

ABBOTT MARSHLANDS



ABBOTT MARSHLANDS COUNCIL

COOPERATIVE STEWARDSHIP PLAN

2024

ABBOTT MARSHLANDS COOPERATIVE STEWARDSHIP PLAN 2024

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“Poaetquissings Creek is by nature provided with everything that man can desire:...”

A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden by Thomas Campanius Holm

No one is certain exactly which of the Delaware River tributaries was memorialized as Poaetquissings Creek in one of the earliest accounts of the Delaware Valley by European visitors, but based on the description of the natural abundance of the area, Charles Conrad Abbott was convinced that Poaetquissings was here, in what is known today as the Abbott Marshlands. And there is certainly reason for his claim. In spite of many man-made intrusions into the area, much of that natural richness remains. The Abbott Marshlands Cooperative Stewardship Council exists to ensure the preservation and enhancement of this important natural and cultural area.

Background

Location

The Abbott Marshlands are situated in Lenapehoking, the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Lenape. We pay respect to the Lenape, past present and future, and to their continuing cultural heritage and connection with this homeland.

The Delaware River's northernmost tidal freshwater wetland is located at the western edge of central New Jersey just below the head of the tide in Trenton, NJ. The juxtaposition of tides and fresh water is a relatively unusual one, and it is one of the reasons for the amazing biological productivity of the area. Situated in a densely populated area of central New Jersey, the marshlands remain an oasis of natural wildness within the urban landscape.

The borders of the Abbott Marshlands cross Mercer and Burlington counties, and include four municipalities: Trenton, Hamilton Township, Bordentown Township, and Bordentown City. While the Marsh was once considered a wasteland, it is now recognized as an oasis of natural wildness in a densely populated urban landscape.

Travel and tourism in the Delaware River region constitute major industries that have led to increased demand for a variety of public access opportunities along the Delaware River. The marshlands have much to offer the casual visitor as well as students of natural history and cultural history.



Significance of the Abbott Marshlands

With its natural and cultural resources, the Abbott Marshlands are a unique urban open space. Within its designated boundaries, the marshlands include approximately 1250 acres of wetlands and 1700 additional adjacent acres of publicly owned uplands; together these provide open space totaling more than 3000 acres. The diverse habitats support over 1,200 species of plants and animals. Birds such as osprey, great blue heron, ducks, geese, and kingfishers thrive in and around its waterways. Bald eagles successfully nest there. The area was important to the earliest Native Americans as long as 13,000 years ago. Present-day visitors to the Marsh can experience this fascinating place on over 11 miles of walking trails as well as canoe / kayak trails.

Overlays of complexity await visitors to the Abbott Marshlands. Scientific interests include examining the varied natural ecosystems and its many inhabitants; studying wetland functions and their value for water quality and flood mitigation; or exploring the amazing productivity of marsh plants that become part of food chains and food webs in the Delaware Bay. Evidence of human footsteps can come from the unexpected presence of a cultivated plant on a woodland trail or from the systematic, archaeological excavation of Lenape settlements at Watson Woods or of Joseph Bonaparte's mansion at Point Breeze.

In recent years, more than 70 scientific articles and book chapters have been published concerning Marsh ecology. These have contributed to our understanding of the value of wetlands, the productivity of tidal freshwater wetlands, as well as the relationships of seeds in the soil to vegetation. Similarly, studies undertaken by archaeologists continue to improve our understanding of the lives of Native Americans, colonists, and Joseph Bonaparte.



The **Tulpehaking Nature Center** (TNC) was opened in 2014 to serve as a gateway to the Abbott Marshlands, highlighting the beauty and diversity of the area. In addition, the TNC is part of the Alliance for Watershed Education of the Delaware River, an initiative of the William Penn Foundation, indicating the significance of the center and of the marshlands in building broad awareness and support for clean water.

In late 2020 a coalition of the State of New Jersey, the City of Bordentown, and D&R Greenway, preserved a 60 acre property in the Abbott Marshlands, Point Breeze, the former home of the of Joseph Bonaparte located near the mouth of the Crosswicks Creek. In 2023, after extensive renovations, D&R Greenway opened the **Discovery Center at Point Breeze** which celebrates the important history of the land.

While many enjoy the marshlands for a wide variety of passive recreational activities, it is also an invaluable resource for education. By coordinating science, math, and other subjects, for example, with local outdoor experiences and by engaging in marsh-based projects, students can connect with nature and become stewards of their communities' natural resources. From a high school student who participated in a field research workshop – *"I learned a great deal about science, and*

also that there is a great place to discover nature only minutes from where I live.” From another: *“I was thankful that we were able to go to the beaver lodge, and to see how the water levels differ on each side of the beaver dam. The experience was one that I will remember for the rest of my life.”* Students (and volunteers) learn about history and nature from hands-on experiences. The rapture of a young person touching a northern water snake, or watching an eel swim in a glass container; the involvement of graduate students exploring how Native Americans might have built a fishing weir on Crosswicks Creek or sieving soil for archaeological indicators at Point Breeze where Joseph Bonaparte once lived, are all important educational experiences.

Ecological Richness

The Abbott Marshlands represent an unsurpassed urban open space in the Delaware Valley. The many types of habitats found in the Marsh make possible the diverse kinds of plants and animals found there. The wetlands communities include those with and without the influence of tides. *Note that the tidal waters of the marsh are freshwater. High and low tides occur twice a day, with a range of more than 6 feet.* Tidally influenced habitats include: tidal rivers and channels; marshes, dominated by non-woody annual and perennial species, where wild rice grows more than 10 feet tall; and virtually impenetrable swamps, with trees and shrubs, as well as herbaceous plants. Another tidal wetland is the 96-acre constructed wetland on Duck Island that compensates for wetland destroyed by highway construction during the 1990s. Non-tidal wetlands include ponds, marshes, swamps, and impoundments caused by beaver. Along Crosswicks Creek, the Delaware River, and islands within the marsh are floodplains that are only inundated during floods. At higher elevations, away from the presence of standing water, along and at the tops of the bluffs, which surround the marsh on the north, east, and south sides, are upland forests. These, too, vary and in some places there are thickets of mountain laurel and rhododendron and magnificent tulip trees more than 3 feet in diameter.



