# **Chapter Four** Alternatives

Introduction

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# Introduction

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and NPS Management Policies 2006 require that alternative strategies be developed to fully explore a range of ideas, methods, and concepts as part of an environmental assessment and special resource study. Management alternatives are created after a resource is determined to be eligible for potential inclusion in the national park system. All alternatives should be feasible for implementation.

In preparing the Delaware National Coastal Special Resource Study (SRS), the NPS identified two management alternatives that satisfy all four requisite evaluation criteria for potential designation as a unit of the national park system. This study explores three alternatives: a No-Action Alternative (Alternative A) required to be included by NEPA; and two action alternatives (Alternatives B and C). Following the description of the alternatives, a table provides a summary comparison. A comparison of environmental consequences for each of the alternatives is also provided in a succeeding table.

# Alternatives Considered but Dismissed from Further Consideration

The following alternatives were considered but not further addressed in this study because one was judged unlikely to meet necessary criteria for potential designation as a unit of the national park system and the other would be unlikely to meet criteria for potential designation as a national heritage area.

# A Delaware National Coastal Heritage Park

This concept was advanced prior to the enactment of Public Law 109-338 to interpret the entire history of coastal Delaware and how it is related to, and contributed to, the nation's history. Under the concept, the NPS would manage four interpretive centers which would link to sites across the state to tell a comprehensive story of the Delaware's coastal heritage. Visitors would be directed to the centers and then leave on tours of resources representing the themes. NPS would manage the centers in cooperation with state agencies and local governments, and provide NPS staff to provide interpretation at various attractions.

Under this "hub and spoke" concept, the boundaries of the park would be drawn loosely to include as many sites as possible that are representative of the themes. The majority of the NPS focus would be on establishing and maintaining the "hubs." These would be visitor contact facilities and provide services to people going on tours, and contain interpretive displays to explain Delaware's place in U.S. history. The largest hub would act as the central gateway and be located in Wilmington on the 7th Street Peninsula associated with Fort Christina. Since the site is relatively small, the study team assumes that additional property would be necessary for the construction of the facility. Three lesser hubs would be located, one each in Delaware's three counties. Resource protection at the variety of sites would continue to be managed by state and local governments with technical and, perhaps, financial assistance from the NPS.

The eight themes included in this concept are the same as those in Public Law 109-338. Interpretation at the various sites would be managed by NPS but involve a combination of Delaware's Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, local historians, tourism professionals, and private contractors. 50U R

This concept was found ineligible for further analysis when it became evident that it would be unlikely that the full combination of resources and themes would meet national significance criteria. The concept is comparable to a series of state welcome centers operated by the NPS and would duplicate a number of existing tourism efforts in Delaware. It also lacks the clear and concise thematic focus normally associated with units of the national park system. It is evident that many states have a vast array of resources that together require coordinated tourism strategies. That effort is best left to state and local organizations and beyond the mission of the NPS. The concept is more appropriate for consideration as a national heritage area, although the multiplicity of themes would require significant stakeholder involvement and tangible financial commitments by all participants.

# A Coastal Delaware National Heritage Area

A National Heritage Area is a nationally distinctive landscape with a locally managed partnership that may include a variety of themes and related resources. Unlike a unit of the national park system, it can be designated without a finding of national significance. If an area is designated by Congress, the NPS is authorized to provide limited financial and technical assistance to the local management entity. That entity organizes and coordinates conservation and interpretation efforts and may provide grants to various sites and key groups that manage specific resources within the area. In Delaware, the objective would be to create links between and among the diverse natural and historic resources to provide a cohesive visitor experience and foster continued resource protection.

Criteria are used in national heritage area feasibility studies to determine if a region qualifies for potential congressional designation. Among the criteria are findings that (1) a local entity exists that is capable of managing the heritage area and enjoys public support; (2) there is public support for the boundary; and, (3) there are tangible local commitments, including financial commitments, for the management and operation of the heritage area.

The concept of a national heritage area was discussed by the study team as a potential area of exploration in each of the public scoping meetings and additional meetings held during the course of this study. No entity was suggested by the public or identified by the study team to be considered as a potential local manager of a heritage area. It became evident in all public meetings that the establishment of a unit of the national park system was preferred to any other concept. Therefore, the study team could not conclude that there was public support for a potential national heritage area designation or evidence of tangible local commitments for its success.

