



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**“SPIRIT OF THE JERSEYS” RETURNS TO WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK;
STATE HISTORY FAIR SET FOR MAY 12**

(12/P48) TRENTON – The “Spirit of the Jerseys” State History Fair is returning to its roots at Washington Crossing State Park in Hopewell Township on May 12, with a daylong series of free educational and hands-on activities aimed at highlighting the long, rich and diverse history of our state, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin announced today.

The fair, to be held in partnership with more than 130 other historic, government, and nonprofit entities and organizations, will take place rain or shine from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the state park that commemorates Gen. George Washington’s historic military crossing of the icy waters of the Delaware River on Christmas Night 1776.

Fittingly, the Revolutionary War will be one focus of dozens of planned historical exhibits, demonstrations, portrayals, encampments, music, and recreation at the State History Fair, which will explore five centuries of New Jersey history.

“We are excited to bring the award-winning State History Fair back to Washington Crossing State Park, which is the right place for a celebration of our state’s role in this great nation’s history,” said Commissioner Martin. “New Jersey’s vital and pivotal role in the founding of our country, and the achievements of its residents, will be on display at the fair.”

Visitors to the fair will encounter some very unique attractions. Like a first-hand encounter with Martha Washington, as portrayed by Janice Erickson Smith. Or an entertaining look at the Tea Party craze of 1773-74 and the grief it caused King George and his tax collectors, in a production entitled, “I’ll Take No Tea!” by the Tuckers’ Tale Puppet Theatre.

Other special features will include a juried art exhibit of New Jersey’s historic heritage, an antiques appraisal, Native American pottery-making, a World War II exhibit area, demonstrations on the art of calligraphy and participatory quill pen writing, open hearth cooking demonstrations at the Johnson Ferry House.

The fair will include appearances by Colonial-era magician “Levram the Great,” the 78th Army Band Jazz Combo, the songs and stories of canal boat captain “Cappy Hummel,” and the likes of Walt Whitman, Molly Pitcher and Benjamin Franklin, among many others.

In addition to the many nonprofit participants, DEP also is partnering with various state agencies for educational exhibits and promotion, including the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Department of Education, and the state Division of Travel and Tourism. Many activities at the State History Fair can help fulfill badge requirements for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Brownie and Junior Girl Scouts. Also, the Office of Historic Sites is offering three

professional development hours to elementary and secondary school social studies teachers who attend the fair and engage in its many historical activities.

The Spirit of the Jerseys Fair was first held in 2004 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of New Jersey's State Historic Sites – a system that began in 1903 with the state's purchase of the Indian King Tavern in Haddonfield. Its goal is to engage the public in discovering the state's history in a fun and enjoyable manner. The fair was not held in 2010 because of logistical issues and limited state resources but returned last year when it was held at Allaire State Park.

“We're happy to return this year to Washington Crossing State Park, the fair's original location,” said Beverly Weaver, supervisor of the DEP's Office of Historic Sites. “Our partners and past fair attendees have made various suggestions on how to improve the fair and we are delivering on their expectations. This should be a great event.”

The fair will be held rain or shine. While admission is free, there will be a \$5 fee per-vehicle parking donation to help defray the costs of the fair. For more information on the State History Fair, including a full listing of events and directions, please visit, www.njhistoryfair.org.

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