Introduction

If one asset shaped the cultural landscape and development of a region, more than any other, would it be worth saving? If this asset could be the foundation that defines a historic and recreation greenway stretching across that region, would it be worth preserving? If this asset could stoke a fire of economic development for nine municipalities, would it be worth fueling? For Warren County, this 'asset' is the Morris Canal, and the answers to these and other questions are the rationale for this plan.

Whether destroyed, threatened or intact, the canal and its associated resources is the critical thread that binds together the proposed greenway. It defines the route and sets the stage. It is likely that the greater public will be more interested in the recreational opportunities offered by the greenway. However, the journey along the way will be defined by the rich history of the Morris Canal. Continued preservation and promotion of the canal will continue to enhance other aspects of the greenway and create opportunities to share the current enthusiasm about the canal with other greenway users.

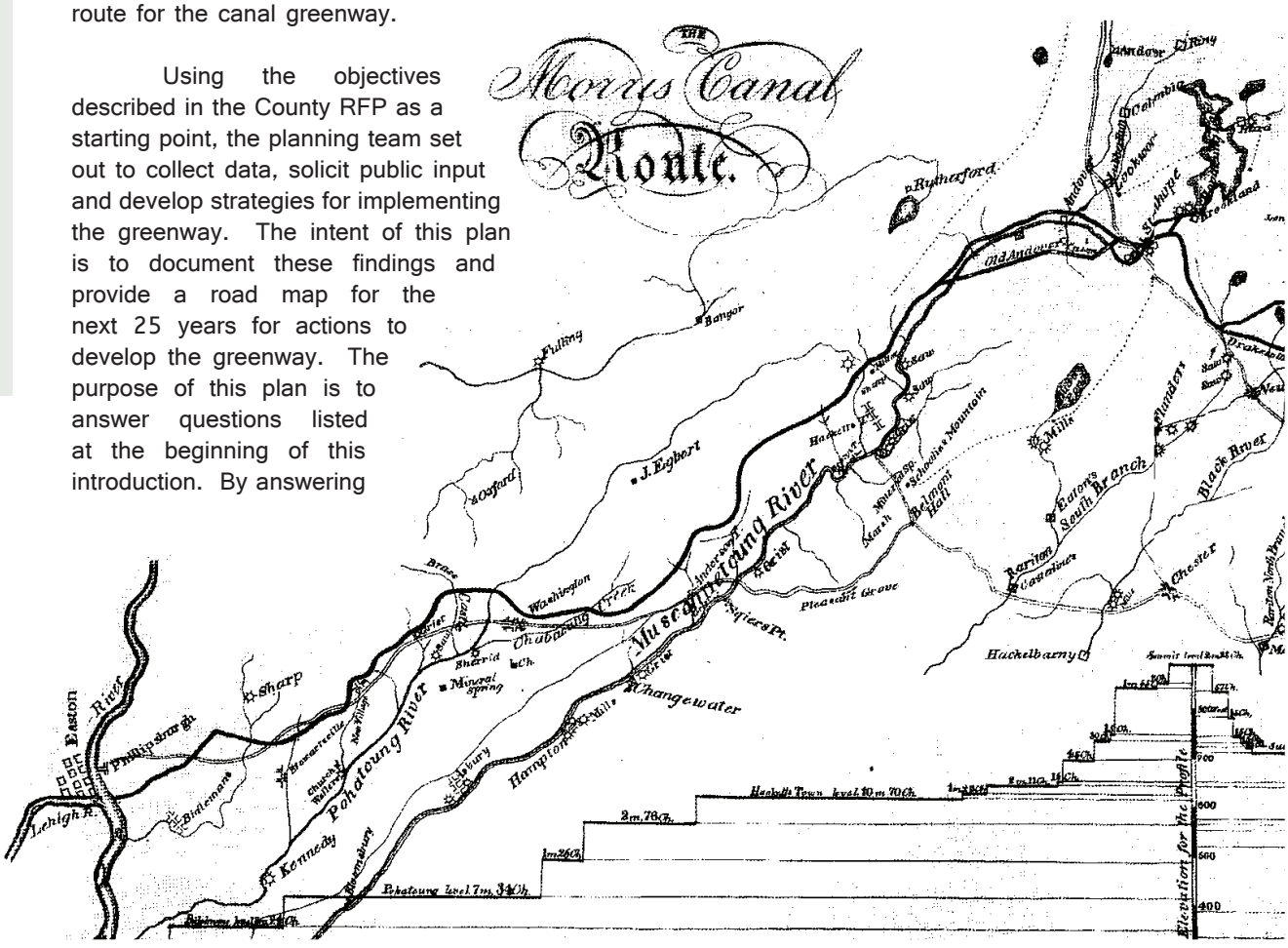
The Canal Arch in Phillipsburg represents the historic beginning point of the Morris Canal.
Photo courtesy New Jersey State Archives

Purpose of this Plan

By resolution in 2007, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders expressed its desire to develop a 25-Year Action Plan for the Morris Canal Greenway. "The Board recognized that a course of action needs to be prepared to evaluate the vision for the Morris Canal Greenway and prepare a plan that will establish goals and milestones, propose projects necessary to meet the goals, define the strategies and methods to be employed, project the costs and the funding sources, propose the organizational structure and interrelationships of public and private entities needed to meet the vision, and project the economic and public benefits that will be realized."[1] The board also recognized that the Morris Canal Greenway had the potential to become a major tourist attraction in Warren County and serve as a regional recreational amenity.

Warren County Planning Department developed an RFP or request for proposals to develop a vision plan for the Morris Canal Greenway in 2010. Langan Engineering kicked-off the project in May of 2011 and began developing the vision plan that you are reading, here. The 12 month process included the collection of data and documentation of field conditions, public outreach and participation and consultation with various constituent groups with particular interest in canal history, the development and refinement of the plan objectives and the identification of a preliminary route for the canal greenway.