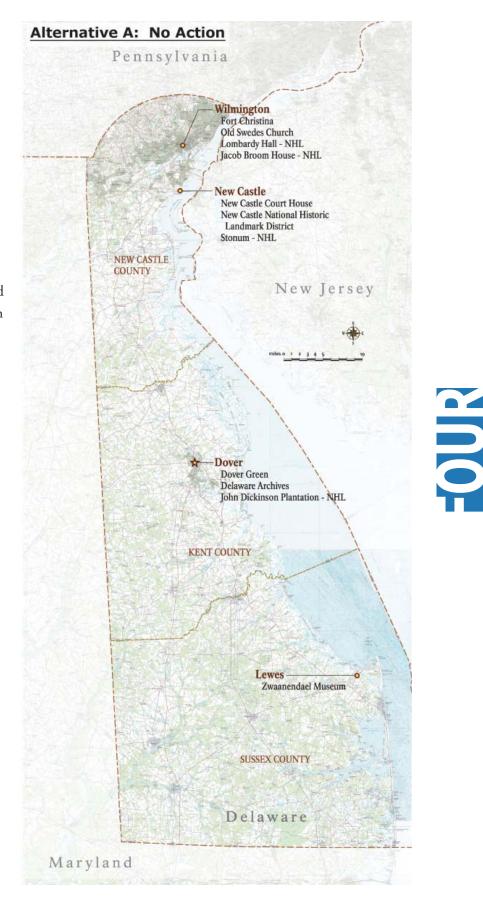
# **Alternatives Considered**

Three alternatives have been considered for further consideration including a "no action" alternative. The two "action alternatives" provide for the potential designation of a unit of the national park system, subject to the completion of the public comment period, transmittal of a study report to Congress by the Secretary of the Interior, and the desire of Congress to establish a unit through legislation.

### **Alternative A: No Action**

This alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act to provide a baseline with which to compare action alternatives; for this study it is, along with the other alternatives, considered a feasible management option.

Under this alternative the NPS would have no role in the study area beyond those already authorized under existing authorities (e.g. through Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance, NHL program financial and technical assistance programs, Historic Preservation Fund support to the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, etc.). Current programs and policies of existing federal, state, county and non-profit conservation organizations would remain in place and current conditions and trends would continue. No unit of the national park system would be established.



### **Resource Protection**

The historic sites analyzed in chapter three that are owned and operated by the state of Delaware include the New Castle Court House, John Dickinson Plantation and Fort Christina. These resources would continue to be protected by the state. Resources in the New Castle National Landmark District, not owned by the state, would continue to be protected by existing non-profit entities and private property owners under local zoning and subdivision ordinances. Stonum and Lombardy Hall would be protected by their individual owners. If federal funds were used for any restoration or rehabilitation of structures that are NHLs, the Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties would continue to apply.

### **Interpretation and Education**

Current NHLs and sites owned by state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations will continue to be interpreted as they are today. Improvements in interpretive programs and media may occur as funding becomes available. At the New Castle Court House, Fort Christina and John Dickinson Plantation, the state would continue to provide interpretive materials and programs. Lombardy Hall would continue to be a site for limited interpretation of Gunning Bedford, Jr. Stonum would be understood simply through a windshield view and any available interpretive information. In New Castle, current interpretive tours and periodic events would continue.

### **Visitor Experiences**

Visitor experiences would continue to be afforded at state-owned sites including Fort Christina, the New Castle Court House and the John Dickinson Plantation; current visitation opportunities including locally initiated special events would continue in the New Castle Historic District; scheduled periodic visitation by reservation would continue at Lombardy Hall; and, no visitation would be introduced at Stonum, other than by driving by the resource. Visitors would discover Delaware sites



Visitors touring historic sites. NPS photo.

related to early settlement and first statehood through state and local tourism agencies, individual web sites and other available information sources.

### Management

All of the resources analyzed in chapter three of this report would continue to be owned and operated by their respective public and private owners.

### **Cost Estimates**

Funding would continue to come primarily from local, state, and private sources for preservation, interpretation and operating costs. Limited federal funds and technical assistance may continue to be available from programs such as the National Historic Landmarks Program; Save America's Treasures; National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program; Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) programs; and, transportation enhancement grants, among others. No new direct NPS costs, other than those already authorized through existing NPS programs, are anticipated.