The rich diversity of ecosystems within the marshlands is responsible for the diversity of animal species found here. As such, it has been designated a **New Jersey Natural Heritage Priority Site** by the NJDEP Natural Heritage Program and an **Important Birding Area** by the New Jersey Audubon Society.

Cultural Richness

Native Americans first ventured into this area near the end of the ice age approximately 13,000 years ago. Over the centuries, the Delaware river and surrounding waterways of the marshlands provided a bounty of fish and plant life for the Lenape, and especially during the Middle Woodland Period, the area became an important location for ceremonial gatherings. Extensive evidence exists of the Lenape occupation of the marshlands.

In 1976, because of its significant archeological record, the area was recognized with the federal designation of **The Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark**, NJ's first archaeological National Landmark. It is considered one of the most significant Woodland Indian sites along the east coast of North America. Charles Conrad Abbott, for whom the landmark is named, was an important 19th

century archaeologist and naturalist. His archaeological discoveries led to a controversial theory of the origins of man in North America that was the subject of debate for decades. As a result, many leading archaeologists and geologists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries worked and observed excavations in the marshlands.



The marshlands lie within the boundaries of the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area designated in 2006. Many historical sites, both pre and post revolution, occur in and near the marshlands. These include the oldest remaining house in Mercer County, The Watson House (1708), the revolutionary period Isaac Pearson House (1773), and the late 18th century Abbott-DeCou Mansion (1797). Thomas Farnsworth settled along Crosswicks and Blacks Creeks (1682) on property that Joseph Borden subsequently bought (1724) and laid out as Bordentown. Revolutionary War boats were sunk in Crosswicks Creek to prevent them from falling in the hands of

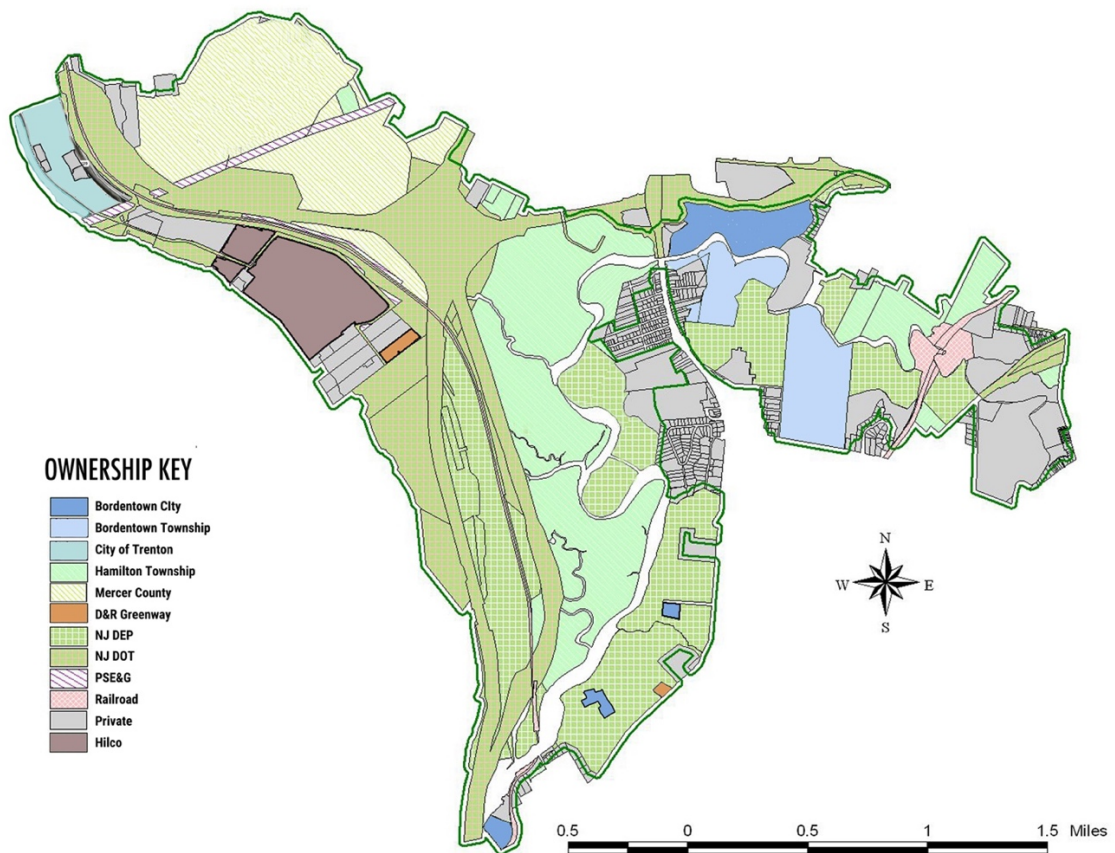
the British. From 1817 – 1839 Joseph Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon and exiled King of Spain, lived at Point Breeze near Bordentown. The Delaware & Raritan Canal and the Camden and Amboy Railroad, built near the west edge of the Marsh in the 1830s, transported passengers and cargo, coming from Philadelphia, to New York City. In the late 1800s, White City Amusement Park was built near what is now known as Spring Lake. Clay from the marsh supported regional brick and pottery factories.

