

Washington Crossing



Pennsylvania State Parks Mission

The primary purpose of Pennsylvania state parks is to provide opportunities for enjoying healthful outdoor recreation and serve as outdoor classrooms for environmental education. In meeting these purposes, the conservation of the natural, scenic, aesthetic, and historical values of parks should be given first consideration. Stewardship responsibilities should be carried out in a way that protects the natural outdoor experience for the enjoyment of current and future generations.



Printed on recycled paper

2021



TOP 10 ACTIVITIES



1. Experience history by taking a guided tour in the park.
2. Bicycle along the adjacent Delaware Canal State Park towpath to visit both the upper and lower sections in the park.
3. Join thousands of people attending the Christmas Day Annual Re-enactment of Washington Crossing the Delaware River.
4. View the best scenic overlook of Bucks County from Bowman's Hill Tower.
5. Fish the Delaware River, and catch a glimpse of the annual shad migration in the spring.
6. Appreciate the historic artifacts in the exhibit area of the visitor center.
7. Attend a free environmental education program or history lecture.
8. Run a race. Many are offered throughout the year.
9. Pay respect to those that made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and are honored at the Soldiers' Graves.
10. Visit Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve to view native Pennsylvania plants and flowers.

WASHINGTON CROSSING HISTORIC PARK

Washington Crossing Historic Park preserves the site of George Washington's dramatic crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776. The park was founded in 1917 to commemorate and preserve the site where the Continental Army crossed the Delaware River. The park became a National Historic Landmark in 1961.

It has historic buildings, walking paths, picnic pavilions, fishing, historical and environmental education programs, outdoor recreation programs, and hosts special events and re-enactments.

Washington Crossing Historic Park is open every day of the year, sunrise to sunset. Day use areas close at dusk. The visitor center and historic building tours are available to the public during specific hours. Contact the park office for facility seasons and hours.

Some park facilities are operated by the Friends of Washington Crossing Park and fees may be charged. Other park facilities and areas are free. For a complete list of fees for services administered by the Friends of Washington Crossing Park, please visit: www.washingtoncrossingpark.org.

Directions

Washington Crossing Visitor Center GPS DD: Lat. 40.295 Long. -74.87205

From the South (Philadelphia), follow I-95 North to I-295 East to Exit 10.

From the West (Harrisburg), follow the Pennsylvania Turnpike I-276 East to US 1 North to I-295 East to Exit 10.

From the North (New York, Northern New Jersey), follow I-95 South to NJ 18 North to US 1 South to I-295 East to Exit 10.

From the East (New Jersey), follow I-295 West to Exit 10.

From I-295, take Exit 10 New Hope. Turn left onto Taylorsville Road and continue for 2.7 miles. Turn right onto PA 532 north. Follow PA 532 to PA 32 north, River Road and turn left. The visitor parking area is on the left and the visitor center is across the street on the right. Washington's Encampment at the Thompson-Neely Farmstead and Bowman's Hill Tower are 3.5 miles north of the visitor center on PA 32 north, River Road.

Caution: The Washington Crossing Bridge between PA 32 and NJ 29 has a 3-ton weight limit and is too narrow for buses, large trucks, and campers.

Washington Crossing Historic Park Visitor Center

The visitor center serves as the park office and provides information about the park, including an introductory film and historical exhibits. A gift shop, restrooms, and ticket sales are also available to visitors.

Groups may reserve the auditorium and two meeting rooms for a rental fee. For more information, call 215-493-4076.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Spend the Day

PICNICKING: Picnic areas are located near the General Greene Pavilion. Picnic tables are also available throughout the upper and lower sections of the park. General Washington, General Greene, and General Sullivan pavilions provide shelter and electricity for group picnics and are reservable up to 11 months in advance.

Reservations can be made online at www.visitPAparks.com or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Saturday.

Captain Moore Pavilion may be reserved for special events through the Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve. Unreserved pavilions are available for public use on a first-come, first-served basis.

FISHING: The Delaware River contains many species of game fish including American shad, striped bass, smallmouth bass, and walleye. Shad migration starts in early spring. The Delaware Canal is a warmwater fishery. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations and laws apply.



