

**New Jersey Heritage Tourism Task Force  
Summary of Activities  
August 2006 - December 2009**

**Task Force Formation**

The New Jersey Heritage Tourism Task Force was established through an act of the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey in August 2006. (P.L. 2006, Chapter 60; Senate No. 1069). The act included the following specifications: (Note: The legislation is included at the end of this document.)

- Established the New Jersey Heritage Tourism Task Force for the purpose of providing strategic direction for the promotion of heritage tourism in New Jersey and to create a comprehensive heritage tourism master plan to improve New Jersey's performance in the regional or national heritage tourism marketplace.
- Recommendations in the master plan will include (but not be limited to): 1) improving heritage signage on the state's highways, 2) establishing a local historic marker program to raise awareness of New Jersey's historical resources, 3) improving the efforts of state, county and municipal governmental agencies to focus more significantly on heritage tourism, 4) promoting coordinate between historic sites throughout the state, 5) identifying potential sources of stable funding for the improvement and maintenance of historic sites available for heritage tourism, and 6) establishing criteria for grants to be made from the Historic Preservation License Plate Fund (P.L. 1995, c. 368; C.39:3-27.75)
- The Task Force would initiate and oversee creation of comprehensive inventory of all historic sites that have potential for inclusion in heritage tourism initiatives.
- Current members representing designated state and regional agencies and organizations are:

<b>Task Force Member</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Agency/Organization</b>
<b>Cate Litvak, Chair</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Crossroads of the American Revolution</b>
<b>Leslie Bensley, Vice Chair</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Morris County Visitors Center</b>
<b>Phyllis Oppenheimer</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>NJ Division of Travel and Tourism</b>
<b>John Seitter, Vice Chair</b>	<b>Former President</b>	<b>South Jersey Tourism Corp.</b>
<b>David Cowell</b>		<b>Advocates for NJ History</b>
<b>Amy Cradic</b>	<b>Asst. Commissioner</b>	<b>DEP, Natural &amp; Historic Resources</b>
<b>Sally Lane</b>	<b>Special Asst.</b>	<b>NJDEP (alt. for Amy Cradic)</b>
<b>Dorothy Guzzo</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>NJ Historic Trust</b>
<b>Cindy Bloom-Cronin</b>	<b>Coordinator</b>	<b>NJ Scenic Byways (alt. for DOT Commissioner)</b>
<b>Janice Sellinger</b>	<b>Acting Exec. Director</b>	<b>NJ Public Broadcasting</b>
<b>Mary Bustillo Donohue</b>	<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Historic New Bridge Landing</b>
<b>Carol Herbert</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>NJ State Council on the Arts</b>
<b>Stephen Dilts</b>	<b>Commissioner</b>	<b>Dept. of Transportation</b>
<b>Marc Mappen</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>NJ Historical Commission</b>
<b>Ann Marie Miller</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>ArtPride NJ</b>
<b>Daniel Saunders</b>	<b>Administrator</b>	<b>NJ Historic Preservation Office</b>
<b>Sandra Turner-Barnes Commission</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Camden County Cultural &amp; Heritage</b>
<b>Brian J. Tyrrell</b>	<b>Asst. Professor of Business Studies</b>	<b>The Richard Stockton College of NJ</b>
<b>Nancy Zerbe</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>ARCH2, Inc.</b>
<b>Michael Zuckerman</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts</b>

### **Task Force Activities**

The first meeting of the Task Force was convened on April 24, 2007. Cate Litvak was elected Task Force Chair. Leslie Bensley and John Seitter were elected Vice Chairs. In addition to addressing the organizational and committee structure of the Task Force, the group began initial discussions on the types of resources that would be useful in planning for heritage tourism and discussed the need to consider a hierarchy of importance for developing and promoting visitor ready heritage sites.