Land Uses and Ownership

With European settlement came wetland reclamation and the building of dikes and dams and the use of some meadows and uplands for agriculture. The 1800s saw the building of the D&R Canal, the railroad, and the beginnings of industry-driven filling of portions of the marsh. In the late 1890s the area near Spring Lake became a popular park and a few years later an amusement park was built on the site. With the 1950s came the construction of power and gas pipelines, and in the 1980s and 1990s highway construction. During this history, the ownership of various parts of the marshlands changed hands many times and today multiple private and public entities are landowners.

Current uses of the land are varied. Municipal lands include, for example, a public park, water supply plant, sewage treatment facility, and preserved open space. Mercer County also operates a public park and the State of New Jersey including NJDEP and NJDOT oversee public parklands as well as roadways, a railroad, a capped landfill, and open space. There are more than 32 municipal and highway storm drains that enter the Marsh and eight brownfields that are potential sources of pollutants to the Marsh.

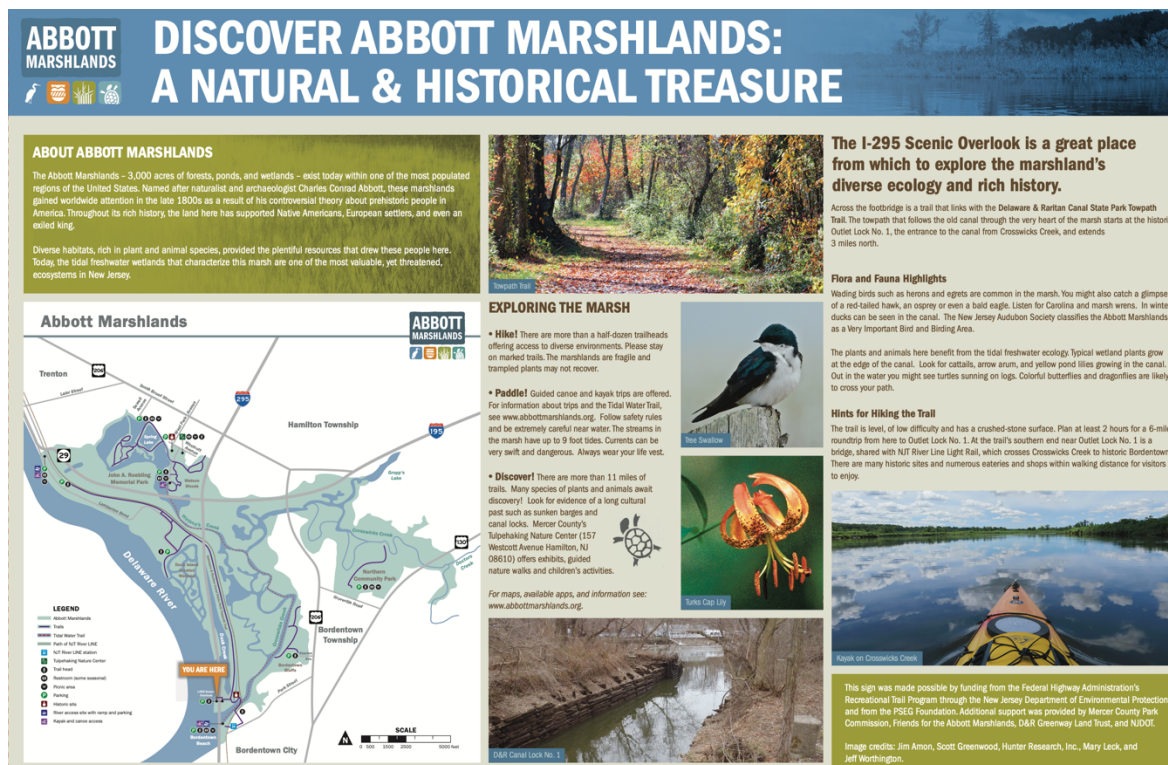
The need for cooperative stewardship is visible in the contrast between the ecological integrity of the Abbott Marshlands and the ownership complexity of the same area as demonstrated in the following maps.



Abbott Marshlands Branding and Identity

After years of inconsistent naming of the marshlands based on different local municipalities that include the marsh, a series of stakeholder meetings resulted the selection of a new name for the entire site, the Abbott Marshlands. The name is taken from the federally designated Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark, which covers a large area of the marshlands. The purpose of the new name and identity was to increase the awareness of the entire site and to emphasize it's unity.

A unique Abbott Marshlands logo was also developed and a branding guideline for signage within the Marshlands. A series of interpretive and wayfinding signs have been created and installed throughout the Marshlands on sites with different landowners. This has been an important element in developing a unified identity for the area.



Purpose of this Stewardship Plan

Prior Management Plans for the Abbott Marshlands were issued in 1999¹ and 2010² and interim update reports were issued in 2013³, 2014⁴, and 2016⁵. A comprehensive update is now necessary because of the many changes that have occurred in recent years. The purposes of this plan are:

- To serve as a guide to supporting and implementing the goals of the Cooperative Stewardship Council in recognizing the resources available from each member organization.
- To provide a central source of information for stakeholders to enhance and support grants and other sources of funding.
- To share information with elected officials, regulatory agencies, governing bodies, businesses and corporations to seek programmatic and civic support.
- To inform, engage, and inspire local residents, neighbors, tourists, schools, researchers, and recreational users to become stewards of the Abbott Marshlands.