BIKING: Bicycle from the Upper Park to the Lower Park on the Delaware Canal State Park Towpath. For loops and longer bicycle riding options, connect with the 70-mile-long NJ Delaware and Raritan (D&R) Canal State Park Towpath in New Jersey via the Washington Crossing Bridge.

WALKING: Visitors can explore forests, fields, and historic structures along several pathways throughout both sections of the park, including the historic Lower Park. Walk or jog on the Delaware Canal State Park Towpath accessed from Washington Crossing Historic Park at SR 532 in the Lower Park or in many locations in the Upper Park.

DELAWARE CANAL STATE PARK TOWPATH: 60 miles, easiest hiking

The park is adjacent to the 60-mile-long Delaware Canal State Park Towpath, which runs from Easton to Bristol. A four-mile section of this trail connects the lower and upper portions of Washington Crossing Historic Park. The towpath is part of the 165-mile Delaware and Lehigh (D&L) Trail system, which follows the historic route of the Delaware and Lehigh canals. Once trod by mule teams pulling cargo-laden boats from the coal fields of northeastern Pennsylvania, the towpath now is used by walkers, joggers, bicyclists, cross-country skiers, and bird watchers.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING: The paths and fields of the park and the adjacent Delaware Canal Towpath are suitable for cross-country skiing when weather conditions permit.

SIGHTSEEING: The 125-foot Bowman's Hill Tower, located in the Upper Park off Lurgan Road, provides a fabulous view of the Delaware River Valley. An entry fee is charged. The tower closes for the winter season.

HISTORY

It was the winter of 1776. With the War of Independence failing, General George Washington and his ragged army had experienced only defeat and despair.

In the preceding months, Washington's campaign in New York had not gone well; the Battle of Long Island ended in a loss when the British troops managed to out-manuever the Continental Army. On December 2, he was forced to retreat across the Delaware River to Pennsylvania. It took five days for the entire army to cross the river. As a defensive measure, Washington ordered various boats along the river to be seized and gathered on the Pennsylvania side.

As the harsh Pennsylvania winter set in, the morale of the American troops sank to an all-time low. Soldiers were forced to deal with a lack food and warm clothing while Washington watched his army shrink due to desertions and expiring enlistments. Desperate for a victory, Washington decided to attempt crossing the Delaware River once again to attack Hessian troops at Trenton.

Washington's plan called for a risky crossing under the cover of darkness, using the local ferry and boats seized during his earlier retreat. Typically used to carry pig iron down the Delaware River, the large Durham boats were used for the crossing due to their ability to hold many people and withstand the ice-choked river conditions.

Fully expecting to be supported by two brigades south of Trenton, Washington assembled his troops near McConkey's Ferry in preparation for the crossing. On December 25 by 6:00 PM, 2,400 troops began crossing the icy river. Due to the condition of the river, the operation was slow and difficult. An abrupt change in the

weather forced the men to fight their way through sleet and a blinding snow storm. These obstacles proved to be too much for the supporting brigades led by Colonel Cadwalader and General Ewing. Ultimately, their attempts to cross at southern points along the Delaware River failed.

Against all odds, Washington and his men successfully completed their crossing and marched into Trenton on the morning of December 26, 1776. The army achieved a resounding victory over the Hessians, a group of German troops fighting for the British. By moving ahead with his bold and daring plan, General George Washington reignited the cause of freedom and gave new life to the American Revolution.



