Susan Gouveia

From: Lashway, Lisa
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2014 11:20 AM
To: Canning, Sean; Susan Gouveia
Subject: FW: Braille Trail Along Morris Canal

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Subject: Braille Trail Along Morris Canal

CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION DEDICATES BRAILLE TRAIL ALONG SECTION OF THE MORRIS CANAL
UNIQUE TRAIL OPENS UP CANAL'S HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES TO VISUALLY IMPAIRED

(14/P34) TRENTON – The New Jersey State Park Service this week dedicated a unique new trail for the visually impaired along a section of the historic Morris Canal that was made possible by a partnership with Mount Olive, Stanhope and fragrance manufacturer Givaudan.

"Through interpretive signs in braille and other features, this trail opens up the rich historic and cultural resources of the Morris Canal to the visually impaired, including the towpath and walls of the old lock tender's house," Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Martin said. "We thank our partners for undertaking this project serving sight impaired visitors and are honored to have played a role in establishing it."

The New Jersey Foundation for the Blind was on hand at the ceremony in Mount Olive on Monday to cut the ribbon along with DEP Assistant Commissioner Richard Boornazian and State Park Service Director Mark Texel.

Located north of the Plane Street Bridge in Stanhope, this section of the Morris Canal Greenway trail serves one of the most intact sections of the Morris Canal. Stanhope and Mount Olive each received $15,000 in National Recreational Trail grants from the National Park Service to enhance the trail.

Enhancements include improvements to the bridge at Plane Street, installation of wayside exhibits from the Plane Street Bridge to the Netcong Train Station, and improving the Houdaille Bridge. This section of the Greenway Trail is part of Allamuchy Mountain State Park.

Complementing this project, Givaudan provided $30,000 to resurface a one-mile section of the Canal Greenway Trail to be ADA accessible and install wayside exhibits in braille. The trail will be further enhanced with benches, above-ground planters and interpretive kiosks.

The Morris Canal once stretched 107 miles across northern New Jersey and was used from the 1820s until the 1920s. It stretched from Phillipsburg on the Delaware River eastward to Jersey City on the Hudson River and was considered a technical marvel for its use of turbines to pull barges and boats through a system of inclined planes, or lifts, to move them over the hills of northern New Jersey.

The canal was used to transport anthracite coal from Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley to northern New Jersey's growing iron industries and other developing industries in New Jersey and the New York City area. It also carried iron ore westward to iron furnaces in western New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania until the development of Great Lakes iron ore caused them to decline.
By the 1850s, the canal began to be eclipsed by the construction of railroads, although it remained in heavy use through the 1860s. It was leased to the Lehigh Valley Railroad in 1871, taken over by the state of New Jersey late in 1922, and formally abandoned in 1924.
Although it was largely dismantled in the following five years, portions of the canal and its accompanying feeders and ponds are preserved for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

The Park Service maintains a number of ADA accessible trails throughout the state, including portions of the 26-mile Paulinskill Valley Trail in Sussex and Warren counties and the D&R Canal in central New Jersey, and a nature trail in Cape May's Belleplain State Forest.

For more information on the State Park Service, visit http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/