Cooperative Stewardship Council

Background

In 1999, under the leadership of D&R Greenway Land Trust, a planning committee of interested parties including state agencies, local municipalities, organizations and concerned citizens produced the *Hamilton/Trenton Marsh Management Plan*. This early plan laid out a series of goals and supported a foundational vision for the marsh that included:

- Protecting critical natural and historic resources
- Preserving valuable wetland functions
- Optimizing the educational potential of the marshlands
- Enhancing recreational opportunities
- Building partnerships for long-term stewardship and management

The *Cooperative Stewardship Plan for the Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh* was issued in 2010. In the interim between the two plans, stakeholders worked to move the vision forward in a variety of ways. Among their significant accomplishments were:

- creation of an active volunteer group in 2002 called Friends for the Marsh, focused on providing leadership in the promotion of the marshlands.
- completion of the D&R Canal State Park towpath trail on Duck Island
- cooperative efforts of Mercer County Park Commission and D&R Greenway Land Trust and to purchase a building to use as a Nature Center for the Marsh
- completion of a collaborative process involving local, state and nonprofit partners and led by Mercer County resulting in the creation of an *Interpretive Plan*⁶ and the *Cultural Resources Technical Document*⁷ as guides to promoting and protecting the natural and cultural resources of the Abbott Marshlands.

In October of 2011, ten organizations signed a formal *Cooperating Stewardship*⁸ agreement to work together on the shared vision and goals for the Marsh and officially created the Marsh Cooperative Stewardship Council. (Council). Since that time, continuing progress in the Marshlands includes:

- The establishment of a new name “Abbott Marshlands”, along with a logo and brand that ties all the land under various ownership together, defining the Abbott Marshlands as a destination.
- The opening of the Tulpehaking Nature Center in 2014, owned and managed by the Mercer County Park Commission. The Nature Center provides education programming celebrating the significance of the Marshland’s rich cultural and diverse environment as well as environmental and cultural education programs for families and people of all ages.
- The adoption of a Brand and Signage Guideline⁹ and the resultant creation and installation of a wayfinding and signage program throughout the marshlands as well as a series of interpretive signs at many public access points.
- The establishment of the Friends for the Abbott Marshlands (formerly Friends for the Marsh) as an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion, protection and preservation of the marshlands.
- The acquisition and preservation of the Point Breeze property through the combined efforts of the State of New Jersey, D&R Greenway Land Trust, and the City of Bordentown.

Purpose of the Cooperative Stewardship Council

The purpose of the Cooperative Stewardship Council is:

- Identify the key Cooperative Stewardship Goals for the Abbott Marshlands supported by the Council members.
- Provide a regular forum for open discussion and coordination on management, maintenance, and enforcement of illegal actions between landowners and other stakeholders, including public agencies, and owners of public access easements.
- Provide appropriate contacts to facilitate communication and cooperation among agencies for handling problems as they arise.
- Support relevant policies and actions taken on behalf of the Abbott Marshlands by signatory partners where appropriate, including common funding goals for grant writing and other fundraising efforts.

After many years of working together the Council recognized that a shift in emphasis was appropriate. Since the Council itself has no personnel dedicated to implementing goals and objectives, it seemed more appropriate for the group to agree on top level goals and to allow each partner to identify the specific activities and resources that are relevant for their organization.



Cooperative Stewardship Goals

The following goals have been identified as critical to the ongoing stewardship of the Abbott Marshlands. Each member of the Cooperative Stewardship Council will facilitate the goals that are most appropriate for their organization's objectives and resources.

Land Protection and Preservation

- Permanently preserve the integrity of the Abbott Marshlands through acquisition and easement. Identify priority land for preservation.

Historic and Cultural Preservation

- Encourage promotion and preservation of the historic and cultural resources of the Abbott Marshlands

Stewardship

- Maintain the integrity of the natural and cultural resources of the Abbott Marshlands through good stewardship practices following resource management guidelines.

Recreation

- Provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the natural and cultural resources of the Abbott Marshlands.

Education

- Promote awareness, education about and respect for the Delaware Watershed and the Abbott Marshlands, and the unique and cultural resources of the freshwater tidal wetlands.

Marsh Identity and Interpretation

- Raise awareness of the national significance of the Abbott Marshlands for a wide range of users, and promote a clear recognizable identity

Public Safety

- Encourage safety and security while supporting appropriate and enjoyable uses of the Abbott Marshlands.

Climate Change

- Monitor and share latest data concerning climate change research specifically as it pertains to the Abbott Marshlands.

Cooperative Stewardship Council Members

The following is a list of current members in the Cooperative Stewardship Council. Below this list, each member has provided a statement describing their organization and the resources which they bring to the Council.

- City of Bordentown
- City of Trenton
- County of Mercer
- D&R Canal Commission
- D&R Greenway Land Trust
- Friends for the Abbott Marshlands
- Hamilton Township
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry, State Park Service
- New Jersey Department of Transportation
- New Jersey Transit
- Township of Bordentown

Resources for Cooperative Stewardship provided by Members

Each member of the Cooperative Stewardship Council has provided a brief introduction to their organization and identified the resources that may be relevant to meeting the Cooperative Stewardship goals directly or in partnership with other Council members.

City of Bordentown

The City of Bordentown is fortunate to have direct access to the natural, historic, and archeological treasure that is the Abbott Marshlands. Direct access to the marshlands is provided within Bordentown City via water to the Crosswicks Creek, as well as via land to the southern end of the D&R Canal State Park, and newly preserved Point Breeze (formerly part of the estate of Joseph Bonaparte) overlooking the Crosswicks Creek.

Portions of the Point Breeze property are owned by the City of Bordentown, the State of NJ, and the D&R Greenway Land Trust. Thus, the city plays an important role with the Abbott Marshlands Council in protecting, preserving, enhancing recreational opportunities, and promoting responsible use for residents and visitors.

Historic and Cultural Preservation:

Bordentown City and its Historical Society maintain, and present historical, archeological, and cultural information related to the Abbott Marshlands, especially regarding the preservation and ongoing study and development of the Point Breeze site.

Stewardship:

Multiple Bordentown City residents participate with the Friends for the Abbott Marshlands including members of the Bordentown City Environmental Commission. These stewards act as a liaison between the Environmental Commission, City Commissioners, and the Friends. This relationship has led to a more coordinated approach to environmental stewardship within the city and the Abbott Marshlands. City and joint activities include cleanups, participation in trail steward programs, invasive species identification and control, and keeping track of erosion along local bluffs locations.