Using the objectives described in the County RFP as a starting point, the planning team set out to collect data, solicit public input and develop strategies for implementing the greenway. The intent of this plan is to document these findings and provide a road map for the next 25 years for actions to develop the greenway. The purpose of this plan is to answer questions listed at the beginning of this introduction. By answering

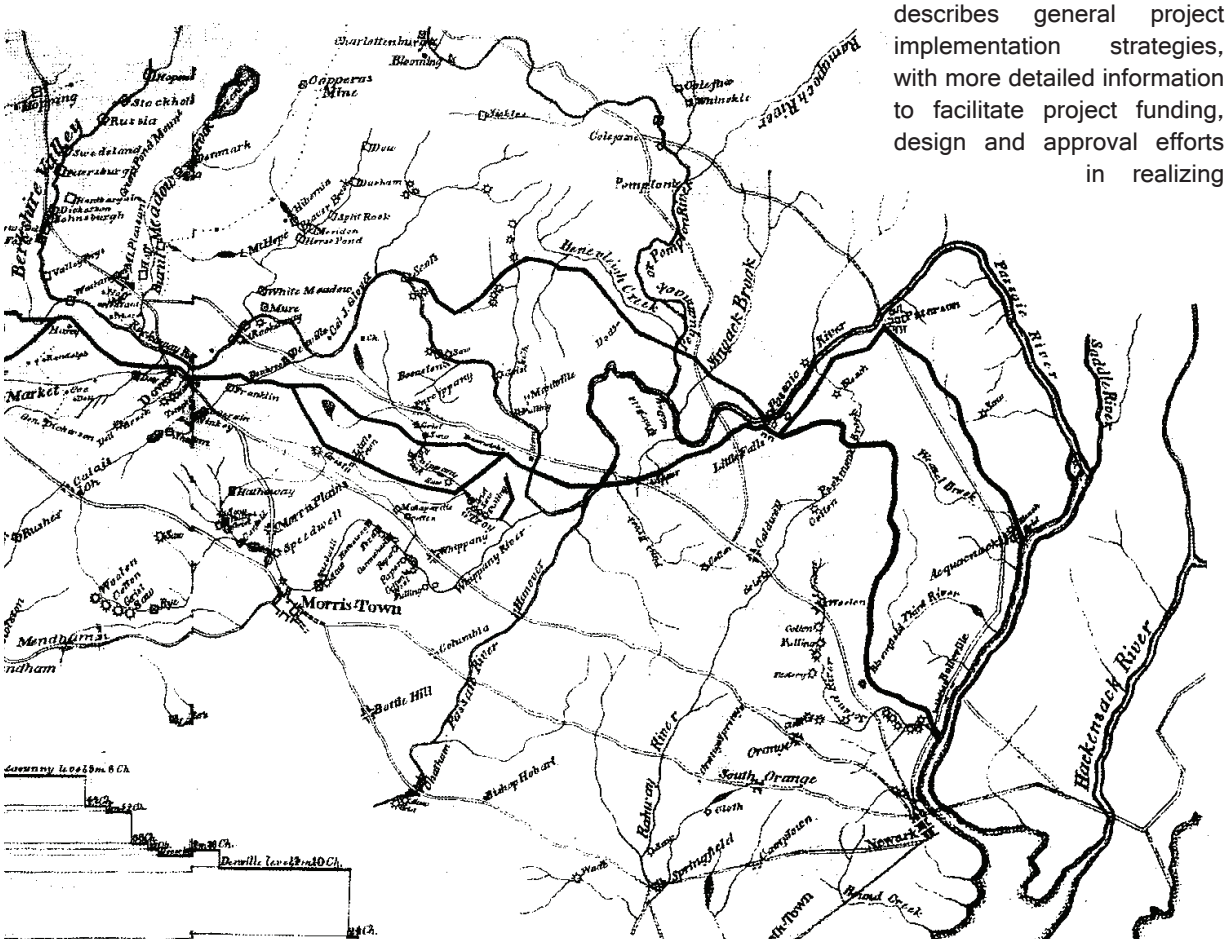


[1] Warren County, Resolution 603-07: Resolution to Develop a Twenty-Five Year Action Plan for the Morris Canal

these questions, the plan will continue the current efforts to establish a greenway and multi-use trail linking major parts of Warren County. Carrying out the plan will preserve a valuable historic resource and foster public interest in the Morris Canal. It will provide recreational opportunities for a large audience and guidance for land-use decisions. The plan will also celebrate the rich history of the Morris Canal.

The final plan describes specific strategies, recommendations and projects intended to guide the next 25 years of development for the Morris Canal Greenway. It prioritizes specific items based on the feasibility, costs and public support. It is a "road map" but not one meant to be static in the sense of a permanent map. Rather, it will be a living document for the County to revisit during the next 25 years as the canal greenway is implemented.

The action plan presented here examines ways to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access along the canal greenway while promoting historic awareness. The County envisions that the historic canal route will be followed wherever possible. Alternate routes are identified to bypass inaccessible sections of the canal. Spur routes are identified to access public and private destinations beyond the canal greenway including other trail systems, historic sites and other public attractions. These destinations may also include bus stops and rail stations, residential neighborhoods, business districts, community facilities such as schools, government offices, and other major employment and activity centers. The plan describes general project implementation strategies, with more detailed information to facilitate project funding, design and approval efforts in realizing



Introduction : *Purpose of this Plan*

the completed greenway. When completed, the greenway will be a living reminder of the county's transportation heritage, providing for off-road walking and biking while promoting the economic benefits of cultural and heritage tourism.

A segment of the East Coast Greenway in Princeton, NJ that crosses over Carnegie Lake. The greenway is a work in progress, but already spans over 2500 miles. It aims to form a continuous trail linking cities from Maine to Florida.

To address the action plan objectives, county representatives, in concert with the Morris Canal Technical Advisory Committee, developed the following list of objectives and included them in the RFP to guide the decisions and direction of the plan.

