



# Special Initiative

## Cultural Landscapes Special Initiative

The New Jersey Historic Trust seeks to enhance representation and involvement in the identification, preservation, and interpretation of cultural landscapes. The Trust encourages applications that propose efforts directly on physical landscapes that reflect diverse cultural, historical, and ecological characteristics.

Cultural landscapes as defined by the National Parks Service are landscapes that have significance in American history and authenticity to a historic time period. The components of cultural landscapes include human-modified ecosystems such as forests, prairies, rivers and shores; as well as constructed works, such as mounds, terraces, structures, gardens, farm steads and other modified landscape features. These cultural landscapes encompass a wide range of features and stories, and their needs are as varied as the landscapes themselves. The goal of this initiative is to address the physical features of landscapes using any of the activities eligible for the Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund grant program (preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction). Cultural landscapes can be defined:

1. **Designed Landscapes:** These are landscapes that were intentionally created by human design. Examples include formal gardens, parks, and estates.
2. **Vernacular Landscapes:** These landscapes evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped them. They reflect the everyday lives, traditions, uses and practices at a site/community. Examples include agricultural landscapes, rural villages, and industrial complexes.
3. **Historic Sites:** This type includes landscapes significant for their association with historic events or activities. Battlefields and locations of significant events fall into this category.
4. **Ethnographic Landscapes:** These landscapes contain natural and cultural resources that are significant to a specific group of people. They often include sacred sites and areas used for traditional cultural practices.

To be considered for this special initiative, the scope of the proposed project must directly investigate; document; identify; assess; and/or physically preserve, restore, rehabilitate or reconstruct (if appropriate) the landscape associated with a specific historic resource. Planning projects should research and document the evolution and character defining features of a landscape as well as evaluate the significance and integrity of the landscape to help guide future treatments and preservation efforts at the historic site.

For more information, please contact the New Jersey Historic Trust at (609) 984-0473

## Project Areas

- **Identification & Evaluation:** Conduct research and investigations, perhaps including archaeological investigations, to identify and inventory existing conditions and landscape features. Evaluate significance and integrity of landscapes and landscape features as well as recommending appropriate landscape treatments. Historic Site Management grants to help fund the preparation of: New Jersey or National Register of Historic Places nominations of significant landscapes, Historic Site Management Plans, Cultural Landscape Reports, Historic Viewshed Management Plans etc.
- **Interpretation:** Projects that involve identification, detailed documentation, and research of cultural landscapes showing their evolution and uncovering or highlighting the diverse narratives associated with the historic site. Heritage Tourism projects that elevate or re-examine landscapes within its historic context.
- **Capital Investments:** Understanding the historic landscape features when proposing restoration of or physical changes to the landscape or historic site such as providing ADA accessible paths or making additions to existing buildings. Restorations of the landscape or viewsheds such as removing inappropriate fencing or restoring overgrown plantings.
- **Exhibit & Programming:** Development of interpretive materials and programs that illuminate the cultural and historical significance of landscapes, and the historic use of the landscapes within a historic site.

## Examples

The following New Jersey sites have recently engaged in capital improvement and historic site management activities that relate to cultural landscapes:

### Historic Site Management (plans):

**Craftsman Farms, Parsippany-Troy Hills, Morris County** - Craftsman Farms, built by Gustav Stickley between 1908 and 1917, is a National Historic Landmark of the American Arts and Crafts movement. Initially intended as a school and farm for boys, it now showcases Stickley's architectural and design vision, with the Log House becoming the family home. The 30-acre site includes nine of the original eleven buildings, such as the Log House, cottages, and farm structures. The Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms received a 2025 grant to prepare a historic site master plan (including archaeological investigations) that will identify landscape features and consider the historic buildings within its historic landscape.

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*Princeton Battlefield*



*Washington Crossing State Park*



*Navesink (Twin Lights) Lighthouse*

## **Princeton Battlefield, Princeton, Mercer County -Princeton**

Battlefield, now a National Historic Landmark and New Jersey state park, was a pivotal site of the American Revolution, where General George Washington's forces defeated the British on January 3, 1777. This victory demonstrated the capability of Washington's amateur army and changed the war's course. In 2023, the American Battlefield Trust received a grant for an archaeological survey to enhance understanding of the site's historic features and guide future restoration and visitor amenities.

### *Capital Preservation:*

## **Washington Crossing State Park, Titusville, Mercer County -**

Washington Crossing State Park marks General George Washington's historic 1776 Christmas night crossing of the icy Delaware River, leading to a crucial victory over Hessian forces in Trenton. The 1,200-acre park includes a Visitor Center, Nature Center, Johnson Ferry House, and the George Washington Memorial Arboretum, which was dedicated in 1931. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1971, the park is also listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. In 2025, a capital grant was awarded for the rehabilitation of the Arboretum, enhancing its path network and restoring trees, shrubs, and signage.

## **Navesink (Twin Lights) Lighthouse, Highlands, Monmouth County -**

The Navesink Twin Lights, a National Historic Landmark, has a history of light keeping dating back to the Revolutionary War, with significant developments such as the first use of Fresnel lenses in 1841 and the first electric generator for lighthouse illumination in 1898. The site also hosted the first Marconi wireless telegraph in 1899. After being decommissioned by the Coast Guard in 1949, it was transferred to Highlands Borough and then to the State of New Jersey in 1962. A capital grant was awarded for viewshed restoration, including plant management and fencing installation.