Recreation:

The City of Bordentown provides clean, attractive, and safe access to the Crosswicks Creek water trail from the Public Bordentown Beach and from the private Yapewi Aquatic Club and Bordentown Yacht Club, as well as to Blacks Creek along the city-owned Lime Kiln Alley Park. The city is also working in concert with the State of NJ and the D&R Greenway Land Trust to maintain and enhance the Point Breeze hiking trails and sports accessibility.

Education:

Bordentown's municipal government and the Bordentown Historical Society worked with the D&R Greenway Land Trust to create the "Discovery Center" at Point Breeze. The Center is both a museum and information point in the original, restored Gardener's House, once part of the historic Joseph Bonaparte estate on Point Breeze. The educational center/museum and its historic garden provide unique opportunities for information gathering about the agricultural history, geology, archeology, native American culture, and European and American history of the area. Educational walks and archeological investigations continue at the Point Breeze Park and opportunities exist to expand educational offerings substantially.

Marsh Identity:

The Bordentown City Environmental Commission actively promotes activities held by the Friends for the Abbott Marshlands on its website and social media. Those same events and media also help educate the public about the Abbott Marshlands and its points of access.

Public Safety:

The Bordentown City Police Department, Consolidated Fire Association, and Hope Hose Humane Co. #1 have the general responsibility for public safety within the portions of the Abbott Marshlands contained in the Bordentown City's municipal boundary. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for this area are handled by RWJ Barnabas Health. Public works personnel, and volunteers keep watch over both land and water access to the marshlands and report and/or address any threats to public safety.



City of Trenton

Originally known as the “Trenton Marsh”, the Abbott Marshlands has played a significant role in the history of the Historic City of Trenton. The Abbott Marshlands contains the lower portion of the historic Delaware and Raritan Canal, which contributed substantially to Trenton’s status as an industrial powerhouse where “Trenton Makes, The World Takes” since the early 19th century. With the decline of our historic industries in the mid-20th century, the Abbott Marshlands continued to be an important contributor to Trenton’s legacy by providing recreational fishing, a transportation corridor, and many recreational and cultural amenities.

Historic and Cultural Preservation:

The City of Trenton is an historic city, a critical turning point in the American Revolution, and an industrial powerhouse since the early 19th century. Historic attractions include the Battle Monument and the Old Barracks. The City maintains substantial historic and cultural records and resources, including the Abbott Marshlands, through venues such as the Trenton Historical Society, the Trentoniana Collection of the Trenton Public Library, and the City’s Department of Recreation, Natural Resources and Culture.

Stewardship:

The City of Trenton owns, manages and maintains the City Boat Ramp on Lamberton Road, which provides boat, kayak and canoe access to the Delaware River, the Abbott Marshland’s riverfront and wetlands on Duck Island, and the entrances to Duck Creek and Crosswicks Creek. The boat ramp is a key amenity for boaters, kayakers, canoeists, sport fisherman, naturalists and other recreators.

Recreation:

Recreational amenities in Trenton include the historic, Frederick Law Olmsted-designed Cadwalader Park; the Assunpink Greenway, the D&R Canal Towpath, Waterfront Stadium and the Belvidere and Delaware Greenway. Existing and planned trails link to the Abbott Marshlands through the D&R Canal Towpath.

Marsh Identity:

As the former namesake to marsh, the City of Trenton and its residents understand the long-standing connections of the City to the old “Trenton Marsh”. Our histories and legacies are intertwined.

Public Safety:

The Trenton Police Department has the responsibility for public safety in the area of Lamberton Street, the Delaware River Boat Ramp and other connections to the marsh along the Delaware River. The Trenton Fire Department maintains substantial resources for fire prevention and protection, and rescue (including marine rescue).



County of Mercer

The County of Mercer plays a key role in the Abbott Marshlands by owning and managing John A. Roebling Memorial Park, the Tulpehaking Nature Center, and the Isaac Watson House (1708) that sits on the bluffs of the Marsh in Roebling Park, the oldest house in Mercer County.

Resources available to advance the Cooperative Stewardship goals are described below. In addition, the County as able, has the ability to provide administrative and technical support through the Park Commission and our GIS and Planning Department.

Stewardship:

The Mercer County Park Commission stewardship staff provides good stewardship practices at Roebling Park and is interested in working in a cooperative and collaborative manner to address overall stewardship of the Abbott Marshlands.

Protection and Preservation:

The County has experience working with state and local agencies and nonprofits, specifically NJDEP regulations and permitting, the NJDEP Green Acres program, the State Historic Preservation Office and the NJ Historic Trust on projects related to the Abbott Marshlands. Mercer County is eligible for various funding opportunities through many of these agencies and also manages an Open Space Preservation Program.

Recreation:

Mercer County provides high quality recreation at its Roebling Park facility. Roebling is a diverse cultural and natural landscape, providing kayaking and canoeing, hiking trails, fishing, picnic areas, and nature study and photography. An important objective of the County is establishing pedestrian connections within the Abbott Marshlands to the City of Trenton and the State D&R Canal towpath.

Education:

The Mercer County Tulpehaking Nature Center (TNC) at Roebling Park provides environmental and cultural education programming celebrating the significance of the Marshland's rich cultural and diverse environment for families and people of all ages. The Tulpehaking Nature Center serves as a "Gateway to the Abbott Marshlands" and is currently developing Exhibit Space highlighting the ecological and cultural richness of the area.

Marsh Identity:

Mercer County continues to promote the Abbott Marshlands brand and identity in signage, social media, outreach and educational programming. The County also strongly encourages the Council partners to promote and utilize the Abbott Marshlands Brand and Logo.

Public Safety:

The Mercer County Park Commission provides rangers and staff support to meet the Public Safety Goal as it pertains to Roebling Park and will work with the council to address common issues of public safety throughout the Abbott Marshlands.



