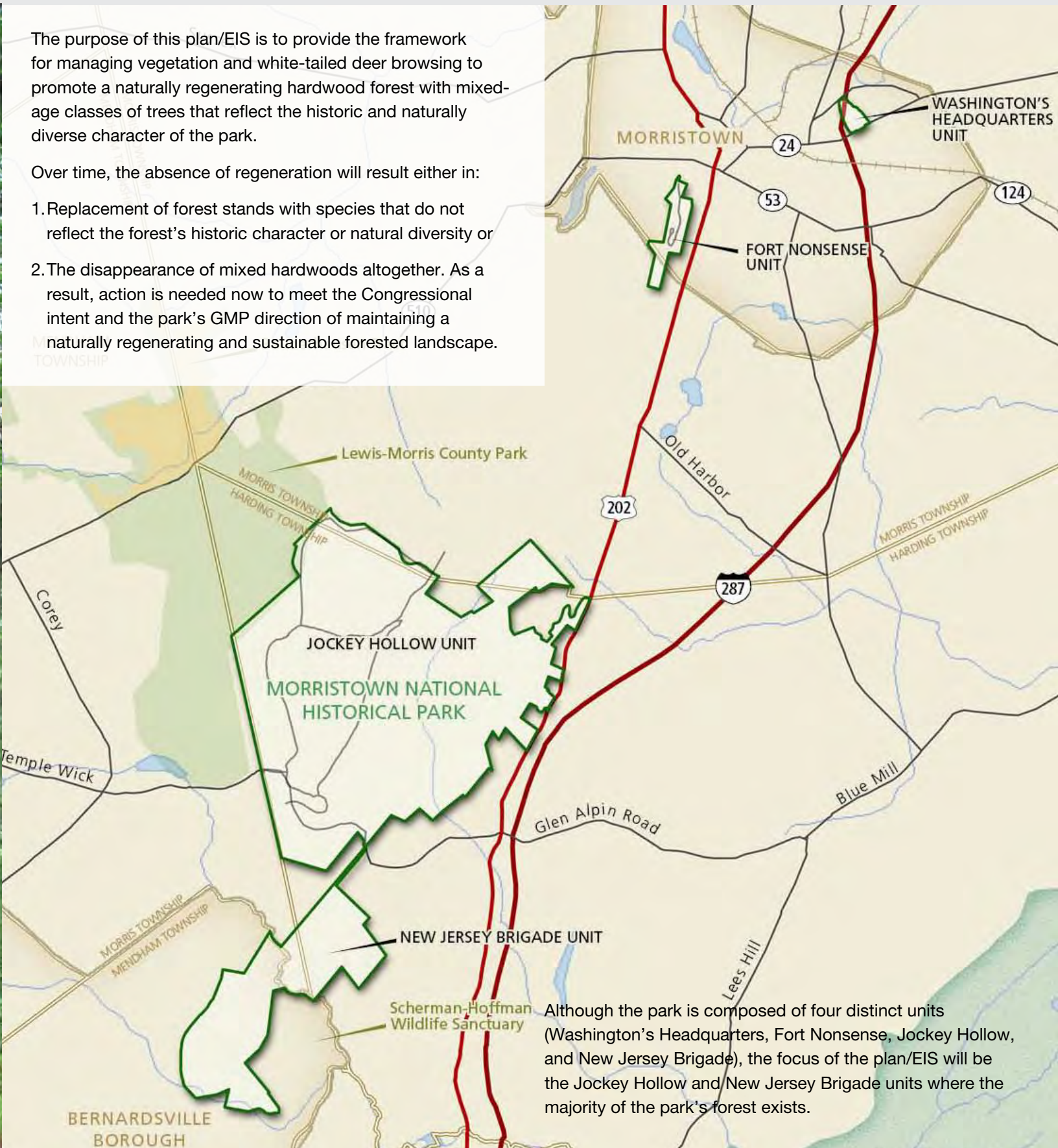


# Plan Purpose and Need

The purpose of this plan/EIS is to provide the framework for managing vegetation and white-tailed deer browsing to promote a naturally regenerating hardwood forest with mixed-age classes of trees that reflect the historic and naturally diverse character of the park.

Over time, the absence of regeneration will result either in:

1. Replacement of forest stands with species that do not reflect the forest's historic character or natural diversity or
2. The disappearance of mixed hardwoods altogether. As a result, action is needed now to meet the Congressional intent and the park's GMP direction of maintaining a naturally regenerating and sustainable forested landscape.



Although the park is composed of four distinct units (Washington's Headquarters, Fort Nonsense, Jockey Hollow, and New Jersey Brigade), the focus of the plan/EIS will be the Jockey Hollow and New Jersey Brigade units where the majority of the park's forest exists.





Forest regeneration is limited in the Jockey Hollow unit.