Respond to the county and municipalities' recognition of the need for a contiguous trail system or greenway

Residents have expressed interest in a contiguous public recreational and heritage-focused greenway within Warren County. The absence of such amenities has been documented in the master plans of nearly every municipality through which the Morris Canal passes. Representatives of the public consistently express a desire for a safe route to school and other public facilities that serve both recreational and educational needs. The connection of these disparate canal-related and recreational sites via the canal greenway would begin to fulfill this need. It would also work to improve the continuity of the Canal's educational experience by clarifying the message about the canal's central role in the industrial and transportation history of New Jersey.

Promote eco-tourism and strengthen local economy

The greenway project represents an opportunity to bring tourists to the region and to provide a recreational and educational amenity for residents. Creating an accessible canal trail will create promotional opportunities for businesses, canal-related resources and events. It will also create opportunities for new businesses to focus on the greenway as a unique market niche that did not exist before. The greenway would provide a link between local businesses and amenities, both conceptually and physically, stimulating further cooperation between greenway supporters and business owners. Ultimately, the hope is that by connecting historical sites, recreation opportunities and other amenities for residents and tourists, sections of the Morris Canal Greenway will become a hub of activity, like a town's Main Street, attracting commerce, small businesses and services to an exciting living, working, learning and recreating environment.

Children engaged with a model of a lock

Introduction: *Purpose of this Plan*

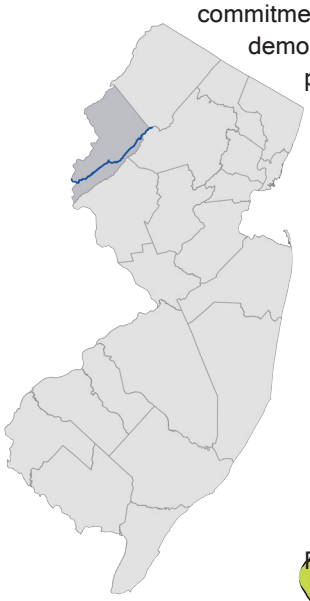
Connect people to the past through interpretation

Making the canal readily accessible and increasing its public visibility can provide a strong cultural link between the past and present, creating a sense of place within the county. Creation of a greenway as a community amenity will entice residents and tourists to return again and again to explore and enjoy the area. Historic sites along the canal could be interpreted in a more meaningful way if they were considered within the context of the canal linking these sites by a greenway trail. Connections to local businesses and amenities will encourage visitation to these important sites, as will expansion of the greenway's use. This audience could be expanded by integrating new technologies for interpretation and by expanding appreciation of the canal's importance to future generations.

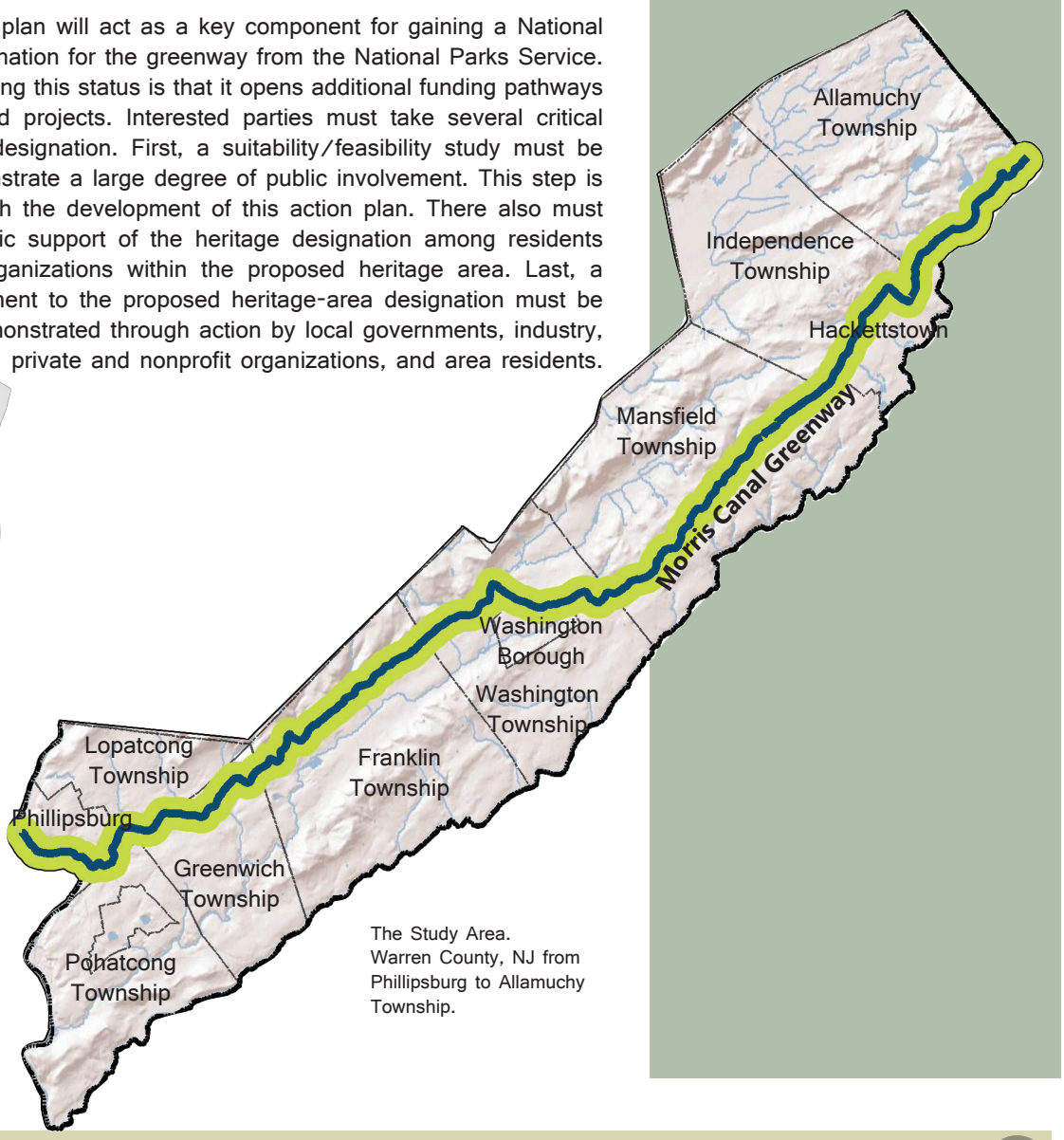
Signage at Bread Lock Park indicating the location of Lock 7 West