D&R Canal Commission

The Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission's mission is to preserve and protect the environmental, recreational, historic and water supply resources of the Delaware and Raritan Canal and the state park. The "Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Law of 1974" established the historic canal as a state park to preserve its integrity as a critical source of water supply, and as a place of recreation and natural beauty. The Legislature authorized the Commission to perform three major duties:

- *Review and approve, reject or modify any action by the state in the canal park, or any permit for action in the state park;*
- *Undertake planning for the development of the park; and*
- *Prepare and administer a land use regulatory program in designated Review Zones throughout a 450-square-mile watershed around the canal that will protect the park from the harmful impacts of new development in central New Jersey.*



Land Protection and Preservation:

Most of the D&R Canal that is located within the Abbott Marshlands is designated in Review Zone A, as established by administrative regulations. Within this zone, a proposed project of any size is reviewed for its visual, historic and natural quality impact upon the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. The Commission also reviews certain projects for stormwater, stream corridor and traffic impacts.

Historic and Cultural Preservation:

The Commission is responsible for preparing, adopting and implementing a master plan for the physical development of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park; reviewing State and local actions that impact the park to ensure that these actions conform as nearly as possible to the Commission's master plan; and coordinating and supporting activities by citizens' groups to promote and preserve the canal park.

Stewardship:

The Commission's stream corridor protections and easement program have resulted in one of the largest protected riparian corridors in New Jersey. More than 5,000 acres of stream corridor have been preserved, and hundreds of acres of native plant restorations have been undertaken under the Commission's direction to date – an accomplishment attained at no cost to the taxpayer.

Recreation:

The Commission works closely with several program elements in the DEP's Division of State Parks, Forests and Historic Sites, which owns and manages the state park. The Commission coordinates its activities with the New Jersey Water Supply Authority, which operates and maintains the vitally important water transmission complex elements of the canal. The three agencies work together to ensure that the environmental, recreational, historic and water supply resources of the Delaware and Raritan Canal are protected and preserved for future generations of New Jerseyans.

D&R Greenway Land Trust

D&R Greenway Land Trust is a nonprofit, professionally staffed land trust founded in 1989. For over 30 years, D&R Greenway has been preserving land in the communities that contribute to the Abbott Marshlands. On December 18, 2020, D&R Greenway joined with the State of NJ and City of Bordentown to purchase and preserve the 60-acre Point Breeze property in Bordentown City.

Land Protection and Preservation

D&R Greenway owns and manages the Discovery Center at Point Breeze, opening in 2023, and co-manages the State parkland with the City of Bordentown. D&R Greenway's mission to preserve land is ongoing and the nonprofit land trust is available to assist land preservation in the Abbott Marshlands.

Historic and Cultural Preservation

The ca. 1820 Gardener's House at Point Breeze in Bordentown City is the only structure remaining from the 19th century when Joseph Bonaparte, exiled King of Spain, owned the property. D&R Greenway has renovated the house and will open it as the Discovery Center at Point Breeze in 2023. Exhibits include historic and cultural education about the people who have lived on the land from the Lenape to Joseph Bonaparte and subsequent owners of significance, and include the preservation story. D&R Greenway engaged Dr. Richard Veit, historian and archeologist from Monmouth University, in an archeological dig in 2021 to identify cultural areas of interest surrounding the Gardener's House. In 2022, D&R Greenway worked with local volunteers to establish an Historic Garden that grows vegetables and herbs from the Bonaparte era, with produce donated to the food bank in the local community.

Stewardship

As an accredited land trust, D&R Greenway employs best management practices for stewardship of the lands it manages. The organization's staff have expertise in invasive species management, native plants and trail-building. D&R Greenway's Native Plant Nursery is a source for native plants that can be utilized in marsh restoration work.

Recreation

The Discovery Center at Point Breeze includes exhibits on the Abbott Marshlands, and on natural and historic resources. D&R Greenway received a grant from the NJDEP to design and implement trails and educational kiosks on the Point Breeze property; this will be accomplished in coordination with State Parks and the City of Bordentown. Additionally, D&R Greenway operates a kayak program based in Bordentown, NJ. On-the-water education for local community residents and youth on the Delaware River and the Abbott Marshlands is offered in partnership with the nonprofit SPLASH, whose volunteer teachers provide lessons on kayak tours of the Abbott Marshlands.

Education

Our commitment to educating people in ways that connect them to the land and create a conservation ethic to care for the Delaware River and its resources is carried out in D&R Greenway's educational communications and programming at its numerous facilities. D&R Greenway distributes an educational e-newsletter twice weekly that includes education about the Abbott Marshlands and Point Breeze, along with our other mission-focused topics.

Marsh Identity and Interpretation

Preservation of Point Breeze was used by D&R Greenway as a visible opportunity to raise awareness by garnering media attention from the New York Times, the London Times, and additional media both internationally and locally. This coverage referenced the significance of this property as contributing to the Abbott Marshlands and received broad attention.

Public Safety

A safety guide hired by D&R Greenway accompanies all kayak tours in our on-the-water education program. Participants in tours of the Point Breeze property are provided guidance to encourage protection of the property's historic, archeological and natural resources. D&R Greenway carefully monitors its properties to ensure resource protection.

Climate Change

D&R Greenway partnered with Soil Carbon Partners on lands outside of the Abbott Marshlands in central New Jersey to explore management techniques in agriculture and forestry that provide increased results in carbon sequestration. Current experiments are focused on improving the health and growth rate of trees. This program, begun in 2020, is funded with a grant administered by D&R Greenway with implementation by Soil Carbon Partners. Promising initial research data may provide opportunities to benefit the Abbott Marshlands and surrounding lands.

