

Vision, Mission, Themes, and Objectives

from the "Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail Strategic Plan Draft (National Park Service, October 2010, updated October 2011), by Joe DiBello and Samantha Driscoll

The W3R®-US' Vision for the W3R®-NHT in 2021

The trail will have along its whole length

- trail markers, waysides, and monuments
- exhibits, pamphlets, and knowledgeable interpreters
- commemorative and educational items for sale

Tens of thousands of U.S. residents and foreign tourists will be

- aware of the history on which the trail is based
- recognize, appreciate, and honor that history
- aware of the location and park services along the trail
- aware of the opportunities to see and to experience the journey
- visiting the trail on foot, by bicycle, by boat, by horse, and by car

NHT partners such as the W3R®-US will

- provide educational content accessible to all
- have program material in dozens of schools along the route
- connect communities, coordinate events, and enhance local facilities
- integrate the W3R®-NHT with related stories and trails
- be inspired and inspire others to take part in the effort

The W3R®-NHT will be a symbol of community pride and international appreciation.

The Mission of the W3R®-US (from 2009 Board action)

The mission of the National Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association, Inc. (W3R®-US) is

- to partner with the National Park Service, W3R® state, international and other organizations, historic sites, preservationists, and conservationists along the 700-mile W3R® National Historic Trail and
- to initiate, coordinate, and promote programs that engage, inspire, and educate the public in the history of how France and the French people provided crucial aid to the United States during the American Revolution.

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Themes for the W3R®-NHT

Birth of a Nation

- Hardships of campaign, both for troops and the civilians who supported them
- Yorktown as huge victory, and visible expression of the hope for independence as well as the gratitude that greeted the returning French Army on its march north in summer 1782
- Watershed in the development of an American identity, and a huge step in becoming a nation

Cross-cultural significance

- Example of international help throughout war, and the global character of War of Independence
- French help an early acknowledgement of America as a sovereign nation by a world power
- American-French Alliance since 1775, comes to peak in this campaign
- Community impact and stories of human interaction between soldiers and civilians
- Illustration of the American War for Independence as a truly diverse effort: not just international assistance but also the settlement patterns of the US, many nationalities contributed and/or fought the war

Military Success of the Campaign

- Victory at Yorktown a "dramatic turnaround"™ in War
- French contribution in military strategy
- Logistical success, a feat in itself
- Geography's effect on military strategy, also how march impacted landscape and waterways
- Ties together stories of the Northern and Southern campaigns
- Example of international military cooperation
- March to Yorktown was longest march of Revolutionary War
- Importance of Battle of the Capes Naval Engagement, De Grasse victory over Hood instrumental in Yorktown victory
- Three phases of trail: RI to West Chester NY, West Chester to VA, and return from VA

Objectives for the W3R®-US

- **Comprehensive Website to serve as the information center for NHT** - The W3R®-US will supplement the material on the National Park Service site.
- **Social Media outreach** - accounts with Facebook®, Twitter®, etc.
- **Cell Phone Tours** - modern method for delivering interpretive material where and when it is needed
- **Documentary Videos** - Web-based or CD with interpretive material
- **GIS Mapping of entire NHT** - NPS GIS version may be supplemented by W3R®-US versions using GoogleEarth®, since the latter can be put online sooner.
- **Comprehensive Official Signage for the NHT** - supplemented by signage placed by states or privately-funded, since these can be in place sooner.
- **Develop and Support Print Materials about the NHT** States and private funding may be attracted through the 3R®-US and can be published sooner. Authors may be encouraged to publish at their own risk and profit.
- **Create Visitor Experience** Collaborate with other trails, parks, or museums along the NHT with visiting or joint exhibits. Encourage artists to depict historic scenes for both display and reproduction for sale at their own risk and profit.
- **Conservation and Preservation** -Support the NPS programs to conserve, preserve and maintain all historic sites, significant landscapes and structures, interpretive material and existing artifacts.
- **Continue Research of the history, location, impact and area of the NHT** - Complete the research work for Massachusetts, Maryland, and Virginia. Locate all intersections with other historic trails or scenic trails, any overlap into parks, landmarks or heritages areas, and a survey of battlefields.
- **Integrate the NHT and the Yorktown Campaign into children's education** - Create low budget videos appropriate for middle school grades where this era is covered. Coordinate interested schools with local historians as resources
- **Support community, local and national events relating to the NHT** - Support community and local events which fall along the route of the NHT. Support all reenactments, especially the march to Yorktown following the route of the NHT. Encourage first person interpretation, living history and guides at every event. Create a calendar of events, while also announcing events via the main website and social media to increase participation.