Attain National Heritage Corridor

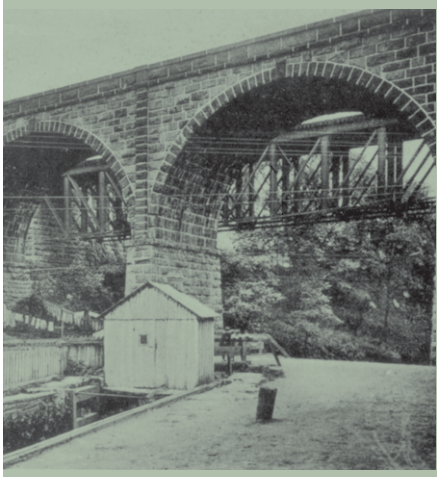
This action plan will act as a key component for gaining a National Heritage Area designation for the greenway from the National Parks Service. The benefit of attaining this status is that it opens additional funding pathways for greenway related projects. Interested parties must take several critical steps to gain this designation. First, a suitability/feasibility study must be conducted to demonstrate a large degree of public involvement. This step is largely complete with the development of this action plan. There also must be widespread public support of the heritage designation among residents and all involved organizations within the proposed heritage area. Last, a commitment to the proposed heritage-area designation must be demonstrated through action by local governments, industry, private and nonprofit organizations, and area residents.



The Morris Canal in Warren County within the context of New Jersey.



The Study Area. Warren County, NJ from Phillipsburg to Allamuchy Township.



A Brief History of the Morris Canal

In 1821, many of the then 24 U.S. states were separated from one another because of poor transportation arteries. Because roads were not always suitable for heavy transportation, hauling by wagon was expensive and slow. In place of roads, canals were able to provide a more viable means of transportation to fuel growth.

In New Jersey, Morristown businessman George P. McCulloch, brought together a group of citizens, including Governor Isaac Williamson, to propose what would become the Morris Canal. Under the direction of Ephraim Beach, a well-known canal engineer, and consultant James Renwick, professor of natural and experimental philosophy at Columbia University, surveys were conducted completing a report recommending that the state build the canal. Although the state legislature had approved the commission and funds to study the feasibility of a canal, in the end the state did not build it. Private investors did. As 1824 came to an end, the legislature passed an act incorporating the Morris Canal and Banking Company to form an artificial waterway capable of navigation between the Passaic and Delaware rivers. Twenty thousand shares of stock raised $2 million in capital — $1 million for building the canal and $1 million for banking privileges. One provision of the charter was that in 99 years the state could take over the canal.

Canal near Port Colden with Plane 6 West in background
Photo courtesy of NJ State Archives

By September 1825, 30 miles were under contract with 700 men digging the canal bed. Construction of the locks and inclined planes began later. In 1826, 1,100 men worked on the canal and construction was divided into sections that were contracted separately. In 1827, work began at Lake Hopatcong, or Great Pond as it was known then. Compared to other canals, the Morris Canal had to do quite a bit of climbing to go from the Delaware River to New York City. From Easton, the canal climbed step by step from one plateau to another and across lakes and rivers until it reached the Lake Hopatcong area, its summit level. From there, it descended to tide level at Newark. Locks overcame small changes in elevations, and inclined planes, used for the first time, overcame changes in elevation greater than 20 feet.

On November 4, 1831, the first trip from Newark to Phillipsburg on the 90-mile canal was completed in about five days. In 1836, an 11.75- mile extension to Jersey City was added, making the main line of the canal 102.15 miles long. When all the navigable waters, including other feeder canals controlled by the canal company were combined, the full waterway covered 109.26 miles. Within this distance were 23 inclined planes and 34 locks consisting of feeder, outlet, tide, guard, and lift locks.

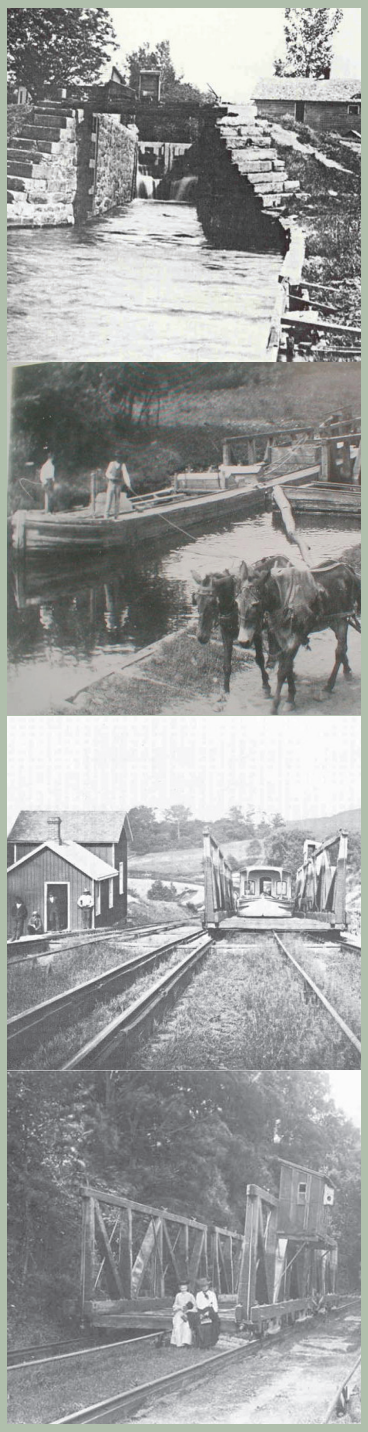
Introduction : *A Brief History*

From 1855 on, Pennsylvania coal was the main commodity carried on the canal. However, grain, wood, cider, vinegar, beer, whiskey, bricks, hay, hides, iron ore, sugar, lumber, manure, lime, and many other goods were also transported. During the decade from 1860 to 1870, canal operations were profitable. And canal business prospered, as did the surrounding region, which saw growth in population and industry.