## **Elements Common to the Action Alternatives**

Each of the action alternatives presents a different way for conserving, interpreting and celebrating aspects of the rich history and culture of the state of Delaware. While each alternative is different, there are also common elements among the alternatives as listed below:

- The NPS would maintain an active partnership with state agencies, local governments, and others to promote resource protection efforts, interpretation, and visitor management at the selected sites.
- A comprehensive visitor experience would be envisioned that directly engages people with authentic resources that are critical to understanding the themes applicable to the resources.
- A variety of interpretive and educational opportunities would be provided so that visitors could explore, appreciate and enjoy selected Delaware resources.
- There would be financial and technical assistance provided by the NPS for conservation of selected historic, natural and cultural resources whether they are publicly or privately owned. Financial assistance for any capital projects would be on a 1:1 matching basis.

# Alternative B: National Historical Park

This alternative would provide for the potential congressional establishment of a unit of the national park system, a national historical park. The purpose of the park would be to preserve and interpret resources associated with early Dutch, Swedish and English settlement, as well as Delaware's role in the birth of the nation and becoming the first state. The boundary of the park would encompass the boundary of the New Castle NHL District (including the New Castle Court House), and the properties containing Lombardy Hall, the John Dickinson Plantation, the Dover Green, Fort Christina, Holy Trinity (Old Swedes') Church, and Stonum. The "hub" of this thematically cohesive park would be in the New Castle NHL District, and the "spokes," or resources critical to understanding both themes, would be in New Castle and Kent Counties. The concept envisions that the NPS would also be authorized to conduct tours to resources outside the park boundary in Delaware that are related to the early settlement and first statehood themes. A small visitor contact station could also be located in an existing community center located on the Holy Trinity (Old Swedes') Church property.

### **Resource Protection**

Responsibilities for resource protection under this alternative would be shared between public and private property owners and the NPS. The NPS would be authorized to provide 1:1 matching grants for historic preservation and restoration to public and private property owners within the boundary of the national historical park. The NPS would also be authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with public agencies, nonprofit organizations and private property owners to foster resource protection, education, and research including archeology.

While it is not anticipated that NPS would own resources, it would be authorized to acquire resources by donation or in fee and acquire historic preservation easements to ensure future protection of the park's resources if they became available from willing donors or sellers.

### **Interpretation and Education**

The NPS would partner with state and local agencies, nonprofit organizations and private property owners

for the development of educational and interpretive media and programs. NPS would provide ranger-led interpretive tours to the resources within the New Castle NHL District, to outlying sites within the boundary of the national historical park and to other sites in the state of Delaware with resources related to the park's early settlement and first statehood themes. NPS would also be authorized to provide technical assistance and 1:1 matching grants for interpretive exhibits at sites within the boundary of the park, and to the Delaware State Archives in Dover and the Zwaanandael Museum in Lewes. NPS would develop comprehensive and longterm interpretive plans in coordination with partnering groups to provide for a wide array of interpretive and educational programs. These would promote greater and more integrated public understanding and appreciation of the park's themes and Delaware's early settlement and first statehood resources, as well as the state's contribution to the history of the United States. NPS uniformed interpretive rangers would provide guided interpretive tours along with the staff of public and private nonprofit organizations that currently do so within the park's boundary.

### **Visitor Experience**

NPS would be authorized to provide 1:1 matching capital improvement grants for the establishment of administrative and visitor service facilities in existing structures within the boundary of the park. An administrative office/visitor center could be established in the historic structure known as the "Sheriff's House" in New Castle which is attached to the Court House. A visitor contact station could also be established at the community center at Fort Trinity (Old Swedes') Church to serve visitors to Fort Christina and the Church.

Tour routes of different lengths would be available for visitors through the center, at individual sites, and at other informal interpretive kiosks. There would also be



The Sheriff's House, New Castle. NPS photo.

