



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Valley Forge National
Historical Park

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Valley Forge National Historical Park

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Valley Forge Announces \$14 Million in Future Improvements To Visitor Center, Exhibits and Trails



KING OF PRUSSIA, P.A. – Last week the National Park Service (NPS) publicly unveiled plans for more than \$14 million in improvements to Valley Forge National Historical Park, including a fully-renovated Visitor Center, new exhibits, a new visitor orientation film, and an expanded trail system in the center of the park. These significant projects will provide the park’s 2.1 million annual visitors with a more accessible and enjoyable experience while offering new opportunities for the public to learn about and explore Valley Forge. Work on each of these four projects is already underway, with estimated completion dates scheduled for late 2020.

“We’re excited to share our plans for these impressive public improvements to our facilities, trails and exhibits,” said Superintendent Steven D. Sims. “Our staff and our park partners have been busy over the last few years writing, drafting, designing and preparing for one of the most significant updates to our Visitor Center complex since 1976. A visitor walking through our doors in 2020 will be greeted by an upgraded and refreshed Visitor Center that truly immerses them in the artifacts and stories of the winter encampment.”

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To facilitate the renovation of the existing Visitor Center, a temporary Visitor Center will be constructed in the current parking lot. The temporary Visitor Center will open this fall and feature a full-service bookstore, theater and information desk managed in partnership with The Encampment Store and the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board.

The \$12 million investment in the Visitor Center will provide for new windows, new finishes including flooring, carpets and signage, energy efficiency improvements, updated collections storage, expanded physical accessibility, modern fire protection and security systems as well as a new HVAC system. The National Park Service, the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board, and The Encampment Store work together within the Visitor Center to manage the park information desk, regional tourism information desk, and a retail bookstore that serves more than 250,000 visitors per year.

“Valley Forge National Historical Park is the gateway for visitors coming to Montgomery County,” said Mike Bowman, President & CEO of the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board (VFTCB). “The site is known both nationally and internationally, and it has a significant economic impact on the region. So, it’s beyond important to support improvement projects that will only enhance key programming and, therefore, guests’ experiences, at this gem of a destination.”

A new \$2.2 million museum exhibit and visitor orientation film project will immerse visitors in the six-month period of the 1777-1778 winter encampment through color, sound and textures of wood, metal and frozen mud. The five-part exhibit will include more than 300 museum objects from the park collection, interactive family activities, tactile demonstrations, and a variety of audio-visual presentations. The exhibit will also tell the story of citizens’ efforts to preserve and protect Valley Forge through historic images and artifacts from over 150 years of park preservation. A new high-definition visitor orientation film, currently in production, will also be available for viewing in the park theater and online.

A community donor, the Valley Forge Park Alliance, and others recently provided more than \$100,000 in additional funding to support the planning and design of the new Grand Parade trails, a new overlook, a new shelter and expanded interpretive signage. These improvements will offer visitors new opportunities to explore the Grande Parade, a several-hundred acre collection of meadows and woodlands located in the center of the park, including areas that until recently were closed to the public. In the fall of 2017 the park completed the environmental remediation of the former Ehret Magnesia Company’s asbestos release site, reopening more than 100 acres of the Grand Parade to public use.

“The expansion and improvement of the Grand Parade trails are the culmination of a true public-private partnership,” said Molly Duffy, Executive Director of the Valley Forge Park Alliance. “The Alliance is happy to welcome visitors to experience this "new" part of Valley Forge.”

This upcoming \$14.2 million federal investment in Valley Forge National Historical Park provides new educational and recreational experiences for future visitors while bolstering the park’s \$46.5 million annual economic impact to the Greater Philadelphia area. More information on the status and schedules of these upcoming projects is available by calling (610) 783-1008 and will be available at www.nps.gov/vafo.

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About Valley Forge National Historical Park

The 3,500-acre park is the site of the 1777-78 winter encampment of George Washington’s Continental Army. The park commemorates the sacrifices and perseverance of the Revolutionary War generation and honors the ability of citizens to pull together and overcome adversity during

extraordinary times. For more information, please visit our website at www.nps.gov/vafo or call 610-783-1099.

About the National Park Service

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