THE "TEN CRUCIAL DAYS:" A Timeline

Prelude	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Postscript
December 2–25, 1776	December 25, 1776	December 26, 1776: <i>First Battle of Trenton</i>	December 27, 1776	December 28, 1776	December 29, 1776	December 30, 1776	December 31, 1776	January 1, 1777	January 2, 1777: <i>Second Battle of Trenton</i>	January 3, 1777: <i>Battle of Princeton</i>	January 3–6, 1777
Following a series of military defeats in New York and New Jersey, General George Washington led the Continental Army in its retreat across New Jersey. They arrived in Pennsylvania in December 1776, where Washington planned the army's next move before soldiers' enlistments expired at the end of the month.	A Continental Army force of 2,400 soldiers crosses the Delaware River from McConkey's Ferry to New Jersey. They march ten miles to Trenton in a blizzard toward the 1,400 Hessian troops occupying the town.	The Continental Army defeats the Hessians at Trenton to win its first significant victory of the war, then returns to Pennsylvania with its prisoners and captured goods.	Colonial militia General Cadwalader crosses the Delaware River into New Jersey to discover the enemy has withdrawn from the Trenton area.	After convening a council of war, Washington and his generals plan a defense in Trenton from the British, led by General Cornwallis.	The Continental Army crosses the river at several ferry crossings and returns to Trenton.	Washington persuades a bare majority of his soldiers whose enlistments are to expire on December 31 to remain with the army for another six weeks by promising to pay each of these soldiers \$10 in hard coin. Washington's force of 6,000 men prepares a defense on high ground south of Assunpink Creek in Trenton.	The Continental Army advances from Trenton toward enemy occupied Princeton, NJ.	British and Hessian forces gather strength in Princeton. The Continental Army skirmishes with British and Hessian troops on New Year's Day.	The Continental Army fights against 8,000 British and Hessian troops under General Cornwallis. The Continentals repel Cornwallis's attacks along Assunpink Creek until dusk. Cornwallis plans to "bag the fox in the morning."	Overnight, Washington and his troops withdraw from Trenton and begin to march to Princeton where they defeat the British and the Hessians. This results in the third and final victory for the Continental Army, thereby ending the military campaign associated with the "Ten Crucial Days."	The Continental Army makes its way from Princeton to Morristown, NJ, where it establishes its winter quarters.

HISTORICAL SITES

Upper Park



WASHINGTON'S ENCAMPMENT AT THE THOMPSON-NEELY FARMSTEAD
In December 1776, approximately 2,400 Continental soldiers camped in the frozen farms, fields, and forests of rural Bucks County. The home of mill owner Robert Thompson and his son-in-law William Neely served as housing for officers and a temporary regimental army hospital for the sick and wounded. The grounds were used by camping soldiers and to bury the dead.
At the age of eighteen, Lieutenant James Monroe, artillery officer and future President of the United States, was second-in-command to Captain William Washington, distant cousin of George Washington. Both stayed at the Thompson-Neely House. The men led reconnaissance missions in New Jersey prior to the Ten Crucial Days. On December 25, the army moved out of their camps and gathered at McConkey's Ferry to cross the river and make their attack on the Hessian barracks in Trenton, New Jersey. Previously hidden Durham boats were brought south to assist the crossing.



THOMPSON-NEELY GRIST MILL
In December 1776, the army was unwelcome in many parts of Bucks County. Some millers refused to accept Continental money to grind grain for the hungry army. As a result, Washington ordered mills and grain to be seized from uncooperative millers and the millers be paid full value for their loss. Robert Thompson likely embraced the patriotic cause and provided the army with much needed flour from his mill while they camped on his property.
In the late 1820s, construction of part of the Delaware Canal on the property raised the water level of Pidcock Creek and halted operation of the mill. Robert Thompson Neely, Robert Thompson's grandson, eventually moved the mill from its original location in front of the house to a new site 100 yards upstream. In 1873, that second mill caught fire and was rebuilt in the same location. The third and final mill is what you see today. Tour the mill for a fee. The mill is in operation during special events throughout the year.



SOLDIERS' GRAVES
The graves of many unknown soldiers who died during the December 1776 encampment are located on park property. The only known soldier buried here is Captain Lieutenant James Moore of the New York Artillery. Alexander Hamilton wrote of Moore's death and said that "a promising officer, who did credit to the state he belonged to, died on the 25th of December after a short but excruciating fit of illness." The stone wall surrounding the graves was finished in 1929 and the flagpole monument was dedicated in 1940.



BOWMAN'S HILL TOWER
This 125-foot tower was built in 1931 to commemorate the American Revolution. 124 stone steps lead to the top of the tower with an impressive view of the Delaware River and surrounding countryside. The tower roof may also be reached by elevator and then 23 stone steps. This site is open seven days a week, March through December, weather permitting. An admission fee is charged.