On May 17, 2007, the Task Force was officially announced with a press event at the Old Barracks Museum in Trenton. The event was attended by Task Force members and guests, including 100 schoolchildren. Speakers included: Richard Patterson, Director of the Old Barrack Museum; Cate Litvak, Chair of the Task Force; Nina Mitchell Wells, Secretary of State; John S. Watson, Jr., DEP Deputy Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources; Bonnie Watson Coleman, Assembly Majority Leader; and Paul Striddick, representing the DCA Commissioner.

At the business meeting following the media event, several committees were formed: Site Inventory, Signage and Markers, Marketing Promotion, Site Coordination and Networking, and Funding. Committees began meeting and presented research findings and recommended action steps at subsequent meetings in 2008. Committee work addressed a number of issues including:

- Site Inventory – Researched and compiled existing inventories of heritage sites and created a database to serve as the foundation for a statewide inventory.
- Signage and Markers – Supported the statewide Wayfinding Plan and Historic Markers Plan.
- Marketing Promotion – Prepared a list of recommended actions to increase funding, staffing and support for tourism marketing.
- Site Coordination and Networking – Reviewed previous reports and prepared recommendations to facilitate networking among historic sites and related state agencies.
- Funding – Reviewed areas that require funding to support heritage tourism development.

The Task Force began planning for a series of public meetings to solicit input from across the state in the development of heritage tourism in New Jersey. Meetings were held in Trenton, Jersey City and Salem City in the fall of 2007. The meetings provided an opportunity to introduce the concept of developing a statewide heritage tourism plan and to gather initial feedback on what should be included.

In late 2007 and early 2008, work began to prepare a Request for Proposals to hire a consultant to prepare the Heritage Tourism Master Plan.

In early 2009, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Heritage Tourism Program was selected to prepare the Heritage Tourism Master Plan. Activities in 2009 include interviews and an online survey with Task Force members to assess ideas and recommendations for inclusion in the plan. The Task Force also organized and hosted four stakeholder meetings in September in Trenton, Morristown, Burlington City and Atlantic City. More than 100 stakeholders attended the meetings and provided input into the heritage tourism planning process.

The Task Force worked with the consultant team throughout 2009 to provide information and insights in preparation of the Heritage Tourism Master Plan. The Task Force also focused on strategies for an appropriate organizational structure to continue the work of the Task Force and oversee implementation of the plan.

## **Methodology for Development of the New Jersey Heritage Tourism Master Plan**

### **2009-2010 Timeline**

<b>February 24</b>	First Task Force meeting with consultant team (via conference call) - review scope of work and timeline
<b>March/April</b>	Research and write context essay, review all background materials
<b>May/June</b>	Interview Task Force members by phone and online survey
<b>July 10</b>	Second Task Force meeting – present research findings, work session to finalize components of heritage tourism master plan
<b>August 13</b>	Third Task Force meeting – present draft master plan, plan for stakeholder meetings
<b>Sept. 16-17</b>	Stakeholder meetings held in Trenton, Burlington City, Morristown and Atlantic City
<b>November 16</b>	Fourth Task Force meeting – present Heritage Tourism Plan, determine prioritization of strategies and final revisions
<b>January 6, 2010</b>	Executive Summary publication and formatted final report and master plan delivered

### **Overview**

The methodology for developing the New Jersey Heritage Tourism Master Plan was to encompass research of previous efforts and to create a forum for stakeholder participation in shaping a plan that specifies action steps and serves as a resource to advocate for support of heritage tourism development in the state.

The process was guided by the Heritage Tourism Task Force, a 19-member body appointed through legislation by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey (P.I. 2006, C60.) The legislation stated that the Task Force was established “to provide strategic direction for the promotion of heritage tourism in New Jersey and to create a comprehensive heritage tourism master plan for New Jersey.”

In the fall of 2008, the Task Force issued a Request for Proposals for development of the heritage tourism master plan. In January 2009, the Task Force selected a consultant team lead by the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Heritage Tourism Program to undertake the project. The team included Carolyn Brackett, Senior Program Associate, Heritage Tourism Program, National Trust for Historic Preservation (project lead); Amy Webb, Director, Heritage Tourism Program, NTHP; Cheryl Hargrove, President, Hargrove International/The HTC Group, Inc.; Mary Ruffin Hanbury, Principal, Hanbury Preservation Consulting; Howard Green, Public History Partners, and Robert Hartman, Robert Hartman Graphic Design.