Unfortunately, the canal became a victim of progress. While canals, including the Morris, enjoyed growth in tonnage, railroads increasingly encroached on canal business. Even though the Morris Canal transferred east-bound shipments of coal from the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad between 1856 and 1870, the maximum of 146,359 tons in 1867 dropped to 80,977 tons the following year and disappeared altogether after 1870. The loss of coal business to the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad amounted to about 34.4% of the entire coal business transacted by the Morris Canal at that time.

It would take another 31 years, though, before the legislature would pass a resolution on March 31, 1903, to investigate and recommend legislation to abandon the canal. As expected, the study commission reported there was no longer an economic reason to keep operating the canal and recommended abandoning it. A plan for abandonment was sent to the legislature in 1905, but no action was taken. In 1912, another commission report said to abandon the canal, but again, the legislature did nothing. In February 1918, the Morris Canal and Banking Company and the Lehigh Valley Railroad filed a bill in court to keep the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission from building the Wanaque Reservoir to supply Newark and nearby cities with water. The canal company contended that water diverted from the Wanaque and Pompton Rivers would render it impossible to operate the canal. The canal company won its case prohibiting diversion of water. However, this decision was unpopular in the eyes of the public and key canal opponents, providing them with the additional support needed to seal the fate of the canal.[2]

On March 12, 1922, the legislature created a commission tasked with transferring the Morris Canal to the state. Eight months later, on November 29, 1922, the state of New Jersey acquired the canal with the exception of property within the town limits of Phillipsburg and Jersey City. In 1924, a bill provided that the Morris Canal and Banking Company continue as a corporation holding the property as trustee for the state, that members of the Board of Conservation and Development be made directors of the corporation. This meant that operation of the canal would end, that Lake Hopatcong, Lake Musconetcong, Cranberry Lake, Bear Pond, Saxton Falls, and Greenwood Lake be retained for public use, and that remaining property be sold.[3]



Photos courtesy of canalsocietynj.org

[2] Transcripts of Testimony in Chancery, Morris Canal and Banking Company v. North Jersey District Water Supply Commission 1920

[3] Lee, James. "Morris Canal – A Brief History." I Dig The Morris Canal

Introduction : *A Brief History*

Why Tell the Morris Canal Story?

The Morris Canal is among 41 places listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Warren County. Each of these places tell stories about the people who lived in and "grew" the county. These historic places tell stories about transportation, architecture, engineering, commerce, politics, community planning, industry, education, religion and more. They tell stories about what challenged and inspired people's lives. Today, they inspire newer generations of historians, artists, engineers, and others seeking to learn from and apply the past to the present by reading about and examining the artifacts we preserve.

"Boy with mules pulling boat," painted by Richard L. Schisler

Today, people who time their fast-paced lives by the minute would be vexed by the slow-moving Morris Canal. People don't know what it was like to live and work in the early 1800s, before trains were introduced, when waterways, including canals, were the transportation highways that helped build America. Today, canals, like other historic sites, are a reminder of that slower past. Boats left dock only when full and moved very slowly. It took five days to travel from Jersey City to Phillibsburg. Canal water sometimes became too low during periods of summer drought, stranding boats, drying the canal prism, and potentially damaging the canal lining so that cracks allowed what little water there was to escape. On the other hand, in winter the water level could be too high. Flooding could wash away embankments, cover locks, and make access difficult. And if the water froze, navigation was over for the season.[4] Life on the Morris Canal was a constant struggle against the elements.

In addition to telling these stories of trial and tribulation, the Morris Canal represents a valuable historical record of canal engineering and the people who built it. Construction and maintenance were accomplished by men and animals following designs dating to Roman times. Canals were and still are complex engineering feats.

"Morris Canal, Inclined Plan 9 West, Port Warren, New Jersey - Morris Canal Boat #795 staring up the inclined plane," painted by Richard L. Schisler

What still sets canals apart today from other civil engineering projects is that every canal has a water budget. Fulfilling the two most important requirements of operating a canal, which were to obtain and maintain an adequate supply of water for the high summit level and to ensure that the canal held water and did not leak - were ongoing engineering issues. Water was lost by leakage and evaporation and when every boat passed through a lock or plane. Because water was generally supplied from the canal's summit level, the summit location and control of the available water sources were some of the most important factors in canal design. Designers of the Morris Canal recognized the importance of a dependable water source and routed the canal to connect to Lake Hopatcong, one of the largest lakes in the state, in order to secure that critical resource.

[4] Notes on Canal History and Engineering http://mysite.du.edu/~jcalvert/tech/canhist.htm

Introduction : *Telling the Story*

Locks, too, were essential for cross-country canals. Without locks, there would never be enough water to allow passage through changes in elevation. The canal locks operated just as they do today wherever boats and ships must move from one level to another such as in the well-known Suez, Erie and Panama canals. A lock consists of a chamber that can be filled or emptied so the water level coincides with either the lower or higher water levels in the canal on either end of the lock.

What distinguished the Morris Canal from other canals such as the Delaware and Lehigh canals in Pennsylvania was the use of inclined planes, which were designed to overcome changes in elevation that could not be achieved efficiently by locks alone. Instead of using water to raise or lower a boat in a lock, boats were loaded onto wheeled cradles or "trucks" that were then winched (by cable) out of the water, up an inclined plane, and over the plane's crest before being lowered down a short incline into the next canal level. When boats travelled in the opposite direction, the process was reversed. At first, power for hauling and lowering boats was supplied by water wheels, but these were later replaced by water-powered turbines.[5]

Visitors enjoy a tour of Bread Lock Park

Looking up the tail race towards the Scotch turbine at Plane 9 West

The proximity of the Morris Canal to other historic resources in Warren County - such as Shippen Manor, the village of Hope, and the historic districts in Hackettstown - should be realized as a significant and unique resource for the heritage tourist. For many preservationists and heritage tourists, preserving artifacts and structures is justified in its own right, but many Warren County residents and the general public do not see the value of spending tax dollars on preservation of the canal. Despite best efforts to

[5] http://www.catskillarchive.com/rrextra/abnjmc.Html

Select Canal Related Terms

Aqueduct: a conduit or artificial channel for conveying water.