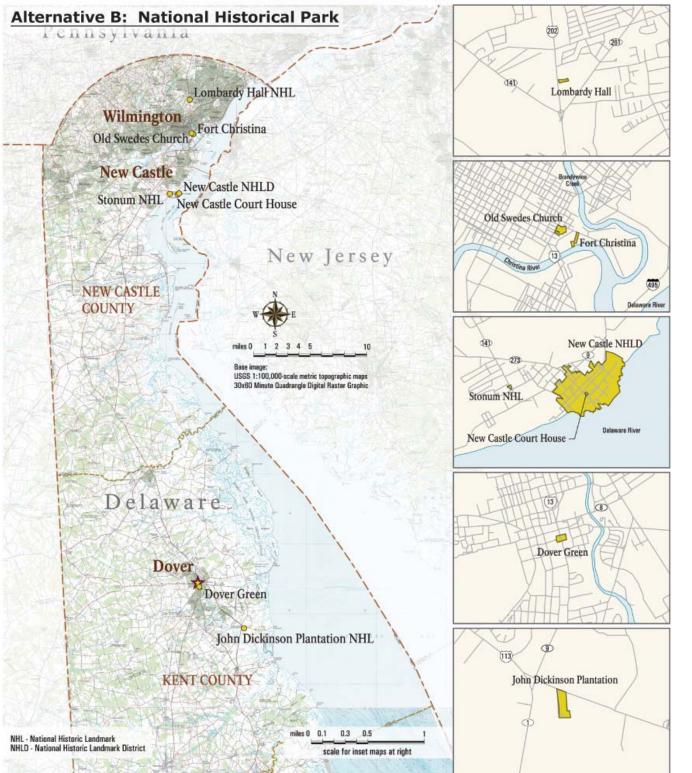
an NPS web site that could be used by visitors to plan their visits. Visitors would experience a wide range of educational, interpretive and resource information to assist them in understanding and appreciating park themes and resources, as well as sites outside of the boundary related to the themes. Visitors would understand the interrelationships between, and the roles of, the individual resources within the overall themes of early settlement and first statehood. In this way, visitors would be provided with a fuller understanding of the state's history and unique contributions to that of the United States.

### Management

NPS would partner with public and private owners of sites through cooperative agreements to provide for visitation and resource protection. It would jointly conduct visitor activities with state and local governments, nonprofit organizations and private property owners within the park's boundary. NPS would also be authorized to provide technical assistance to its management partners and other related resources.

### **Capital and Operational Cost Estimates**

Grants would be available on a 1:1 matching basis to the state of Delaware, its political subdivisions and non-profit



organizations for the rehabilitation of existing structures to serve as administrative and visitor services facilities for the park. Grants and technical assistance would also be available for historic preservation and restoration of resources within the boundary of the park and the costs of design, construction, installation and maintenance of exhibits related to the park. The federally provided share of the grants is estimated at up to \$5,000,000.

NPS operations of the park would involve the stationing of five to seven full-time equivalent (FTE) NPS interpretive rangers at the park. The FTE would include a site manager/chief of interpretation at the GS-12 level and four to six interpretive rangers at grades GS-5 through GS-11. Administrative, contracting and personnel support would be provided by a nearby unit of the national park system. If resource protection assistance could not be provided by a nearby unit or by sources within the Northeast Regional Office of the NPS, a resource protection specialist could be substituted for one of the interpretive ranger positions. The cost for operations is estimated at between \$400,000 and \$500,000 annually. A modest contribution for maintenance of visitor services facilities is estimated at \$50,000 annually. The NPS cost for preparation of a general management plan for the park is estimated at \$600,000.

# Alternative C: National Historic Site

This alternative would provide for the potential congressional establishment of a national historic site comprising Fort Christina and Holy Trinity (Old Swedes') Church. As indicated in chapter three, the resources at this location are nationally significant, suitable and feasible for potential designation as a unit of the national park system. The purpose of the park would be to preserve these resources and interpret the



Fort Christina State Park, Wilmington. NPS photo.

arrival and early settlement of the Swedes in the United States. The boundary of the site would encompass the current properties occupied by Fort Christina and Holy Trinity (Old Swedes') Church. Besides concentrating efforts on revealing the importance of the first landing of the Swedes and their defensive structure and town at Fort Christina, it would permit limited tours to other sites such as New Castle that further explain the early history and settlement patterns of the Swedish people in Delaware. The site would require a management and interpretive partnership between the National Park Service, the state of Delaware and the Old Swedes Foundation. Partnerships with other nearby early Swedish settlements in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, such as Tinicum Island State Park would provide for information sharing and tourism coordination.