## **Steps in Plan Development**

- I. **Research and identification of key factors in plan development** - In the spring of 2009, the consulting team began work on the research phase of the project. Activities included:
  1. **Context essay** - Team member Howard Green (Public History Partners) completed the context essay which provides a concise history of key events and milestones that shaped New Jersey and influenced the nation's development.
  2. **Interpretive Themes** - Five interpretive themes were drafted to guide development and marketing efforts.
  3. **Background research** - The consultant team reviewed all background reports provided by the Task Force to understand previous heritage tourism efforts in New Jersey. Materials reviewed included Task Force meeting minutes from 2007, 2008 and 2009, Task Force committee reports, and reports on the state of tourism in New Jersey, the state's wayfinding plan and historic marker study.
  4. **Inventory** - Inventory collection efforts were reviewed and recommendations were made for increasing efficiency in collection.
  5. **Task Force Interviews** - Team members conducted telephone interviews with Task Force members. Interviews included general questions about the heritage tourism plan and specific questions about the member's subcommittees.
  6. **Online Survey** - An online survey was conducted to gather more feedback from Task Force members.
  7. **Economic Data Analysis** - Available economic impact data on travel in New Jersey was analyzed to attempt to identify the impact of heritage travel in the state.

The research phase allowed the consultants to identify several key factors related to the development and implementation of New Jersey's heritage tourism plan.

- 1) **The Economy** - While the #1 desire stated by Task Force members as an outcome of the heritage tourism plan is *economic impact*, the #1 concern is *the economy*. Budget cuts at the state and local level resulting in staff layoffs, historic site closures, deferred maintenance and limited marketing funds must be taken into consideration as the heritage tourism plan is developed. Stakeholders felt that the difficult economy might make some potential partners more willing to work together.
- 2) **Ownership of the Plan** - The question of ownership of the heritage tourism plan and leadership for implementation is a major issue that needs to be addressed to ensure the implementation of the plan.
- 3) **State and Local Capacity** - The heritage tourism plan will identify short-term activities that can create a track record of success but that do not necessarily require a large financial investment. Mid and long term activities will include options for growth and expansion of New Jersey's heritage tourism activities when additional human and financial resources are available.
- 4) **Community Pride** - A successful heritage tourism plan will include strategies to cultivate community pride so that residents can become advocates for heritage tourism development.

II. **Meeting with Task Force – July 10, 2009** – At the July Task Force meeting, the consultants presented their research findings and identification of key factors. The Task Force took action on several items:

1. **Identification of goals to measure heritage tourism success**

- Engage locals in heritage experiences.
- Increase the visitor experience.
- Increase (and be able to demonstrate) the number of visitors who say heritage was a factor in visiting, and having a good travel experience, in New Jersey.
- Increase local and state revenues because of heritage travel.
- Increase heritage product and experiences (quality and quantity)

2. **Decisions on specific elements of the heritage tourism plan**

- **Directional Signage** – Incorporate the plan being developed by Celebrate New Jersey into the heritage tourism plan.
- **Statewide Marker Program** – Incorporate the statewide marker research report into the heritage tourism plan.
- **Focus State, County and Municipal Agencies on Heritage Tourism** – Identified as a key factor in the success of the plan's implementation.
- **Promote Coordination Among Historic Sites** – Use one of the stakeholder meetings as a forum for all heritage site representatives.
- **Establish Criteria for a Grant Program** – Focus should be on promotional ideas to generate more sales of the Historic Preservation License Plate to provide funding for grants.
- **Identify Funding for Historic Sites** – Other sources of funding should be identified to support historic sites.

3. **Addition of Strategies**

The Task Force agreed that the following strategies should be added to the Heritage Tourism Plan.

