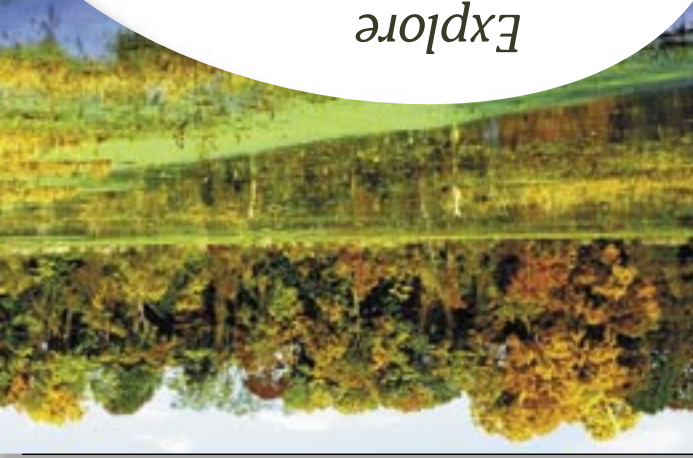




Hamilton Trenton Bordentown Marsh

Explore
the mysteries
discover the magic of the



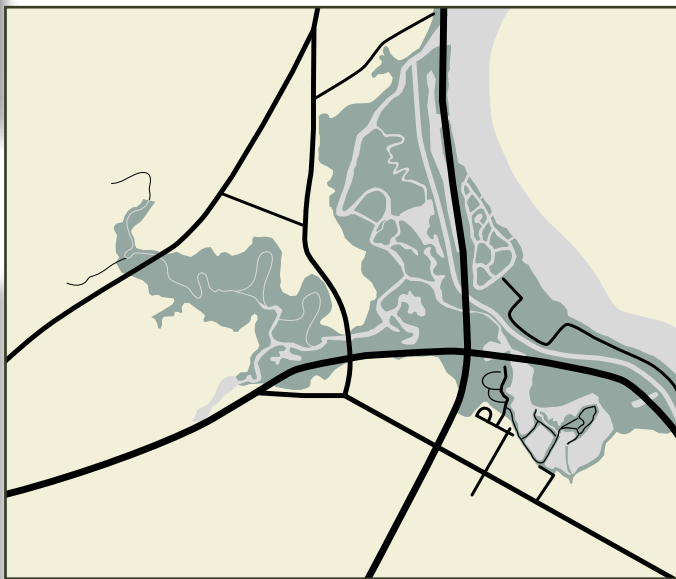
Explore the mysteries . . . Discover the magic . . .

At the western edge of central New Jersey's densely populated urban centers, between the cities of Trenton, Bordentown and Hamilton Township lies the Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh, the Delaware River's northernmost freshwater tidal wetland. Found here are tidal marshlands, swamps, ponds, creeks and forests.

The Marsh's diverse habitats support over 1,200 species of plants and wildlife. Among these are 237 species of birds including red-winged blackbirds, thrushes, warblers, woodpeckers and owls. Waterbirds such as ospreys, great blue herons, ducks, geese and great egrets thrive in and around its waterways. In addition, more than 875 species of plants, 17 species of mammals, 19 species of amphibians and reptiles, 62 species of fish and 28 species of butterflies make their home in the Marsh. A number are rare or endangered.

The Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh has also supported humans since pre-historic times. Native Americans lived here 8,000 - 10,000 years ago, drawn to the area by readily available sources of food, fuel and shelter.

Present-day visitors to the Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh can experience this fascinating ecosystem on over 8 miles of walking trails and 11 miles of water trails. You are invited to explore this amazing natural and historic world and discover its mysteries and magic for yourself.



How to Find the Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh

Hamilton

From Interstate 295, take Arena Drive (east) exit. Turn right onto Woodside. To Spring Lake: from Woodside, turn right onto South Broad St. (Rt. 206); turn left onto Sewell Ave.; at the end of Sewell, turn left and drive down the hill to parking.

