

Executive Summary
Heritage Partnership of New Jersey Leasing Toolkit

New Jersey's extensive state programs for acquiring or otherwise protecting dwindling open space and farmland through the Garden State Preservation Trust are noted nationally for their extensive reach and record of success. Historic resources and cultural landscapes have often not been considered in advance of the acquisition of open spaces that includes them, however. Thus, the acquiring state agencies (e.g. Parks & Forestry or Fish & Wildlife Divisions of DEP) have not always evaluated how best to preserve and protect these fragile sites. The result, all too often, is that no action has been taken and the historic site, without repair and maintenance and often unsecured against vandals, deteriorates quickly and is lost. In an increasing number of circumstances, however, local nonprofit organizations and, less frequently, local governments, have stepped in to propose plans to preserve, protect and interpret the cultural landscapes and historic sites. State statutes require such potential steward or management organizations to execute a lease with the relevant state agency, and the stringent requirements, as well as the seemingly impenetrable bureaucracy within which these negotiations occur, seem daunting at best.

This **Leasing Toolkit** and Manual was developed as part of a Heritage Partnership of New Jersey program that assists and provides information to nonprofit organizations and local governments seeking to lease historic properties that are located on preserved, state-owned land. The Toolkit includes several chapters that provide information and guidance designed to assist an organization or local government considering a role as steward of a historic site on state-preserved land. It provides assistance to such organizations in learning about the state property leasing process, the responsibilities of steward groups, the processes and programs that will necessarily be followed to develop and execute a lease, and the financial and organizational resources available to help.

Potential lessees and other participating entities are required to fulfill certain state expectations when leasing a historic site, including preparation of a management plan and a preservation plan, gaining approvals from state agencies such as the State House Commission, obtaining adequate insurance, and following the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* when planning and executing the preservation or renovation plan, as well as finding funding sources to support the project.

Section I - Getting Started

The first steps towards leasing a historic property from DEP agencies include knowing and understanding the processes, procedures and relevant State entities involved. The lessee must know their responsibilities towards the agency that holds the property, such as the Division of Parks and Forestry or the Division of Fish and Wildlife, as well as the role of the State House Commission and the lessee's participation in the

Commission's decision-making processes. Also included in this Section is a leasing process chart describing the steps involved in the actual process, from the first advertisement of available property to final execution of a lease. Potential roadblocks in the process are discussed, with suggestions to lessees of possible strategies for advancing the proceedings.

Section II - General Responsibilities of Lessees

The general responsibilities of the potential lessee are summarized in this Section, including strategies for drafting a management plan, elements of a good preservation plan and guidelines found in the *Secretary of Interior Standards* that must be followed during rehabilitation of properties that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Sources and suggestions for obtaining appropriate and adequate insurance as required by the State of New Jersey are also covered in this section.

Section III – Funding Sources

Sources of potential funding for rehabilitation and restoration are outlined in Section III, with annotated lists of possible granting agencies and contact information. This section covers grants made by various federal, state, county and local agencies and private foundations and includes various types of grants made by the New Jersey Historic Trust.

Section IV – Stories of Success

A number of historic and cultural properties have been leased to nonprofit organizations by the State of New Jersey — some as long ago as the mid-1970s — and these success stories can be instructive to organizations seeking to replicate them. Each of the stories of successful leasing programs described in this section includes information about the relevant state agency that owns the properties, the lessee steward organization and the uses to which that organization is putting the historic site, the form and source of funds that supported rehabilitation and presently supports operating expenses and a brief history of the historic site.

Section V – Contacts and Sample Leases

The final Section includes additional useful information, including contact information about the relevant agencies and the members of the Heritage Partnership. Also included in the Section are examples of successfully executed leases.

From the Port Mercer Canal House, to the Vass Farmstead to the Cape May Light, some significant historic and cultural resources on state-owned land in New Jersey have been successfully protected, preserved, operated and interpreted for the benefit of the citizens

of the state by local nonprofit organizations and local governments by way of leasing programs with relevant state agencies that own the resources.

The Heritage Partnership of New Jersey, a project managed by Preservation New Jersey and partially funded by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, is helping to find solutions to problems associated with the planning for and management of historic sites on publicly protected open space and farmland. Members of the Partnership that worked with Preservation New Jersey to develop this manual include various divisions of New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection - the Green Acres program, the State Historic Preservation Office, Division of Fish & Wildlife and the Division of Parks and Forestry - as well as the New Jersey Historic Trust, the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, the Highlands Council and the New Jersey Barn Company, and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, as well as numerous local organizations including the Harmony and Knowlton Twp. and Warren County Historic Preservation Commissions