

National Park Service



National Park Service Delaware National Coastal Special Resource Study/EA



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What the Statute Required

- **Public Law 109-338, enacted on October 12, 2006, authorized the Secretary to conduct a special resource study of the national significance, suitability, and feasibility of including sites in the coastal region of the State of Delaware into the National Park System. The Act required the study to be done within two years after funds were made available.**
- **The study should include an analysis and any recommendations of the Secretary concerning the suitability and feasibility of designating one or more of the sites along the Delaware coast, including Fort Christina, as a unit of the National Park System that relates to the themes described in the legislation.**



Themes in the legislation

- (1) the history of indigenous peoples;**
- (2) colonization and European settlement;**
- (3) founding of a nation;**
- (4) industrial development;**
- (5) transportation (maritime);**
- (6) coastal defense;**
- (7) Underground Railroad; and**
- (8) the coastal environment.**



Special Resource Study Criteria Necessary for Designation

- National Significance (NHL criteria for cultural resources)
- Suitability – not adequately represented in the System or protected by others
- Feasibility/Costs/Public Support
- Need for NPS Management



Initial Reconnaissance on Resources and Analysis of Themes

- **Indigenous Peoples** – No NHL Potential
- **Industrial Development** - Suitability Issues
- **Transportation (Maritime)** – No NHL Potential/Suitability Issues
- **Coastal Defense** – Suitability Issues
- **Underground Railroad** – No NHL Potential Except New Castle Courthouse – UGR Network to Freedom Inclusion
- **Coastal Environment** – Suitability Issues – Perceptions of conflicts due to NPS management policies



Study themes with resources that were found to meet the national significance and suitability criteria:

1. The colonization and establishment of the frontier, which would chronicle the first European settlers in the Delaware Valley who built fortifications for the protection of settlers, such as Fort Christina.
2. The founding of a nation, which would document the contributions of Delaware to the development of our constitutional republic.



National Significance

Resources that have been previously evaluated and designated as National Historic Landmarks have passed the required national significance criteria required by the NPS.



Nationally Significant resources relevant to the themes of settlement and statehood

Fort Christina – Wilmington - NHL

John Dickinson Plantation – Dover - NHL

Lombardy Hall (Gunning Bedford, Jr.) – Wilmington - NHL

New Castle NHL District

Stonum (George Read's House) – New Castle - NHL

Trinity (Old Swedes') Church – Wilmington – NHL

Dover Green – contributing resource to statehood theme

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Early Settlement Resources



**Trinity (Old Swedes')
Church NHL, Wilmington**



**Fort Christina landing site, NHL,
Wilmington**

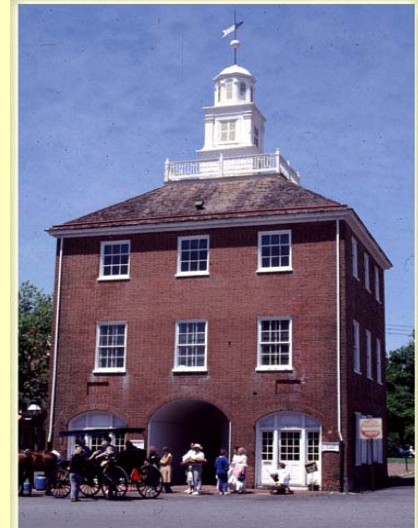
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New Castle Court House