Friends for the Abbott Marshlands

The Friends for the Abbott Marshlands (Friends) is the only organizational member of the Abbott Marshlands Council that does not directly own or manage land and whose sole focus is on the entire Abbott Marshlands. Our mission is to engage the community to inspire an appreciation of the rich ecology, and history of the marshlands, and in so doing to encourage community participation in its preservation and stewardship.

The Friends maintain a website for the Abbott Marshlands (abbottmarshlands.org) as a central repository of information concerning the natural and cultural richness of the marshlands. Visitor information including maps, trail locations and recreation opportunities as well as an active calendar of events taking place within the marshlands. All Council members are invited to submit materials for posting to the Abbott Marshlands website.

Historic and Cultural Preservation:

The Friends maintain information about the Historic and Cultural resources of the marsh on their website and include Cultural and Historic information in their outreach efforts and programming.

Stewardship:

The Friends recruit volunteers to participate in a variety of stewardship activities. These include periodic marsh clean-up events, public stewardship events and a trail steward program that encourages monthly stewardship visits to public trails and reports current conditions to the appropriate trail owners.

Recreation:

The Friends sponsor recreation programs within the Abbott Marshlands and promote passive recreation opportunities on the website and social media.

Education:

The Friends work in partnership with the Tulpehaking Nature Center on their educational efforts in the Abbott Marshlands. They also sponsor their own educational programming as well as provide educational materials on the website.

Marsh Identity:

In addition to the website, the Friends promote the Abbott Marshlands at Community Events and through talks to local community groups.

Public Safety:

The volunteers of the Friends are frequent visitors to the trails of the marshlands and report any threats to public safety to the appropriate land owner.



Hamilton Township

The Township of Hamilton is a large land owner within the Abbott Marshlands, owning and maintaining over 450 acres of (mostly) undeveloped open space/marshlands as well as several active and recreational park properties, including the historic Isaac Pearson house. Township residents also currently enjoy direct access to County facilities such as Spring Lake and Roebling Park from Sewell Avenue and Independence Avenue. The Abbott Farm National Historic district is also within Hamilton Township and extends from the Whitehorse Circle, along South Broad Street to Trenton and then bordered by the Delaware River and Crosswicks Creek – thereby overlapping with the Abbott Marshlands.



Historic and Cultural Preservation:

The Abbott Farm National Historic District is a significant feature within the Township and obviously plays a special role within the Marshlands. The Isaac Pearson House (listed on the National Register of Historic Places and located within the district) was recently approved for a NJ Historic Trust grant for roof restoration, chimney and first floor structural repairs. Hamilton continues to strive to preserve and rehabilitate its valuable cultural and historic resources within the Township, especially within the Abbott Marshlands. We maintain our records and resources through the Hamilton Township Library, its Historic Society with some items of interest displayed at the Abbott House on Kuser Road.

Stewardship:

Hamilton Township maintains several parks in the Abbott Marshlands neighborhood - including Deutzville Park, Bunting Avenue Park, Deutzville Playground, Isaac Pearson House and grounds and McClellan Avenue Park. Hamilton Township continues to be a partner dealing with stewardship issues as they arise in the municipality.

Recreation:

While the Township parks in the area are more passive in nature, active recreation facilities are found within the County's two major sites – Spring Lake and Roebling Park – both accessed through local neighborhoods.

Education:

Hamilton Township residents and public system school students are aware of this vast resource and many elementary have frequented the Tulpehaking Nature Center on field trips. This is a valuable asset to Hamilton to take advantage of.

Marsh Identity:

Hamilton has promoted the marshlands via our Environmental Commission and through public information outreach efforts.

Public Safety:

The Hamilton Township Police Department and the newly consolidated Hamilton Township Fire Department (inclusive of EMS) have the general responsibility for public safety within the portions of the Abbott Marshlands contained in Hamilton Township's municipal boundary.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection – New Jersey State Parks Forests, and Historic Sites

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is a key member and partner of the Abbott Marshlands Council through its stewardship of DEP (State of NJ) acreage located within the Marshlands. This includes protection and interpretation of the natural and cultural resources within DEP lands, while providing safe recreational and educational opportunities. The DEP has assigned management of its acreage and structures within the Marshlands to the NJ State Park Service; specifically, D & R Canal State Park. This park provides direct maintenance, law enforcement, and program support through the work of its paid and volunteer staff.

Additional resources the DEP brings to the Abbott Marshlands Council includes promoting the Council's Mission and programs through DEP's social, electronic, and paper media; support from the regulatory and advisory programs within DEP when needed; and advocacy and support from official "Friends" organizations of the State Park Service/D & R Canal State Park with like-minded goals of protecting the Marshlands. DEP has assigned the Administrator of the State Park Service to serve as its representative on the Council.

Stewardship:

The D & R Canal State Park staff provides good stewardship practices throughout acreage within the Abbott Marshlands assigned to the State Park Service. Park staff collaborates with other programs within DEP as needed to provide technical assistance, notably the State Forest Service, and the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Protection and Preservation:

The State Park Service's law enforcement wing - The State Park Police - provides rules enforcement and safety awareness throughout State owned lands in the Marshlands. The State Park Service also has extensive experience working within the other state agencies including NJDEP regulations and permitting programs, the NJDEP Green Acres program, the State Historic Preservation Office and the NJ Historic Trust on projects related to the Abbott Marshlands. The State Park service is eligible for various funding opportunities through many of these agencies, in addition to the federal Recreation Trails grant program.

Recreation:

The State Park Service collaborates with Marshlands partners to provide high quality interpretive/educational programs within State owned lands within the Marshlands. A recent example is the working Agreement with the D & R Greenway and the City of Bordentown for programs and recreation activities within the new Pointe Breeze acquisition. State Park Service trails (managed by D & R Canal SP staff and volunteers) provide pedestrian connections for recreation into sections of the Abbott Marshlands.