Aqueduct bridge: a structure that carries a canal over a river, stream, or valley.

Berm: a side bank of a canal, also known as the heelpath.

Berm side: the bank of a canal opposite the tow line.

Culvert: a traverse drain or other conduit channeling water; feed culverts are hollow spaces, or tunnels, within lock walls through which water for filling or "feeding" a lock and for emptying it is conducted.

Dam: a structure built across a watercourse to maintain water levels and confine and keep back flowing water (a fixed dam is a permanent structure without movable parts; a movable dam is one which can be set up or thrown down as desired).

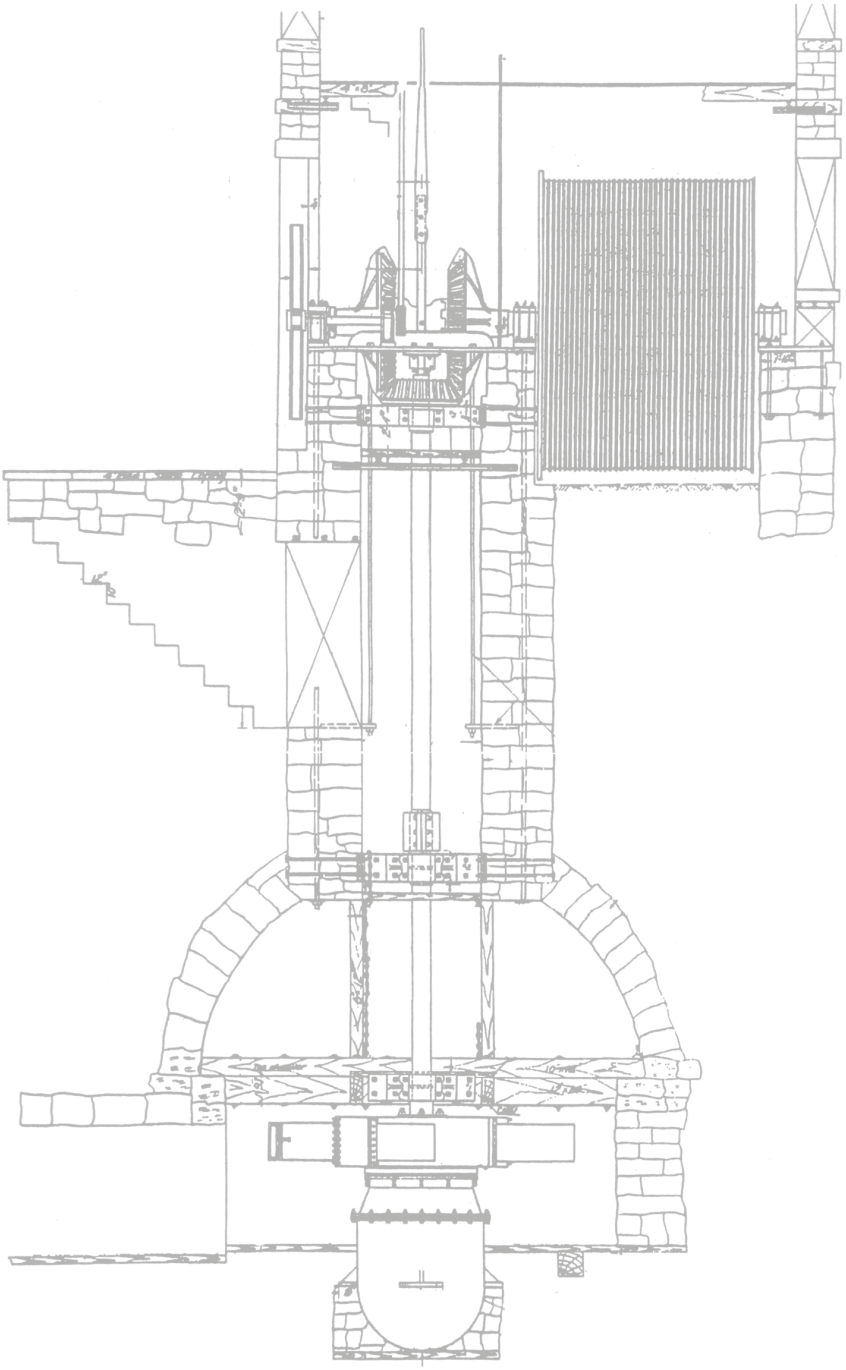
Feeder: diverted stream water used to supply water to maintaining the canal level.

Guard lock: a lock at the mouth of a basin or a lock for preventing flooding, usually where the canal joins a natural water course.

Hydrograph: a chart recording the changing level of water, as in a reservoir, stream, or river.

Incline plane: a device developed to haul canal boats over hills. The boat was strapped to a rail car and pulled over the hill on tracks.

develop quantitative measures of preservation benefits, projects like the canal greenway are challenging to quantify in this way. Historic preservation involves much more than saving and restoring old buildings and historic sites; externalities such as economic, cultural, environmental, and educational benefits of historic preservation all play a significant role. Uncovering the potential positive impacts of the canal greenway can help develop public support ensuring that they remain a significant part of their community while satisfying one of the goals of this 25-year Action Plan.



Historic engineering drawing of the Scotch turbine at Plane 9 West

Current State of the Canal and its Resources

Port Colden Manor is a historic canal related structure in need of significant repair.

Significant portions of the historic course of the Morris Canal through Warren County remain intact. Additionally, there have been many recent endeavors to restore key historic sites because of great interest and enthusiasm in the county. Many of the restored historical features enjoy extensive visitation during spring and fall tours conducted by the Morris Canal Committee. Such features include Saxton Falls, Florence Kuipers Memorial Park in Hackettstown, Port Murray Boat Basin, Bread Lock Park and Inclined Plane 9W. Even with the preservation and promotion efforts of these key features, the status of much of the remaining canal resources remains in flux. Select portions of the canal and towpath have been filled or destroyed in favor of farmland. Other parts were lost to urban in-fill and suburban development. But for the encroachment of surrounding woodlands, other parts exist much in the way they did when the canal was active. In fact, parts of the canal are still watered, some serving as stormwater management features, making them viable candidates for pressing them back into greenway use.