Aerial View of Historic
New Castle



Old Town Hall and
Market Place

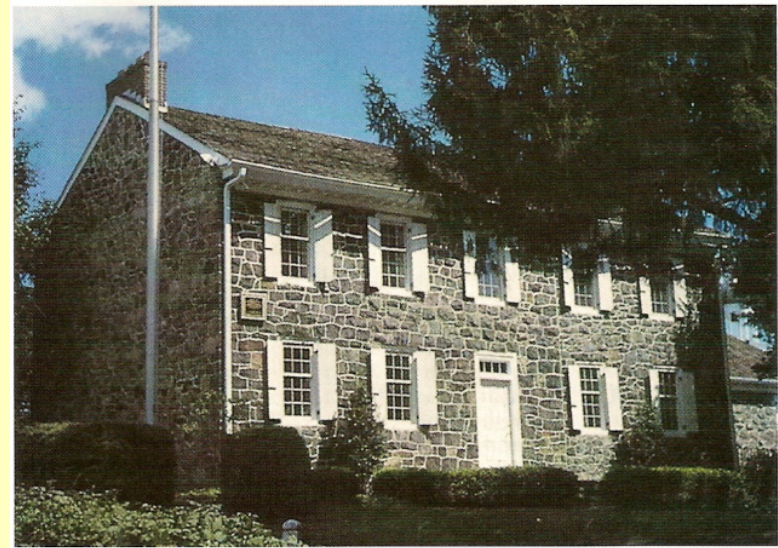
New Castle National Historic Landmark District



Statehood Resources



Stonum NHL
George Read's House



Lombardy Hall NHL
Home of Gunning Bedford, Jr.

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John Dickinson House NHL



Dover Green



Suitability

Compared with other sites inside and outside the national park system, no other sites adequately represent the themes of early Dutch, Swedish and English settlement or themes associated with the establishment of the nation's "first state."



Feasibility

Evaluating size and configuration, landownership, access, threats to resources, staffing, development requirements, and public support, the proposed Delaware sites are found to be feasible for inclusion in the national park system.



NPS Management

The study found that NPS management in concert with other public and private owners would be superior to existing and other potential management arrangements.



Other Alternatives Explored: National Coastal Heritage Park and Coastal Delaware National Heritage Area

- Multiplicity of themes and resources representing a mixture of NHL and other “nationally distinctive” resources would normally be considered for a potential National Heritage Area designation.
- While the resources may potentially meet the criteria for inclusion as a National Heritage Area, no management entity came forward or was identified during the study process.



Alternatives Considered:

- A. No Action (necessary to comply with NEPA requirements)
- B. Delaware National Historical Park
a collection of sites relating to early settlement and Delaware's role as the "first state"
- C. Delaware National Historic Site
focusing on Delaware's Swedish settlements including: Fort Christina and Trinity (Old Swedes') Church



Alternative A: NO ACTION

Concept

Sites, organizations, and programs would continue to operate independently without NPS management or assistance.

NPS Role

No NPS staffing or operational responsibilities.

Cost Estimates

No NPS funding other than that available through existing authorities.



Alternative B – National Historical Park

Concept: A Partnership Park celebrating Delaware's early Dutch, Swedish and English Settlements and the events leading up to and including the state's role in the founding of our nation.