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### **Resource Protection**

Under this alternative, the NPS, the state of Delaware and Old Swedes Foundation would share in the task of resource protection. Grants on a 1:1 matching basis would be available from the NPS for preservation and restoration of the resources within the boundary of the park. The NPS would also be authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with the state and the Foundation to foster continued resource protection through technical assistance. It is not anticipated that NPS would own or directly manage any resources at the national historic site, but would be authorized to seek historic preservation easements by donation.

### **Interpretation and Education**

NPS and its state of Delaware and Foundation partners would develop comprehensive and long-range education and interpretive plans for Fort Christina and Old Swedes' Church. NPS ranger-led tours and interpretive media would provide for increased visitor understanding and appreciation of the resources and the theme of early Swedish settlement. NPS would be authorized to provide 1:1 matching grants for the design and construction of interpretive exhibits at the national historic site.

### **Visitor Experience**

NPS would be authorized to provide 1:1 matching capital grants to establish administrative offices and a visitor contact station in the community center at the Old Swedes' Church to serve individual and group visitation. Here visitors would be supplied with information and participate in NPS ranger-led guided tours. An NPS web site would be established to assist individuals in planning their visits to the site. Visitors would experience a wide range of educational, interpretive and resource information to assist them in understanding and appreciating the park's Swedish settlement theme and park resources, as well as information pertaining to resources outside of the boundary of the park related to its themes.



Old Swedes Community Center, Wilmington. Old Swedes Foundation photo.

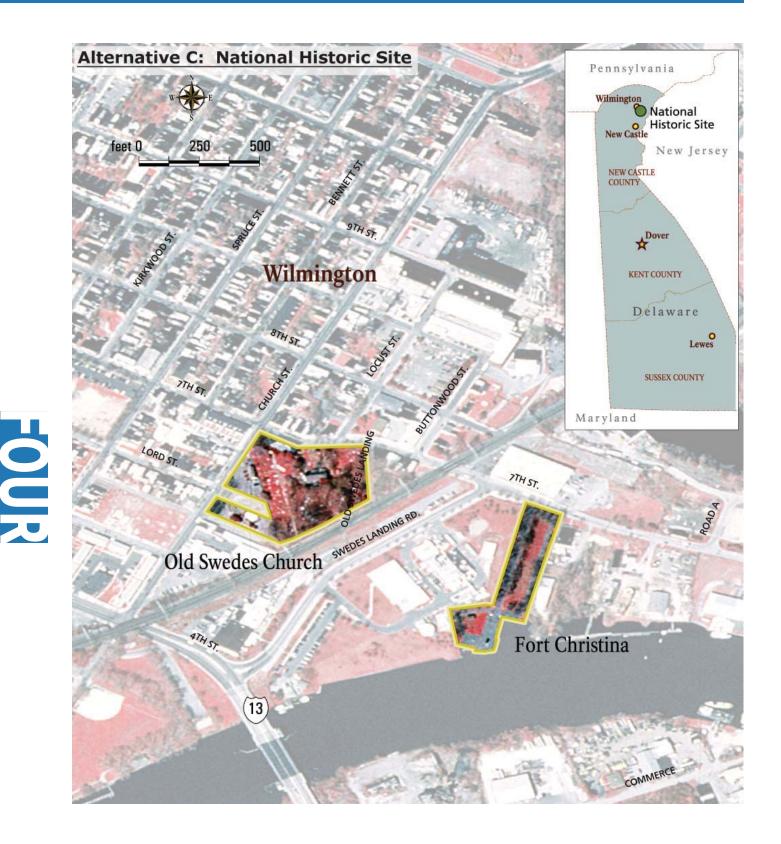
### Management

The NPS, the state of Delaware and the Foundation would partner in managing the visitor contact station. The NPS would be authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with its partners to provide technical assistance and also enter into partnership arrangements with other related sites in New Jersey and Pennsylvania for information sharing and joint programming.

### **Capital and Operational Costs**

Grants would be available on a 1:1 matching basis to the Old Swedes Foundation and the state of Delaware for rehabilitation of the community center for service as administrative offices and a small visitor contact station for the park. Grants and technical assistance would also be available for historic preservation and restoration of resources within the boundary of the park and the costs of design, construction, installation and maintenance of any exhibits for the park. The federal cost share of the grants is estimated at up to \$500,000.