Similar varying condition can be seen in canal structures. Many of the locks and inclined planes that once allowed the Morris Canal to overcome more than 900 feet of elevation change were "made safe", between 1923 and 1929[6] during the canal's final decommissioning. These actions typically included destruction and sometimes burial for the safety of surrounding communities. Destruction of some structures, such as Plane 7W along

[6] Maps of the Morris Canal, Western Division: Phillipsburg-Lake Hopatcong, Gary E. Kleinedler, page 4

Land line: that part of a canal which is an artificial channel--not in a river, lake or natural water bed.

Lift: the distance or extent to which water in a canal lock rises.

Lock: an enclosure with gates at each end used in raising or lowering boats passing from one level to another.

Lockage: the passage of a boat or boats through a lock; the raising or lowering of a boat from one water level to another.

Prism: the volume of water in a stream or waterway in motion considered as a shape of chosen length in conjunction with the cross section of the channel.

Spillway: a passageway for surplus water from a canal or reservoir.

Summit level: the highest level or elevation reached.

Towpath: path along one bank of a canal where teams of men and animals worked to pull boats.

Waste weir: an overflow, or weir, for the escape of surplus water from a canal or reservoir; a dam-like structure along the canal berm with openings to control the water level.

http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/research/res_topics_trans_recrds_glos.shtml

the aptly named Plane Hill Road in Washington Township, left only subtle evidence of their existence. Plane 6W, was partially destroyed because it was in the path of subsequent quarry operations that have since ceased. Although some structures were destroyed, others survive in some condition similar to what they once were. Lock 7W, the Bread Lock, was buried intact, ready to be unearthed and restored for educational interpretation when funds become available. Nevertheless, some structures such as Plane 9W and Lock 5W at Saxton Falls represent some of the best interpretative resources available today.

The final parts of the canal story lay in the historic and cultural resources related to the canal. The nature of these resources varies greatly. Some canal stores, boat-captain's homesteads and lock tender's homes can still be found along the canal route and are in good condition, including the Plane 9W Tender's House or the old Port Colden brick School. Many of these structures share similarities in architecture and orientation to the canal and will reinforce the canal greenway user experience. Unfortunately, other significant buildings are suffering from years of neglect. Examples include Port Colden Manor, the Campbell House, and the Lock Tender's House for Lock 4W (known as Elsie's Tavern). All of these buildings are in need of immediate attention and stabilization. Sadly, other structures have been removed completely or surviving structures have been repurposed and renovated such that little of their historic value remains.

Lock 4W and Elsie's Tavern
Photo courtesy NJ State Archives

Project Approach and Methodology

The Morris Canal 25-Year Action Plan was developed through a combination of public participation, physical inventory, and analysis techniques. The foundation of the public participation process involved the establishing a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of the members of the Warren County Morris Canal Committee, representatives of the Warren County Planning Department, and other interested individuals. The TAC, with its intimate knowledge of the canal and adjacent communities, provided valuable background information and regular input on the project. Planning began with a kick-off meeting with the TAC to introduce the consultant team and discuss the project goals. The TAC provided the consultant team with a field view of the canal as part of a full-day tour consisting of stops at key features and walks along preserved sections of the canal towpath.

Introduction : *Approach*

TAC Meetings and Public Involvement

Monthly meetings were subsequently held with the TAC throughout the planning process. The initial meetings focused on developing a vision for the 25-Year Action Plan and discussing the opportunities and constraints associated with undertaking such an initiative. Input from the TAC and county planning staff steered the focus of the planning efforts and provided the majority of the guidance in crafting recommendations.

First Stakeholders Meeting in September of 2011

A series of four public outreach sessions were then held using various meeting formats to share the draft vision with the public and solicit additional input. The first session in the series was designed for a stakeholder audience consisting of County and Municipal elected and appointed officials representing the municipalities along the canal and representatives from the key agencies and organizations. A full list of invitees can be found in Appendix C.

These representatives served as a stakeholder committee to provide input early in the planning process and at key stages in developing the plan. The format of the stakeholder committee meeting consisted of a formal presentation of the scope of the 25-Year Action Plan, followed by a question-and-answer period. This meeting was successful in engaging municipal, state and county officials who represented the majority of participants at this event.

The second session in the series was intended to solicit ideas from four specific focus groups: businesses, nonprofit organizations, public schools, and local government, as listed in Table 2-1 . The overlap in representation at the stakeholder committee and focus group meetings was intentional to provide these entities with multiple outlets for providing input on the 25-Year Action Plan. The format of the session consisted of a formal presentation of the project scope followed by a roundtable discussion for each focus group to generate a free-flowing and spontaneous exchange of ideas. While the invitation list for the focus group session was comprehensive, attendance was heavily represented by public school and municipal officials.

A typical segment of the canal prism's at Saxton Falls remains

Shortly following the conclusion of the focus group meetings, the general intent of the plan and the vision were presented at an open house for the public's for review and comment. Participants in the open house where given opportunities to provide input on a series of topics surrounding the

Table 2-1: Focus Group Invitees

Government and Planning Officials

- Warren County Agriculture Development Board
- Morris Canal Committee
- Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners
- Municipal Officials
- Representatives of other Elected Officials
- Planning Boards
- Open Space Committees
- Environmental Commissions

School Officials

- Warren County Community College
- Centenary College Public
- Rutgers University
- Local School Districts and School Boards

Non-profit Groups

- Musconetcong Watershed Association
- Pohatcong Watershed Association
- Skylands Tourism Council
- Canal Society of NJ
- Friends of the NJ Transportation Heritage Center
- Highlands Project
- Youth Corps

vision developed by the TAC. The meeting also incorporated informational displays of the vision and project scope with one-on-one discussions with the project team and TAC members, in addition to two activities for providing anonymous input. One activity required participants to place dots on a map indicating memorable places along the canal; another asked participants to write their thoughts about each element of the draft vision statement. The majority of participants at this event were people who live or used to live along or near the canal, had ancestors who worked on the canal, or who were especially interested in canal history or volunteering with canal preservation projects. Additionally, attending members where given the a chance to provide general feedback on their perspective of the Morris Canal, it's resources and the proposed greenway.