To Nature and Interpretive Center's Future Site & Watson Woods: from Woodside Ave., turn right onto S. Broad St.; turn left onto Park Ave. West; turn left onto Westcott; turn right at sign for Watson House. The nature center is on the left; drive down the hill, turn left, to Watson Woods.

Bordentown and Bordentown Township
To Bordentown Beach: From Rt. 206, follow Park Street to the end. Continue straight following the old paved road down the hill, under the railroad bridge to the parking area.
To Northern Community Park: From Rt. 206 north or Rt. 130 north take Groveville Road to Northern Community Park.

Marsh photographs courtesy of: M.A. Borge, G. Fluck, M. Freeman, M.A. Leck, T. Vankirk, L. Vansant, & J. Worthington. This brochure was funded by Washington Crossing Audubon's Holden Fund.

What is a Marsh?

Marshes are wetlands that are frequently or continually inundated with water and are characterized by emergent soft-stemmed vegetation adapted to saturated soil conditions. Swamps, in contrast, are dominated by trees and shrubs. Life rhythms of the Marsh are defined by the twice-daily, six-foot, freshwater tides.

A Vital Natural Resource

The Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh is a significant ecological and environmental resource. The Marsh reduces flood damage by holding large volumes of water and it removes excess nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorous, and other pollutants from surface runoff. It recharges ground water that eventually becomes municipal drinking water. The lush plant growth of the Marsh supplies food chains within its borders as well as the lower Delaware estuary.

In fact, the Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh approaches tropical rainforests in the amount of ecological productivity each year.

Since 1973, more than 60 scientific studies have been published based on research conducted here. Students come to the Marsh to learn about ecology, the role of wetlands in urban landscapes and the principles of field research, making it an important educational as well as natural resource.

A Prehistoric Record

Indian artifacts dating back 8,000 - 10,000 years have been recovered from the Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh. Many are on display in the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton. To help safeguard this important archeological site, the United States Department of the Interior designated a major portion of the Marsh as the *Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark* in 1976, the highest designation bestowed by the federal government.





An Historic and Cultural Connection

Europeans began settling the Hamilton-Trenton Bordentown Marsh in 1682. They brought with them the technology for diking and damming marshland, "reclaiming" lands for farming. The Watson House, the oldest building in Mercer County was built near the edge of the Marsh in 1708.

During the Revolutionary War, colonists sank boats in Crosswicks Creek to keep them from falling into British hands.

Attracted by the magnificent view, Napoleon's brother Joseph Bonaparte built a mansion on the bluffs overlooking the Marsh and lived there from 1816-1838. Part of his estate was preserved by D&R Greenway Land Trust and the NJDEP Green Acres Program in 1996.

In the 1830s, the Delaware & Raritan Canal and the Camden and Amboy Railroad were built along the western edge of the Marsh. The recently opened light rail

service between Camden and Trenton follows the original track route.

Noted archaeologist and naturalist Charles Conrad Abbot also made his home at the edge of the Marsh from 1874-1914.

During the 19th century a dike was constructed to create White City Lake (now known as Spring Lake) as a part of the White City Amusement Park. This Park attracted people from throughout the region to the Marsh. The remains of the ornate steps that linked the dance pavilion at the top of the bluff to the lake below are still visible today. Civic concern about proposed development in the 1930s resulted in the purchase of 300 acres that were deeded to Mercer County, establishing John A. Roebling Memorial Park as a wildlife refuge. The park has grown to 406 acres. Other public lands here include the D&R Canal State Park, Northern Community Park in Bordentown and the southern tip of Duck Island.