# Plan Objectives

Objectives help set the framework for analysis and define the range of alternatives for the Vegetation and White-tailed Deer Management Plan. The NPS has identified the following preliminary objectives and goals for the plan/EIS, which may be modified based on further analysis and feedback provided by interested parties during the public scoping period.

## CRITICAL OBJECTIVES

These objectives must each be met to a large degree for an alternative to be considered reasonable and carried forward for analysis in the environmental impact statement:

**Vegetation.** Within the timeframe of the plan (15-20 years), develop an adaptive forest management strategy to preserve and enhance the structure and species composition of the park's forests to reflect historic character, biodiversity, and natural processes by:

- Reducing the percentage of coverage by nonnative invasive species to minimize competition for hardwood regeneration,
- Increasing the mixed-aged classes of hardwood trees,
- Measuring the response of the forest resource to potential management actions, natural changes, and unanticipated impacts over time to determine if the desired future conditions of forest sustainability are being achieved, and
- Taking action to minimize additional spread of, or establishment of, new nonnative species that could threaten hardwood forests.

**Effects of White-tailed Deer on Vegetation.** Within the timeframe of the plan (15-20 years), develop an adaptive management strategy for the forest to naturally regenerate by:

- Reducing the effects of white-tailed deer browsing on the regeneration of mixed hard wood species.

**Cultural Landscape.** Within the time frame of the plan (15-20 years), create the conditions for the forest to naturally regenerate in order to:

- Maintain the forested components of the park's cultural landscape.

## SECONDARY GOALS

The following goals also will be considered during alternatives development, although they are not critical to the development of a range of reasonable alternatives.

**Park Operations and Management.** Work with other agencies, adjacent landowners, and interested stakeholders to develop a greater understanding and awareness of continually changing forest conditions in order to increase the diversity in forest structure and native species composition.

**Education.** Help visitors and the general public understand the park's vegetation and white-tailed deer management strategies. In doing so, minimize the adverse impacts of the plan's implementation on the visitor experience.



# Management Strategies

## PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The following elements represent preliminary management strategies for potential alternatives and revisions may occur throughout the plan development process.

### Vegetation Management

- Removal of invasive species (physical and/or chemical)
- Improve conditions, such as selective tree removal, to increase the amount of sunlight that reaches the forest floor to encourage the regeneration of native hardwoods
- Soil amendments
- Experimental native forest planting
- Fence sensitive native vegetation to exclude deer
- Use of white-tailed deer repellants

### White-tailed Deer Browse Management

- Deer fencing in targeted areas
- Reproductive control (surgical and/or chemical)
- Lethal reduction with firearms
- Lethal reduction without firearms



Historic apple orchard in Jockey Hollow requires fencing to protect whips (young apple trees).

# Schedule

The following schedule highlights important steps in the planning and environmental compliance process:

Public Scoping Meetings ( <b>WE ARE HERE</b> )	July 2011
Public Scoping Period Concludes	August 2011
NPS Reviews Public Scoping Comments, Gathers Data, and Develops Alternatives	Winter 2011
Draft Plan/EIS Prepared	Fall 2012
Draft Plan/EIS to Public for Review and Comment (60 days)	Winter 2013
Public Meetings for Draft Plan/EIS	Winter 2013
NPS Prepares Final Plan/EIS and Makes Decision	Fall 2013 / Winter 2014



# How to Comment

## **PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE COMMENTS**

Because the plan/EIS will analyze complex issues, your participation is vital to the planning process. You can participate by attending one of the public open houses.

**Wednesday, July 27, 7-9 PM**

**Thursday, July 28, 2-4 PM**

### **Location for both meetings:**

**Morristown NHP**

**Washington's Headquarters Museum**

**30 Washington Place**

**Morristown, NJ 07960**

At the scoping (information gathering) open houses you will be able to:

- Express your views on the plan's purpose, need, and objectives;
- Discuss issues or concerns that you have about vegetation and white-tailed deer management at the park; and
- Suggest potential components of an alternative management approach.

The meetings will be in an open house format, with an introductory presentation and opportunities for small group discussions. NPS staff will be on hand to visit with you, answer questions, and solicit your comments.

Please submit comments by August 14, 2011. To allow for easier analysis of comments, the NPS prefers that you submit comments electronically at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/MorristownVegDeerPlanScoping>.

You also can submit comments via mail to:

Mr. Robert Masson, Biologist  
Morristown National Historical Park  
30 Washington Place  
Morristown, NJ 07960

Before including your address, phone 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. While 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.

More detailed information, including directions to the public open houses, is available at <http://www.nps.gov/morr>.



Deer enclosure fence in the Jockey Hollow unit.





National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Superintendent  
RE: Vegetation and White-tailed Deer Management Plan / EIS  
Morristown National Historical Park  
30 Washington Place  
Morristown, NJ 07960

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# Morristown National Historical Park

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