

NEWS

For immediate release

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New Nonprofit Champions Delaware Historic Site

Friends of Cooch's Bridge "all in" on preserving state's heritage

Montchanin, Delaware, September 6, 2021 — "When it comes to preserving Delaware's diverse heritage, we're all in," says Vince Watchorn, president of the new nonprofit Friends of Cooch's Bridge.

"The Friends group has only been around for a year, but our board and advisors have already accomplished several years' worth of work to that end," Watchorn says.

The Cooch's Bridge Historic Site is owned and operated by the state through the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs (HCA), a Dover-based government agency.

The Friends of Cooch's Bridge acts as an advocacy group for the property.

Among the group's accomplishments in its first year, the Friends of Cooch's Bridge has provided private tours of the site to nearly 100 visitors and stakeholders; introduced its mission to state and federal legislators, and to policymakers outside of HCA; conducted audience research; developed a strategic plan and vision statement; and secured state and county funds for a feasibility study of new trails connecting nearby public lands.

Promoting future public access to the historic property is a keystone of the nonprofit.

The group has also put in place online and offline fundraising capabilities; established a social media presence; launched a website; and developed partnerships with other historic preservation and educational organizations.

"We take our role of stewarding this property seriously," Watchorn says, stressing that the group aims to tell the whole story of the people who lived, worked, fought, and died at the site.

"Cooch's Bridge Historic Site is a gem of a resource that should be safeguarded and understood as a way to broaden our understanding of Delaware history. We hope to see it become a place that can be experienced by visitors from all over the country.

"It's best known as the site of Delaware's only Revolutionary War battle, and ongoing research is constantly teaching us more about that important event. The site also embodies the broad story of Delaware's shared past. Together with patriotism and the birth of our nation, it tells a story that includes indigenous Americans, African Americans, a prominent Delaware family, and a farm and industrial site of great importance in the area. Cooch's Bridge presents a multifaceted opportunity to tell Delaware's story with a new lens.

"The Friends' job is to encourage all to learn about, understand, and enjoy the property!"

About the Friends of Cooch's Bridge Historic Site

Friends of Cooch's Bridge Historic Site is a non-profit advocacy group that aims to preserve the built, natural, and narrative features of the Delaware-owned historic property known as Cooch's Bridge Historic Site, and promote public access to them. The property, among other things, is the site of Delaware's only battle of the Revolutionary War. More information is available at <https://friendsofcoochsbridge.org>.

Note to editors: Photos available upon request. Contact Bob James.