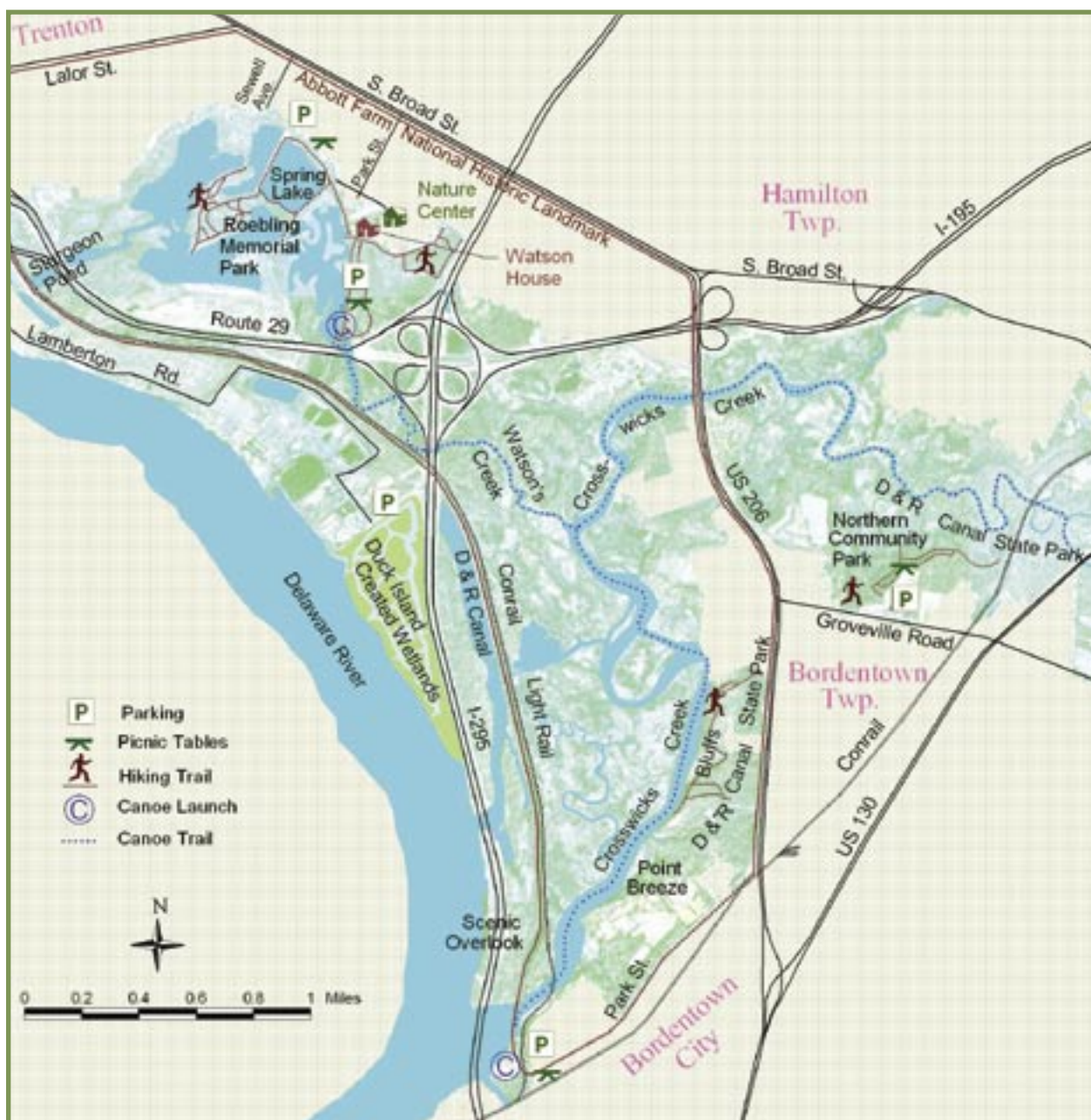
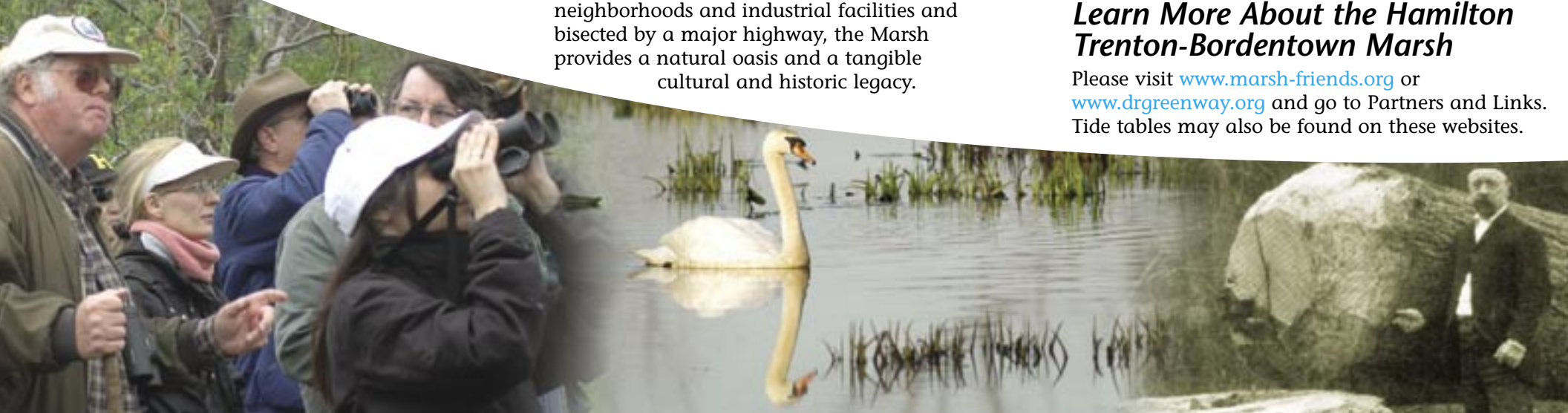
Today, despite being surrounded by residential neighborhoods and industrial facilities and bisected by a major highway, the Marsh provides a natural oasis and a tangible cultural and historic legacy.