Education:

DEP/State Park Service partners with Abbott Marshlands partners to provide environmental and cultural educational programs. This includes hikes, paddling, and interpretive programs along sections of D & R Canal State Park within the Abbott Marshlands.

Marsh Identity:

DEP/State Park Service promotes the Abbott Marshlands brand and identity in signage, social media, outreach, and educational programming. The DEP/State Park Service also strongly encourages the Council partners to promote and utilize the Abbott Marshlands Brand and Logo.

Public Safety:

New Jersey State Park Police provides professional law enforcement assistance to meet the public safety goals of D & R Canal State Park; including state parklands within the Abbott Marshlands. State Park Police have been the lead investigatory agency on illegal dumping within Abbott Marshlands, working in partnership with local law enforcement agencies on surveillance and prosecution.



New Jersey Department of Transportation

The primary mission of the New Jersey Department of Transportation is to provide a safe, reliable and efficient multi-modal transportation network which serves the mobility needs of residents, commerce and visitors in a manner that promotes economic development and insures environmental responsibility.



NJDOT provides a transportation system that:

- Enhances the quality of life for residents and traveling public
- Achieves consistent progress through focuses investments in keeping infrastructure in a State of Good Repair
- Simulates and sustains smart development and economic growth
- Employs the latest technologies to adapt to changing conditions and environments
- Respects and protects the distinctive and delicate character of the State's natural resources
 - Embraces its role as a customer service organization

NJDOT works to provide "planning, acquisition, engineering, construction, reconstruction, repair, and rehabilitation of the state's transportation system." In addition to the planning, designing, building, and maintaining the roadway from ROW to ROW, NJDOT has the following Community Programs:

- Clean UP NJ
- Local Aid and Economic Development/Grants
- NJFIT – Future in Transportation
- Safe Routes to School
- Scenic Byways
- Transit Village Initiative

Township of Bordentown

The Township of Bordentown is part of the Abbott Marshlands through Northern Community Park and Bordentown Bluffs. Northern Community Park and Bordentown Bluffs are both Township and State property. The Township is the gateway to both parks' interiors. The Township is eager to participate with the Friends for the Abbott Marshlands on all parts of the Marsh that exist in the Township of Bordentown. The Township offers the Friends of the Abbott Marshlands opportunities to participate in Township events and Environmental Commission Meetings.

Historic and Cultural Preservation:

Bordentown Township has a long history with various historic figures including the Bonaparte's. Joseph Bonaparte's estate reached into Northern Community Park. Although the Township's history is not documented as well as the City of Bordentown's, both share a long entwined history before they separated.

Stewardship:

Multiple Township of Bordentown residents participate within the organization of The Friends for the Abbott Marshlands. The Township has offered its services to the Friends and participation within the Stewardship subcommittee of the Friends. Our elected officials at times have participated in invasive species controls and trail repairs. We hope to continue to be a partner in such things in the future.

Recreation:

The Township of Bordentown prides itself on its parks and the amenities within them. This includes hiking trails, fireplaces, fishing, bird watching, and playgrounds.

Education:

Township of Bordentown has sponsored walks on behalf of the Friends with our elected official who happens to be an entomologist. That partnership has educated our residents and residents from the surrounding areas on ecology, entomology, and environmentally friendly practices. The Township offers the Friends opportunities to engage with the public about the Abbott Marshlands at Township events.

Marsh Identity:

The Township of Bordentown has and will continue to use the Friends for the Abbott Marshlands as a guide in creating signage within our Abbott Marshlands areas. The Township is conscious of using the correct name for the Marsh and strives to remove older antiquated names when it can.



Public Safety:

The Township Police Department ensures the public safety and policing of the areas of the Abbott Marshlands as applicable. Bordentown Township is served by two Fire Districts, both of which are available to respond to emergency calls, and the Township is contracted with RWJ Barnabas EMS for emergency services. The Township Public Works also maintains some of the adjacent areas for safety related issues

Acknowledgments and Support

The Abbott Marshlands Council wishes to acknowledge and thank all of the many individuals and organizations that have dedicated their time and energy to the preservation, protection and stewardship of the Abbott Marshlands.

End Notes

- 1 ***Hamilton/Trenton Marsh Management Plan***, 1999
https://abbottmarshlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/1999_Marsh-Plan.pdf
- 2 ***Cooperative Stewardship Plan for the Hamilton – Trenton – Bordentown Marsh, 2010***
https://abbottmarshlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2010_MarshCoopStewardPlan2010.pdf
- 3 ***Abbott Marshlands Stewardship Council Annual Report, 2013***
https://abbottmarshlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2013_CouncilAnnualReport.pdf
- 4 ***Abbott Marshlands Stewardship Council Annual Report, 2013-2014***
https://abbottmarshlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2013-2014_CouncilAnnualReport.pdf
- 5 ***Abbott Marshlands Stewardship Council Annual Report, 2015-2016***
https://abbottmarshlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2015-2016_CouncilAnnualReport.pdf
- 6 ***Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark Interpretive Plan***. Prepared for Mercer County by Jane Clark Chermayeff & Associates, LLC. 2009.
<https://www.mercercounty.org/home/showpublisheddocument/13567/636840024253370000>
- 7 ***The Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark Interpretive Plan. Cultural Resource Technical Document***. Prepared for Mercer County by Hunter Research. 2009.
<https://www.mercercounty.org/home/showpublisheddocument/13565/636840024244000000>
- 8 ***Cooperating Stewardship Agreement for the Abbott Marshlands***. Revised November, 2016.
https://abbottmarshlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/COUNCIL_Cooperating-Stewardship-Agreement_Nov2016-copy.pdf
- 9 ***Abbott Marshlands Brand and Signage Guidelines, Revised May 27, 2014***
https://abbottmarshlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Council_Brand_Signage_Guideline_rev062014-.pdf