In addition to the focus group and stakeholder meetings, an on-line survey was distributed to solicit feedback from all property owners with a portion of the canal on or directly adjacent to their property. The intent of this survey was to judge the level of support for creation of a trail and greenway connections. The anonymous survey also allowed land owners to bring forth any concerns they would have should a trail be located near their property. Finally, the survey assessed the desire of a land owner to be involved in future greenway development activities.

The public involvement portion of the 25-year action plan finished with a second public meeting. At this meeting preliminary greenway and trail recommendations where shared those in attendance. The intent of this meeting was to gauge the level of public support for many of the key project strategies developed by the TAC. Members of the public where also given the opportunity for input and feedback on the topic presented, as well as other topics they wished to discuss.

Further detail and the results of the public input portion of the 25-year action plan are provided in the Visioning and Public Process section of this report.

Tail race of Plane 9W

Review of Background Information

A wealth of background information pertaining to the canal, local history and land-use planning was collected in preparation for planning activities and field reconnaissance with the goals of: documenting and evaluating conditions of the canal; defining the limits of the greenway; and developing the recommendations included in this plan. Staff of the Warren County Planning Department provided copious documentation including state, county and municipal planning documents, and plans addressing previous, current and future canal preservation efforts. A full listing of the documents review in preparation of this plan can be found in Appendix A. Review and evaluation of these documents provided a foundation for the remainder of the planning process and helped everyone understand resources and prioritize preservation activities. A particularly important reference was the detailed inventory of canal resources outlined in the 1983 Historic Preservation Survey of the Morris Canal in Warren County, New

Jersey, prepared by Brian H. Morrell and his subsequent publication, Historic Preservation Survey of the Morris Canal in Warren County, New Jersey (1987). These resources served as the basis for an updated survey and assessment of canal and related resources for the 25-Year Action Plan.

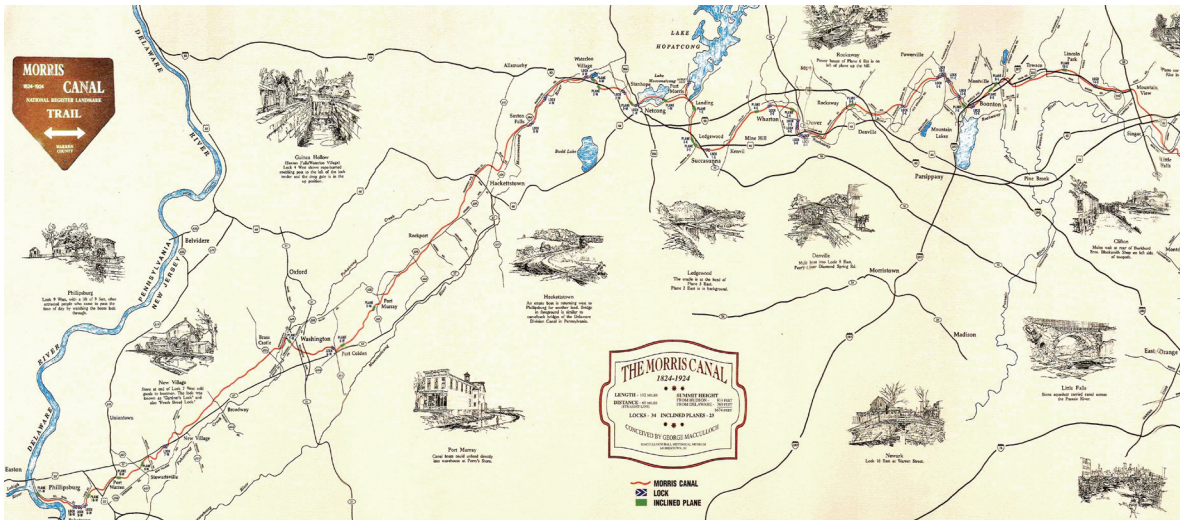
Coinciding with the review of this information, the planning team also reviewed the county's economic and demographic conditions to assess the potential for greenway-related economic development. The economic and demographic examination considered the existing demographics and trends within the municipalities surrounding the Morris Canal with those of other municipalities regionally. This analysis also compared the economic development efforts of other municipalities served by greenways and regional trail networks with the types of businesses potentially served by the Morris Canal Greenway.

The results of the inventory and analysis were used to identify recommendations for preserving, enhancing, interpreting and developing the greenway for a variety of public purposes.

Field View

Given the nature of the 25-Year Action Plan, it was critical for the planning team to spend a significant amount of time familiarizing themselves with the conditions and character of all parts of the greenway. As previously discussed, the project began with a guided tour of selected locations and highlights along the canal within Warren County. This tour began in Phillipsburg and continued along the length of the greenway to Waterloo Village. Along the way, stops include significant historic sites such as Bread Lock Park and Plane 9W. Stops also focused on ongoing and previously completed improvement projects similar to the Strykers Road Improvement Project and several sections of completed greenway trail. The tour served as an important overview of the length of the greenway, providing general context for the remainder of the planning process.

After gaining additional insight on the existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints existing along the greenway and possessing a better understanding of the vision and goals of the TAC, the team set out to develop a better understanding of existing conditions. Another goal of this field view aimed to better evaluate specific trail routing discussed with the TAC. Potential routes were evaluated based on their suitability for providing a safe and enjoyable trail experience; potential connections to historic, civic and commercial resources; current ownership status; and the routes' proximity to the historic route of the canal. The field view was completed over a period of three and a half days and generally moved from Phillipsburg to Allamuchy.



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