NPS operations of the park would involve the stationing of three full-time equivalent (FTE) NPS interpretive rangers at the park. The park would be administered



from a nearby NPS unit and assigned park staff would include three interpretive rangers in grades GS-5 through GS-9. The cost for operations is estimated at approximately \$170,000 annually. A modest contribution for maintenance of the administrative office/ visitor contact station is estimated at \$20,000 annually. The NPS cost for preparation of a general management plan for the park is estimated at \$250,000.

# Environmentally Preferred Alternative

In accordance with NPS Director's Order 12 and NEPA, the NPS is required to identify the environmentally preferred alternative. The Council on Environmental Quality defines the environmentally preferred alternative as the alternative that would promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's Section 101. In their Forty Most Asked Questions, the Council on Environmental Quality further clarifies the identification of the environmentally preferred alternative, stating that it is "the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources" (Q6a).

Based on the analysis of environmental consequences of each alternative in chapter six, Alternative B is the environmentally preferred alternative. Alternative B best protects the cultural resources of the area by providing resources to interpret, educate, and preserve historic sites related to early Swedish, Dutch and English settlement and important early events in the birth of our nation. This alternative would include more cultural resource sites, would enhance the protection of these sites, and provide a wider sharing of these resources than Alternatives A and C.

# The NPS Most Effective and Efficient Alternative

Alternative B also represents the NPS most effective and efficient alternative. Besides providing the opportunity for optimal protection of a larger collection of resources, particularly those under private ownership, Alternative B maximizes opportunities for a fuller public understanding of early Dutch, Swedish and English settlement in Delaware and its role as the First State. It also provides for further leveraging of federal financial contributions for resource protection through matching grant incentives for supplemental state, local and private financing for resource protection and interpretive exhibits. Under this alternative, visitors would be provided an integrated resource-based experience in which individual sites would provide coordinated and integrated interpretive programming. These would demonstrate the relationship of each resource to the larger themes of which they are a part, and which characterize Delaware's contributions to American history.

# **Summary of Alternatives**

	Alternative A: No Action	Alternative B: National Historical Park	Alternative C: National Historic Site
Concept	<ul> <li>Current programs and policies of existing federal, state, county and non-profit conservation organizations would remain in place and current conditions and trends would continue.</li> <li>No unit of the national park system would be established.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>A Congressionally established National Historical Park that comprises the New Castle NHL District, NHL sites and Dover Green within New Castle County and Kent County with links to other historic, thematically related facilities.</li> <li>The purpose of the park is to preserve and interpret resources related to early Swedish, Dutch and English Settlement and Delaware's role in the birth of the nation.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>A Congressionally established National Historic Site that comprises Fort Christina and Old Swedes Church in Wilmington, Delaware.</li> <li>The purpose of the park is to preserve and interpret resources related early Swedish settlement in Delaware.</li> </ul>
Resource Protection	<ul> <li>Resource protection continues to be managed by state and local governments, nonprofit organizations and private property owners</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>NPS, state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private property owners share in resource protection. NPS would seek to acquire historic preservation easements from willing property owners.</li> <li>1:1 NPS matching grants available to enhance resource protection.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>NPS, the state of Delaware and Old Swedes Foundation share in resource protection. NPS would seek donated historic preservation easements on the two properties.</li> <li>1:1 NPS matching grants available to enhance resource protection.</li> </ul>
Interpretation and Education	<ul> <li>Current interpretative programs at sites devoted to early settlement and Delaware' role in the birth of the nation continue. No interpretation occurs at some sites.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>The NPS would partner with state and local agencies, nonprofit organizations and private property owners for the development of educational and interpretive media and programs and provide NPS ranger-led interpretive tours to the resources within the New Castle historic district, to outlying sites within the boundary of the national historical park and to other sites in the state of Delaware with resources related to the park's early settlement and first statehood themes.</li> <li>1:1 NPS matching grants available for design and construction of exhibits.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>NPS would partner with the state of Delaware and Old Swedes Foundation for the development of educational and interpretive media. NPS rangers would lead tours at the national historic site and related thematic resources in Delaware.</li> <li>1:1 NPS matching grants available for design and construction of exhibits.</li> </ul>

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### Summary of Alternatives, continued

