



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
news releases

January 11, 2017

DEP PRESERVES IMPORTANT SITE NEAR PATERSON GREAT FALLS

Green Acres Program Acquires Parcel Above National Historic Site

TRENTON - Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin today announced that the Green Acres Program has purchased a tract of land near the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park to preserve the viewshed and support visitation to this important landmark.

The 8.5-acre site sits upon a dramatic ridge that rises more than 100 feet above the Passaic River, and offers an excellent view of Paterson's Historic District below and the New York City skyline in the distance.

The property is adjacent to Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park; partially within the National Historic Landmark district, and adjacent to the Great Falls of Paterson-Garret Mountain National Natural Monument. Preservation of this property provides the opportunity for an expanded trail system, historic interpretation and other park amenities.

"Preserving this land is very important to enhancing the Paterson Great Falls Historical Park and preserving another aspect of the site's important heritage," Commissioner Martin said. "The preservation of this beautiful landscape would not be possible if not for the shared vision of all the partners in this project and their commitment to preservation of this land. The Christie Administration remains committed to preserving historic sites that are important to people in the state and in cities like Paterson."

"The site offers the possibility of creating a sequence of overlooks, landscapes, pathways and features that bring together the richness of a spectacular natural history and ecology; an aspect of our industrial and Native American heritage, and current day community and tourist interests, including recreation, interaction and events," said Paterson Mayor Jose "Joey" Torres. "We envision a design strategy that will work to amplify existing assets and will enhance the natural beauty of the site."

The Green Acres Program purchased the property from Paterson Renewal Associates, LLC for \$5.7 million. The land, once slated for a housing development, contains a parking lot that will be used to support public access.

DEP will partner with the City of Paterson regarding improvements to and management of the property. "We're very pleased that this parcel is going to be preserved as open space," said Kate Marcopul, Administrator of the State's Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). "This action will preserve the integrity of the setting and the character of Paterson's nationally significant historic sites, so that current and future generations of New Jerseyans can better understand its importance to our history."

The Falls area has a long and storied history linked closely with not only the beginning of the United States but with a number of the key people who made the new nation a reality. In 1778, Alexander Hamilton first visited the Falls and was impressed by its potential for industry. Later, after Hamilton took the position as the nation's first Secretary of Treasury, he selected the area as the site of the nation's first planned industrial city, which he called a "national manufactory."

In 1791, Secretary Hamilton helped found the Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufactures (S.U.M.), a state-chartered private corporation to fulfill this vision. Paterson itself was founded by the Society that same year and it chose to name the new town after New Jersey Governor William Paterson - a signer of the Constitution and, later, an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court - in appreciation of his efforts to promote the society.

"Preserving this property is a win for New Jersey for both ecological and historic reasons," said Rich Boornazian, Assistant Commissioner of Natural and Historic Resources. "New Jerseyans and visitors to our state will now have additional space to see this geologic marvel and to further learn how it inspired leaders to build Paterson and a new industrial foundation for a young nation."