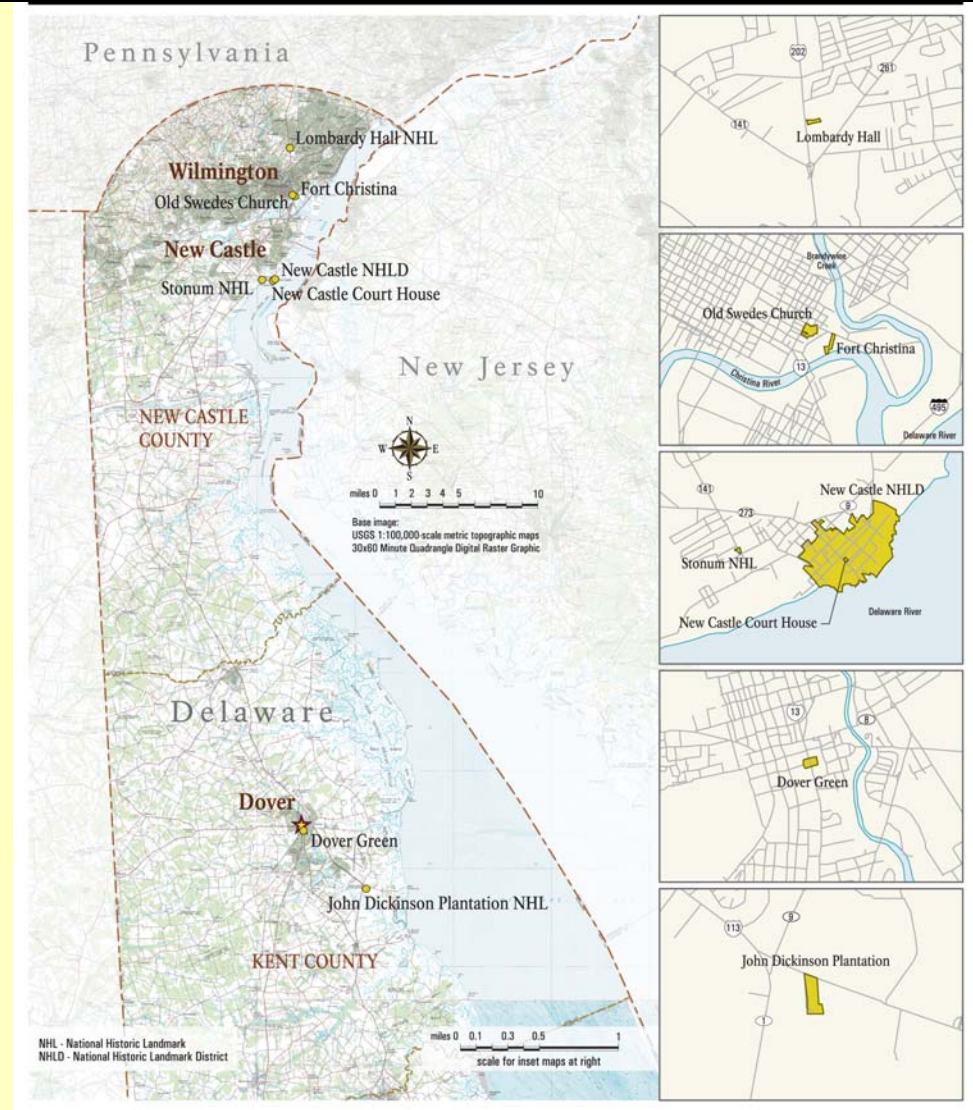
NPS Role: NPS would jointly conduct visitor activities with the state and other partners. NPS would be authorized to provide technical and financial assistance for resource protection (including private properties), and interpretation.

Cost Estimates: One-to-one matching grants for resource protection and interpretive planning and programming, not to exceed \$5 million.

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Alternative B National Historical Park



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Alternative C – National Historic Site

Concept: This alternative would provide for the potential establishment of a national historic site comprising Fort Christina and Trinity (Old Swedes') Church and interpret the arrival and early settlement of the Swedes in the United States.

