

Park Service, coalition thanked for festival

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EDITOR:

Thank you for the great article and editorial you wrote last week about the first Highlands Festival at Waterloo; A Celebration of All Things Local, and of all the values that the New Jersey Highlands represent.

On behalf of the board and members of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition, we are delighted by how much everyone enjoyed the festival, its great music, exhibitors and vendors. It was a wonderful opportunity for people to revisit or learn for the first time about beautiful Waterloo Village. What a really fun weekend!

I am very happy to say that our board has already determined that we hope to do this again next year, and thank our 80 member organizations, particularly the Canal Society, Friends of Waterloo and Winakung at Waterloo, for their work in helping the festival go so well.

The New Jersey State Park Service was absolutely integral to the success of the weekend – we cannot thank them enough! By some miracle, they completely rebuilt the gazebo in time for it to serve as a stage, they did a marvelous job preparing the village to look its best for festival visitors, and they did absolutely everything they could to help the weekend function almost flawlessly.

Andrea Proctor and Jim Scholtz were our go-to people who always had a smile and made things happen, whatever we requested.

The State Park Service recognizes that bringing attention and new visitors to Waterloo is key to its revival. Waterloo has a long and complicated history. The foundation that once ran it had to cease operation, the state inherited its management and some buildings can no longer safely be opened to the public. The state has begun the process to reverse the village's fortunes and restore it to the lovely, historic village it could become.

It is my hope and belief that events such as the Highlands Festival at Waterloo will serve as a foundation for that effort, and the New Jersey Highlands Coalition is fortunate to be able to bring the Highlands Festival at Waterloo to the public with the help of all our partners.

JULIA SOMERS

Executive Director

New Jersey Highlands Coalition

Boonton