



Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail E-Newsletter

Greetings,

In this issue, we highlight Superintendent Steve Sims and Johnny Carawan of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail (WARO) and Ellen Van Karajan, the Executive Director for W3R-US. We are also excited to provide you with an update and information on trail progress.

Superintendent Steve Sims

Welcome to the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail (WARO) quarterly E-Newsletter!

Nine months ago I was honored with the responsibility of being the first superintendent of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail. I am also the superintendent of Valley Forge National Historical Park (NHP) and Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site. Prior to becoming a Superintendent I served in the National Park Service Northeast Regional Office, Independence NHP and at the National Mall and Memorial Parks. Prior to my NPS career I was an engineering consultant and also served in the military as a commissioned Army engineer officer.



I am a graduate of the United States Military Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, a graduate of Norwich University with a Master of Business Administration and a graduate of the University of

Missouri with a Master of Science in Engineering Management. I am a registered Professional Engineer, a Certified Facility Manager and a certified Project Management Professional.

As you can see from my resume, I am not a history major nor an interpretive park service ranger. However, I do share your passion for the Revolutionary War and its critical importance and relevance to our society today. Along with many of you, I too have an ancestor who served in the Revolutionary War. He served at the battles of Brandywine, Germantown and King's Mountain. He was even at the Valley Forge encampment and served on General Washington's Life Guard.

As one of 419 units within our national park system, WARO holds the special purpose of preserving, protecting and interpreting the routes taken by the allied American and French troops from Newport, Rhode Island to Yorktown, Virginia. We commemorate the critical French-American alliance and the victory over British Army at the siege of Yorktown, Virginia.

The National Park Service is fortunate to have W3R who has been advocating for the Trail for over 20 years. I want to thank W3R for your steadfast dedication and passion for your important work to establish the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail. In partnership, the National Park Service and W3R can better achieve the goals and purpose of this critical time event in the history of our nation.

I look forward to getting to know each of you and serving the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail.

Trail Administrator

I am honored to serve as WARO's new trail administrator. The military, logistical and cultural significance of this Trail is without question. It highlights a pivotal point in the American Revolutionary War and the routes used by the Continental Army under the command of George Washington and the Expédition Particulière under the command of Jean-Baptiste de Rochambeau during their 1781 march from Newport, Rhode Island, to Yorktown, Virginia. Without the assistance of thousands of French soldiers and sailors, many of whom gave their lives, the outcome of the war could have been different. Today the route includes many



historic sites and scenic byways that are open to the public and important to explaining this key part of French and American history. I am excited to be here and to be a part of helping to preserve and interpret this important part of history.

For the past 17 years, I have had the privilege of working for the National Park Service. I am coming to WARO from Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA). Prior to DEWA, I worked at Colonial National Historical Park and Cape Lookout National Seashore. I have also served on special assignments with Grand Canyon National Park and our Northeast and Southeast Regional Offices.

My background includes a variety of experience from law enforcement, fire and safety, volunteers and partnerships, park operations, and fee and business program management. I also have 19 years of military experience and currently serve as a First Sergeant in the Air Force Reserve. My education includes a Bachelor's of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (Business & Health) from Liberty University and a Master's in Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Sports Management from North Carolina State University.

I concur with Steve that we are fortunate to have W3R as our trail partner. I look forward to working with you and developing a strong and lasting relationship. Our work has a great impact upon the stakeholders along the 700 mile trail corridor and I look forward to working with the W3R leadership and members.

Johnny Carawan

W3R-US Executive Director

Here it is - the first ever issue of a joint newsletter with the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail. We'll be issuing this quarterly from now on to keep our friends, members and partners up to date.



Never have we had so much good news to report! Last October, the National Park Service appointed Steve Sims as our Trail Superintendent. With his West Point and military background, he brings a distinctive sensitivity to

the complexities of our “military” trail. Then in February, Johnny Carawan joined him as our first ever full-time Trail Manager. He brings many years of diverse past Park Service experience and more military acumen - Air Force, in his case. Johnny’s presence means we will have some hands-on guidance and assistance in implementing new programs and interpretive products as we start getting ready for the 250th Anniversary of the War of Independence. Hats off to Johnny, too, for getting this newsletter organized.

More good news: we won’t be working in uncharted territory in our planning efforts anymore because the long-awaited *Foundation Document* for the trail is finally completed. The National Park Service also invited our organization, as managing trail partner, to participate in developing a *Long Range Interpretive Plan* that will really help us tell the amazing stories of the many diverse peoples who played a role in the March to Yorktown. Not that we’re neglecting the water trails – we’ve just begun two projects to start identifying and telling those stories, one funded by the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and the other, by the Florence Gould Foundation. Both projects are designed to help us better define how we can integrate equity, diversity and inclusion into our programs and interpretation and celebrate the French Alliance.

W3R had another red-letter day when the National Park Service funded the first set of way-finding signs bearing the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail logo. As partner, W3R’s job is to get them in the ground at historic properties and sites along the 700-mile trail - all 60 of them, spread through the nine states and District of Columbia. Our state leaders are busy getting permissions and arranging installations as I write this. Maybe you’ve seen one already?