A Place for Recreation and Relaxation

The Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh contains well-marked land and water trails where you can walk or paddle along pathways once traveled by Native Americans, colonists and nobles. **Please be cautious when near water; currents can be swift and dangerous.** Interpretative signs enhance understanding of the Marsh's natural and historic significance. After exploring the Marsh's many wonders, you can picnic at facilities available at Watson Woods, Spring Lake, Northern Community Park and Bordentown Beach.

Learn More About the Hamilton Trenton-Bordentown Marsh

Please visit www.marsh-friends.org or www.drgreenway.org and go to Partners and Links. Tide tables may also be found on these websites.



Friends for the Marsh

The richness of the cultural, historical and natural resources in the Marsh will be lost forever unless we protect and preserve what remains. The **Friends for the Marsh** is an all-volunteer group organized in 2004, in partnership with D&R Greenway Land Trust. D&R Greenway has been active since 1993 in protecting the natural lands and open space in the Marsh and surrounding communities. The goals of the Friends for the Marsh are:

- To protect and preserve the natural, historical, and recreational resources provided by the Marsh.
- To promote research and actions that lead to enhanced stewardship within the Marsh.
- To expand education, public awareness, and appreciation of the Marsh.

We invite you to join Friends for the Marsh. Membership benefits include special educational and recreational programs. Please visit www.drgreenway.org or call 609-924-4646 for more information.

Nature and Interpretive Center

Mercer County, in partnership with D&R Greenway Land Trust and the NJDEP Green Acres Program, has secured a home for a Nature and Interpretive Center at the Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh, scheduled to open in the Fall 2006.

The role of the Nature and Interpretive Center is to promote an understanding of the contributions that wetlands make to regional biodiversity and the resources they provide to surrounding communities. Other goals are to help make the "science" of the Marsh accessible to non-scientists – particularly schoolchildren – and to foster understanding of the relationship between its natural and cultural heritage.

Hunting and fishing are permitted only in designated areas. Otherwise, leave only footprints, take only photographs and memories. Please report any inappropriate behavior, depending on location to: Mercer County Park Rangers (609-443-8956); Hamilton Township Police (609-581-4000); Bordentown Township Police (609-298-4300); or Bordentown City Police (609-298-0101).