

MORRISTOWN TO ASSESS WATER QUALITY AND THREATS THROUGH NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

By BOB MASSON

MORRISTOWN NATIONAL HISTORICAL Park is a 1,685-acre park located largely within the upper reaches of the Great Swamp watershed in north-central New Jersey. During two critical winters—1777 and 1779-80—the area served as quarters for the Continental Army. The National Park Service manages both the 1,320-acre Jockey Hollow Encampment Area and 321-acre New Jersey Brigade Encampment Area of the park to maintain not only the historic context of the scene, but also to protect the natural characteristics, including the existing high water quality.

A year-and-a-half ago, we became partner partners with the U.S. Geological Survey to protect national water resources through our participation in their National Water Quality Assessment Program. Known as NAWQA, this program documents the quality of national surface and groundwater resources and defines current trends in the quality of these waters in order to produce long-term, consistent water quality information that will be useful to managers and policy makers at national, state, and local levels.

In assessing national water quality, the U.S. Geological Survey has divided the country into 60 study units that include most of the major rivers and aquifers in the nation. Morristown National Historical Park is in the Long Island-New Jersey coastal drainage system study unit.

We participate in the process by attending study unit meetings that are held every six months over an eight-to-ten-year period. At the first of two meetings held thus far, we determined and prioritized surface, groundwater, and aquatic ecology issues within the study unit. At the second meeting, we defined available water quality data and discussed how agencies will map water quality study areas. Plans for the future include compiling and analyzing avail-

able data, designing study approaches, conducting intensive sampling for a wide array of physical, chemical, and biological characteristics, beginning low-level sampling, and completing reports on the intensive sampling data. The NAWQA program is proving to be a useful approach for us to monitor our water resources at Morristown.

While planning to continue with NAWQA, we also hope to take advantage of a recently completed memorandum of understanding between the National Park Service and the U.S. Geological Survey to locate sampling sites within national park system units if the sites will be useful to the study of water quality. Through our participation in NAWQA and the possible location of a sampling site within the park, we hope to enhance our ability to monitor long-term water quality trends in the park. 

Bob Masson is a Resource Management Specialist at the historical park. He learned about the NAWQA program through a water resource scoping report written for the park by the NPS Water Resources Division in Fort Collins, Colorado. Masson recognized that the park really did not know much about its water quality and that it would probably not be able to investigate properly water quality questions on its own. The NAWQA program and the interagency agreement to locate study sites in parks are proving to be good, inexpensive solutions. Masson's phone number is (201) 539-2016.

The national liaison for the NPS-USGS memorandum of understanding is Bill Walker of the Water Resources Division, (202) 219-3386. Barry Long and Gary Rosenlieb of that office provide technical assistance in implementing the cooperative NPS-NAWQA studies. They can be reached at (303) 225-3518.