First steps are always good news, and that step has been taken. It takes many years and lots of planning and money to mark a long-distance trail. W3R and our state leaders and groups were also very pleased to be invited to participate in a *Trail Access and Development Assessment* which will help define high potential sites and trail segments. When completed early next year this assessment will give a multi-layered blueprint for marking the trail in a prioritized, systematic way. Delaware is miles ahead of our other states with an engineered signage plan already in place and a long-standing relationship with DelDot, which I salute for its enthusiasm for this trail. And the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area has been moving forward for several years with the installation of an excellent series of interpretive wayside signs.

In the meantime, high school intern, Chris Solan, completed a mobile app for us working with our New Jersey. To see it, download *Izi.Travel* from your app store and type in *Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route New Jersey*. Production was funded through a Partnership for National Trail System grant.

Inspiration and new learning, though intangible, are always cause for celebration. Both were provided me in abundance when the National Park Friends Alliance gave me a scholarship to attend their winter conference in Glacier Park, Montana. I filled an entire marble notebook with new knowledge, methods and ideas to share with the W3R board. I went on to the Partnership for the National Trail System Conference in Vancouver, Washington a few weeks later and was amazed at the range of activities that trail partners --- most of them volunteers --- all across this wonderful country are involved in, the love they bear their trails and, of course, the common threads we share in our challenges.

Speaking of challenges, despite the continuing dedication and many, many accomplishments of our board and state leaders and their working groups, we still don't have enough feet on the ground to realize our emerging vision. Maybe you love this period in history and have skills that you'd like to share and would like to join one of our state groups. Maybe you are looking for a service-learning project for your class, or an internship (unpaid - but the experience you gain will be priceless!). If so, my email is evonkarajan@gmail.com I'd love to hear from you.

In closing, I hope you are enjoying the beauty of this long-awaited spring as much as I am.

Ellen Von Karajan

Trail Update

Summary: Over the past 9 months WARO has made significant progress in the development of foundational planning documents which form the basis for NPS decision making as well as creates a standardized approach for managing the Trail. The documents that were continued and/or completed are detailed below.

NPS staff is committed to preserving, protecting, educating and interpreting the WARO trail. Our efforts target the long term administration of the trail with a priority to establish purposeful and systematic approach to planning

and operations and to capitalize on opportunities for strengthening our partnership and working on common goals with W3R.

Staffing:

- October 1, 2018: Steve Sims assigned as superintendent of Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail (WARO).
- February 15, 2019: Johnny Carawan assigned as interim Trail Administrator and as of June will serve as the permanent Trail Administrator.
- Community Assistance Fellow (CAF): A recruitment package for a 47 week graduate student is underway. Exact start date is TBD. The CAF will assist Johnny in the administration of the Trail by forging relationships with communities and partners along the route.

Foundation Document: A foundation document provides basic guidance for park planning and management decisions. Every unit of the national park system has been directed to have a foundational document and WARO's was finalized and approved in February 2019.

The core components of a foundation document include a brief description of the Trail as well as the Trail's purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, other important resources and values, interpretive themes and an assessment of planning and data needs. The assessment provides a focus for Trail planning activities and establishes a baseline from which planning documents are developed.

The foundation document aids park managers and staff with essential information that is necessary for park management to consider when determining future planning efforts, outlining key planning issues, and protecting resources and values that are integral to trail purpose and identity.

Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP): The WARO LRIP is in its draft-final stage. The last workshop to develop the implementation plan was conducted on April 16th. The LRIP is now in final stages of edits and will soon be merged with relevant graphics and images for the final product.

The LRIP advances planning by describing desired interpretive outcomes and by making recommendations for a variety of personal and non-personal interpretive services and partnerships that will communicate the trail's purpose, significance, and primary stories.

Interpretive themes from the foundation document are repeated in the LRIP and describe the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting the trail. Interpretive themes are an organizational tool that reveal and clarify meaning, concepts, contexts, and values represented by the trail's resources. The two WARO interpretive themes are *The French Alliance and its Global Context* and *The Yorktown Campaign*.

Trail Access and Development Assessment: The purposes of the Trail Access and Development Assessment are:

- To identify WARO's high potential historic sites and high potential route segments, as defined in the National Trails System Act.
- To identify focal areas along the historic route offering the greatest opportunity for developing high quality visitor experiences along the trail where visitors can learn about the routes taken by American and French troops to Yorktown from 1781 to 1782 and the role of the French-American alliance in the victory over British forces at Yorktown.
- To identify priority actions for interpretation, education, signage, communication and landscape resource, and artifact conservations and protection of the historic route.
- To assess the potential to expand existing trails and connections within focal areas, thereby addressing the recent Secretary of the Interior's priority to expand access for outdoor recreation opportunities.
- To develop a shared understanding of the NPS, the W3R Association, and partner site roles in developing trail experiences.
- The Trail Access and Development Assessment is in progress and planned to be complete this calendar year. Currently, the NPS is planning meetings with W3R state leadership and trail stakeholders this summer.

Next Newsletter

Our next newsletter will be released October 1st and we would like to highlight the work occurring within W3R state chapters and any upcoming special events that you would like for us to mention as well.

Please submit articles and pictures by August 1st to Johnny Carawan at johnny_carawan@nps.gov

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