Lower Park



HIBBS HOUSE
This restored and furnished nineteenth century home was erected circa 1828-1830 as part of the village of Taylorsville. It was leased out as a tenant house for craftsmen and was advertised as a wheelwright's house and shop. Open hearth cooking demonstrations are held here at various times throughout the year.



BLACKSMITH SHOP
The current blacksmith shop was built in 1990 to replicate Taylorsville's original blacksmith shop constructed around 1830. Living-history demonstrations are conducted here during special events throughout the year.



FRYE HOUSE
Built circa 1828-1830 by the Taylor family, this home is believed to have been constructed for a blacksmith.



DURHAM BOAT BARN
This twentieth-century structure houses the Durham boat replicas. Durham boats were originally used to haul iron ore and were the sturdy craft used by Washington and his men for the crossing. Today, these replicas are a key component of the annual reenactment of Washington crossing the Delaware River on Christmas Day.



MCCONKEY'S FERRY INN
This eighteenth-century inn and tavern was owned by Samuel McConkey. The inn served as a guard post during the Continental Army's encampment in Bucks County in December 1776. Earthworks and cannon defended the ferry landing. According to tradition, this inn is where Washington and his aides ate their dinner prior to the crossing of the Delaware River on December 25, 1776. Additions were made to the inn in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by the Taylor family. This building continued to serve as an inn for many decades, and it is the only original structure that was in the Lower Park at the time of the crossing.



TAYLORSVILLE GENERAL STORE
Beginning around 1828, this store was owned and operated by Mahlon K. Taylor. It also functioned as the post office for Taylorsville. Mahlon Taylor served as the postmaster for nearly 40 years.



MAHLON K. TAYLOR HOUSE
This home was built circa 1817 for one of the town founders of Taylorsville, now known as Washington Crossing. It shows the status and prosperity of the Taylor family in the community.

INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS

Washington Crossing Historic Park
1112 River Road
Washington Crossing, PA 18977
215-493-4076
WashingtonCrossingSP@pa.gov
Bowman's Hill Tower
215-862-3166
Washington Crossing Historic Park is administered by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in partnership with the Friends of Washington Crossing Park.
An Equal Opportunity Employer
www.visitPAparks.com

Access for People with Disabilities

This symbol indicates facilities and activities that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible for people with disabilities. This publication text is available in alternative formats.

In an Emergency

Call 911 and contact a park employee. Directions to the nearest hospital are posted on bulletin boards and at the park office.

NEAREST HOSPITAL
St. Mary Medical Center
1201 Langhorne-Newtown Road
Langhorne, PA 19047
215-710-2000
www.stmaryhealthcare.org

Capital Health
One Capital Way
Pennington, NJ 08534
800-637-2374
www.capitalhealth.org/our-locations/hopewell

Electric Vehicle Charging Station
Two 2-plug, electric-vehicle charging stations are available for public use in the visitor center parking lot. Please move to another parking space once your vehicle has been charged.
Make online reservations at
www.visitPAparks.com or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Saturday, for state park information and reservations.
@WashingtonCrossingPark

Protect and Preserve our Parks

Please make your visit safe and enjoyable. Obey all posted rules and regulations and respect fellow visitors and the resources of the park.
• Be prepared and bring the proper equipment. Natural areas may possess hazards. Your personal safety and that of your family are your responsibility.
• Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