- **Marketing Strategies** - Include strategies for branding and image building that can be integrated with state tourism marketing.
- **Local Engagement and Building Community Pride** - Include strategies for engaging New Jersey residents in heritage tourism efforts and for building residents' pride in the history of their state.

III. **Meeting with Task Force, August 13, 2009** – At the August meeting, the consultants presented the draft heritage tourism plan. The Task Force reviewed the following:

1. **Format of the Heritage Tourism Plan** – To include the master plan as outlined in the scope of work and the addition of a Local Community Toolbox which would include resources to assist communities in developing heritage tourism plans.
2. **Guiding Statements** – These included vision and mission statements and five principles which will guide implementation of the heritage tourism plan.
3. **Strategies** – Three overarching strategies were presented along with a series of recommendations for action steps to implement each strategy.

IV. **Stakeholders' Meetings – September 16-17, 2009** – Stakeholders' meetings were held in Trenton, Morristown, Burlington and Atlantic City. The objectives of the meetings were:

- to inform the participants about the plan's recommendations
- to receive feedback on the specific draft recommendations
- to deliver a call to action for the plan's ultimate implementation

Approximately 100 stakeholders from across the state participated in the meetings with representation from Destination Marketing Organizations, historic sites and others.

Consultants presented the recommendations in the heritage tourism plan and solicited feedback from attendees. Participants also ranked the order of priority they placed on implementing specific recommendations. The average percentage rankings from the four meetings are:

- 52 Provide guidance and technical assistance to ensure heritage sites are managed and sustained.
- 42 Adopt funding strategies to support New Jersey heritage sites
- 27 Develop criteria to identify visitor ready heritage sites in the database of New Jersey heritage resources.
- 27 Build a strong network of historic sites through increased and consistent communication with managers, staff, volunteers, boards.
- 25 Implement plans to increase local engagement and build community pride.
- 25 Market to attract new and repeat New Jersey travelers.
- 25 Collaborate to expand and leverage resources for the New Jersey Heritage Tourism Program.
- 18 Increase communications with state, county, and municipal agencies to generate support for heritage tourism.
- 14 Support implementation of New Jersey's Wayfinding Master Plan.
- 13 Create and manage a New Jersey grant program.
- 12 Implement a performance evaluation system.
- 12 Develop a statewide marker program that complements the themes and wayfinding signage.
- 6 Create advocacy pieces to reach target audiences.
- 3 Increase revenues generated from sales of Discover NJ license plates.

V. **Task Force Meeting, October 15, 2009** – At the October meeting, the Task Force focused discussions on strategies for establishing a management entity to implement the heritage tourism master plan. The Task Force approved a motion to recommend creation of an executive order to continue the function of the Task Force through an inter-agency work group with public participation and that the body be housed in the New Jersey Historic Trust and funding through the New Jersey Historic Preservation License Plate Fund. Other actions that were approved were:

1. The Task Force will work through existing agencies and their grant programs which focus on heritage tourism.
2. The Task Force will recommend establishing a new funding source to support development of visitor amenities and enhancements through a capital grant program with the New Jersey Historic Trust.
3. The Task Force will recommend that the state dedicate a staff person for heritage tourism within the New Jersey Office of Travel and Tourism, the New Jersey Historical Commission, the New Jersey Historic Trust, the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry, and the New Jersey Network.

VI. **Meeting with Task Force, November 16, 2009** – At the November meeting, the consultant team presented the final draft of the heritage tourism master plan. The plan included all additions and revisions that were requested by the Task Force following the August meeting. The meeting included:

1. Review of plan strategies and action steps.
2. Review of new or revised plan components.
3. Prioritization of strategies
4. Final requests for revisions or additions to the plan.

VII. **Project Completion** – The following steps were taken to complete the project:

1. Final revisions were made and the heritage tourism master plan was completed.
2. The Task Force met on December 8, 2009 to officially approve and adopt the plan.
3. The executive summary was written and a camera-ready design was created.
4. The final formatted master plan, final report and executive summary were delivered on January 6, 2010.