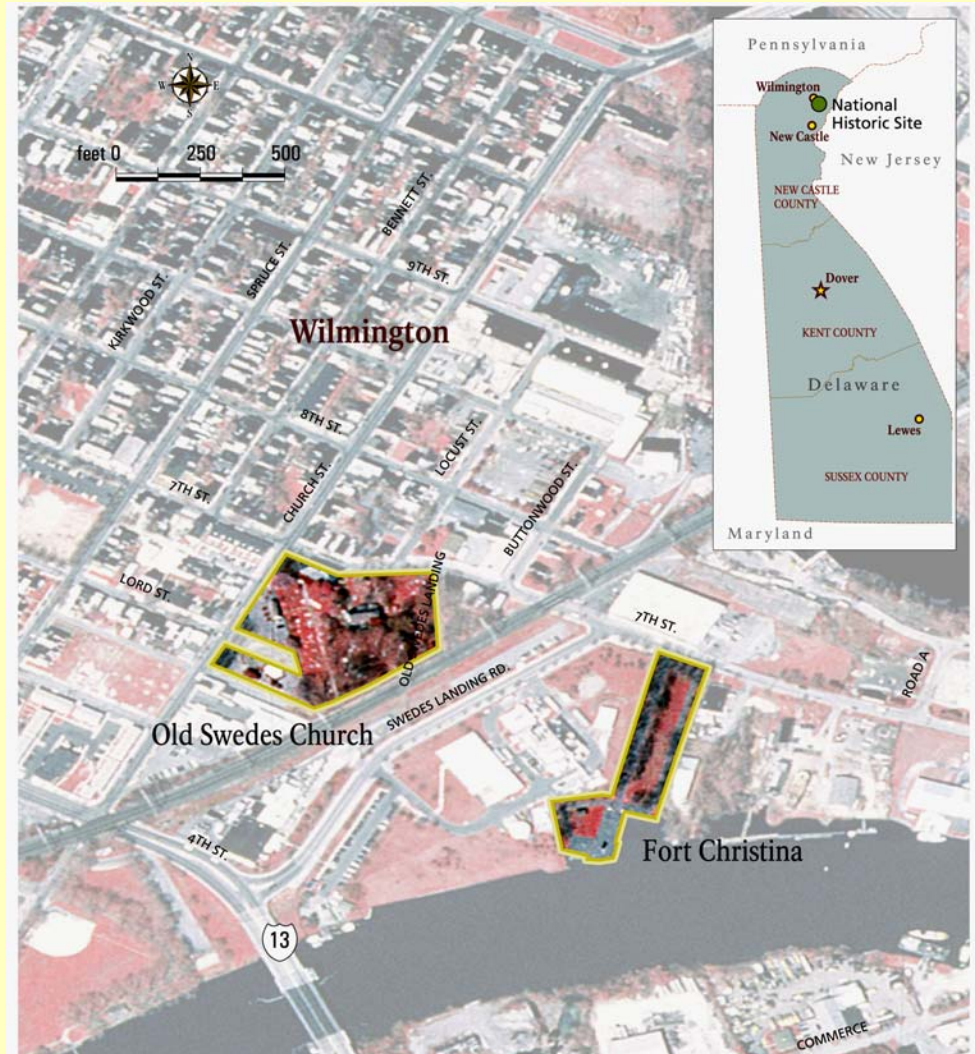
NPS Role: The NPS would provide limited staff and potentially partner in managing a visitor contact station at the church and provide technical assistance with related sites.

Cost Estimates: One-to-one matching grant for capital improvements and exhibits, not to exceed \$500 thousand.

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Alternative C National Historic Site



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Components and Authorities for the Environmentally Preferred Alternative

- NPS would not own any resources.
- NPS 50% cost share for administrative and visitor service facilities.
- NPS interpretive staff (5 to 7 full-time employees) authorized to provide interpretive tours to designated sites.
- NPS authorized to provide financial and technical assistance to designated early settlement and statehood sites.

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Resources that would be within the boundary and eligible for NPS technical and financial assistance:

- Dover Green – Dover
- Fort Christina – Wilmington - NHL
- John Dickinson Plantation – Dover - NHL
- Lombardy Hall (Gunning Bedford, Jr.) – Wilmington - NHL
- New Castle NHL District
- Stonum (George Read's House) – New Castle - NHL
- Trinity (Old Swedes') Church – Wilmington - NHL



Sites proposed for potential visitor services



Sheriff's House – New Castle



Community Center at
Trinity (Old Swedes') Church



Additional Resources Eligible for Financial and Technical Assistance



Delaware Public Archives, Dover



Zwaanendael Museum, Lewes



Additional Potential NPS Authority:

Conduct tours to other
thematically related sites
outside the boundary
of the park.



Ryves Holt House, Lewes



Next Steps

- Public comment period ends Dec 26, 2008
- Preparation of Document with Response to Comments and Potential Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) – late December
- Secretary's Transmittal of Final Report & EA to Congress



Contact information for submission of comments:

The NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>

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