	Alternative A: No Action	Alternative B: National Historical Park	Alternative C: National Historic Site
Visitor Experience	<ul> <li>Visitor experiences would continue to be guided by guides in the state agencies who manage historic resources, and by historic groups and tourism officials who provide these services.</li> <li>Touring routes will continue to be available through the state's tourism web site, and at other attractions throughout the state.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Visitors would be welcomed at a centrally located visitor services facility in an existing building in the New Castle Historic District co-managed by NPS in partnership with the state and venture to other sites by NPS ranger-led or self-guided tours. 1:1 NPS matching grants would fund the rehabilitation</li> <li>A contact station at Old Swedes' Church orients visitors to that resource and Fort Christina, and provides park-wide information.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Visitors would be welcomed at a visitor contact station located at Old Swedes' Church in an existing building co-managed by NPS in partnership with the state and Foundation. 1:1 NPS matching grants would fund the rehabilitation.</li> <li>Visitors would experience ranger- led tours of the Church and Fort Christina.</li> </ul>
Management	<ul> <li>State and local governments, nonprofit organizations and private property owners would continue to own and manage individual sites.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>State and local governments, nonprofit organizations and private property owners would continue to own and manage individual sites.</li> <li>NPS would co-manage a visitor facility in New Castle and a visitor contact station at Old Swedes' Church.</li> <li>The NPS would enter cooperative agreements with public and private owners of resources for historic preservation, interpretation and education.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>The state and the Foundation would, respectively, continue to own Fort Christina and Old Swedes' Church. NPS would seek historic preservation easements on the properties.</li> <li>The NPS would co-manage a visitor contact station at Old Swedes' Church with the Foundation and the state.</li> <li>The NPS would enter cooperative agreements with the state and the Foundation for historic preservation, interpretation and education.</li> </ul>
Capital and Operational Costs	<ul> <li>No new federal capital or operational costs other than through existing authorities</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>1:1 matching grants for administrative and visitor services, facilities, exhibits and historic preservation - \$5,000,000</li> <li>NPS Staffing and operations up to \$500,000 annually</li> <li>Maintenance contribution - \$50,000 annually.</li> <li>Preparation of General Management Plan - \$600,000</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>1:1 matching grants for administrative and visitor services facility, exhibits and historic preservation - \$500,000.</li> <li>NPS staffing and operations - up to \$170,000 annually.</li> <li>Maintenance contribution - \$20,000 annually.</li> <li>Preparation of General Management Plan - \$250,000.</li> </ul>

# **Summary of Environmental Consequences**

This table provides a comparison of the environmental consequences of the proposed alternatives. See chapter five for a detailed impact analysis.

	Alternative A: No Action	Alternative B: National Historic Park	Alternative C: National Historic Site					
Cultural Resources								
Historic Structures	Alternative A would have no direct or cumulative impacts on historic structures. For purposes of Section 106 consultation, a determination of no historic properties affected is anticipated.	Alternative B would have beneficial impacts on historic structures as partnerships are created, historic preservation grants become available and more educational and interpretive opportunities are offered. For purposes of Section 106 consultation, a determination of no adverse effect is anticipated.	Alternative C would have beneficial impacts on historic structures. Benefits would be the same as in Alternative B, but to a lesser extent as the number of resources included, availability of historic preservation grants, and scope of the project area would be smaller. For purposes of Section 106 consultation, a determination of no adverse effect is anticipated.					
Visitor Use								
Transportation	Alternative A would have no impacts on transportation.	Alternative B would have no impacts on transportation since the increase in the number of vehicles traveling to the sites would not be measurable.	Impacts to transportation under Alternative C are identical to Alternative B.					
Socioeconomics	Alternative A would have no direct or cumulative impacts on socioeconomics.	Alternative B would have beneficial impacts on socioeconomics and potential for benefits to spread to the surrounding communities.	Alternative C would have beneficial impacts on socioeconomics, but to a lesser extent as the number of sites designated as a NPS unit and the economic benefits would be fewer than Alternative B.					
Visitor Experience	Alternative A would have no direct or cumulative impacts on visitor experience.	Actions associated with Alternative B would likely result in increased visitor experience and visitor satisfaction due additional education and interpretive opportunities.	Impacts on visitor experience would be enhanced by the increase in interpretative and educational opportunities, but to a lesser degree than Alternative B.					