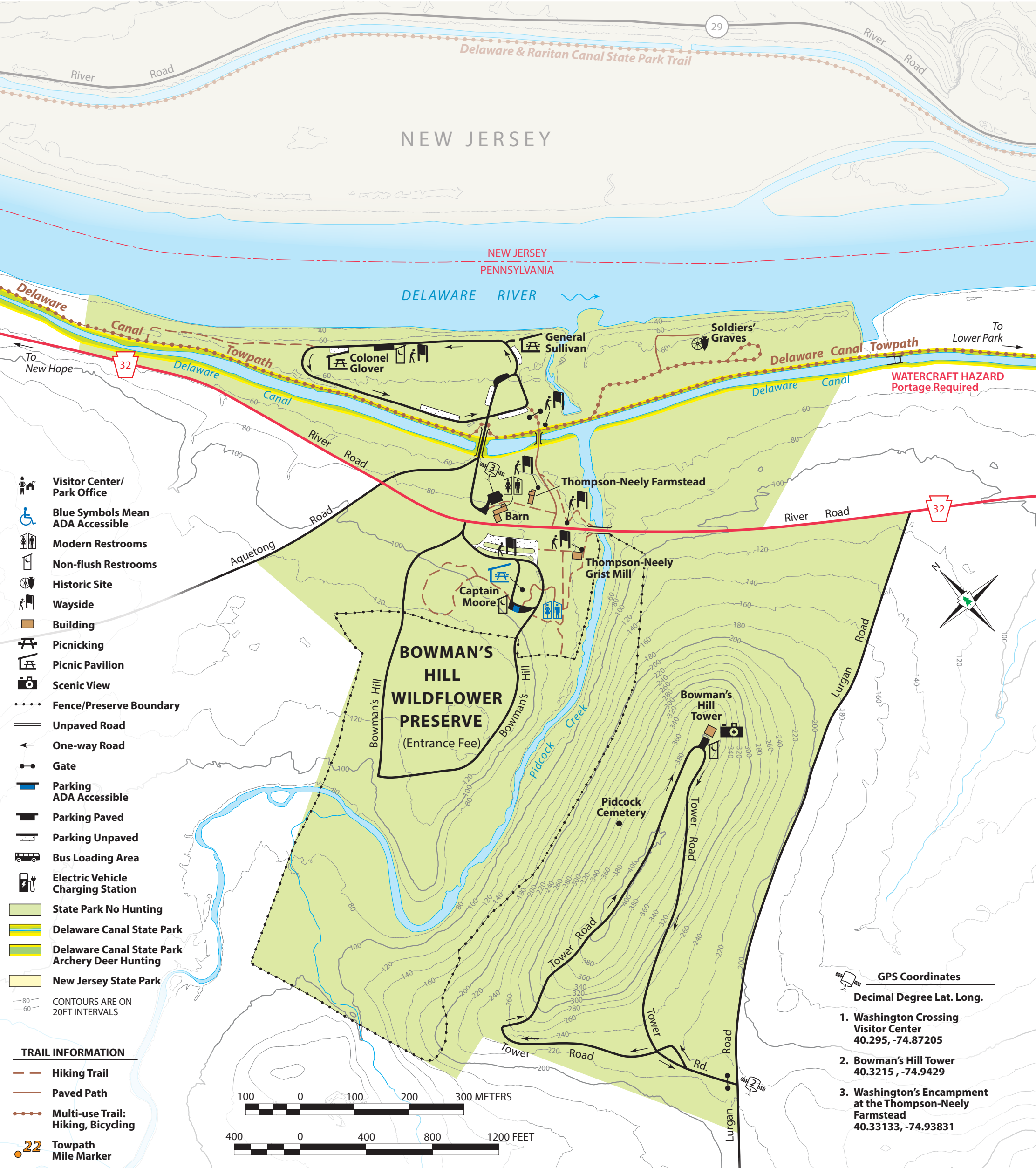
Nearby Attractions

Information on nearby attractions is available from Visit Bucks County.
www.visitbuckscounty.com
The Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor provides many opportunities to explore the area along the 165-mile D&L Trail. 610-923-3548. https://delawareandlehigh.org
In the Upper Park, **Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve** showcases an extraordinary diversity of plants native to Pennsylvania and the Delaware Valley. The non-profit organization cares for and protects the native plant collection with the goal of encouraging the public to visit, enjoy, and learn about the richness of Pennsylvania's natural heritage. Admission fee is charged. 215-862-2924. www.bhwp.org
At **Delaware Canal State Park**, visitors enjoy biking, hiking, boating, and learning about the canal-building era of American history. 610-982-5560
Tyler State Park has hiking, bicycling, exercising and nature trails, fishing, picnic facilities, environmental education programs, summer canoe rentals, and a mobile food concession. 215-968-2021
Washington Crossing State Park in New Jersey offers a visitor center, trails, camping, fishing, picnicking, and educational programs. Entrance fee is charged in the summer season. 609- 737-0623



WASHINGTON CROSSING HISTORIC PARK

Upper Park



Lower Park

