



# Saratoga

## NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

*The Great American Outdoors Act is providing crucial funding – up to \$6.65 billion over five years – to fix our national parks’ crumbling roads, decaying buildings, outdated water systems and many more repair needs. This bill, along with other funding sources, is ensuring our parks can continue to welcome millions of visitors each year and protect the natural and cultural resources that tell our nation’s history.*



### BY THE NUMBERS:



**\$5 million** investment from the GAOA to repair interpretive waysides, parking areas and walkways



**\$6 million** in annual economic output



**150,000** annual visitors



**25 miles** of trails



**26** buildings

**PHOTOS:** Cover: ©Enrico Della Pietra | Shutterstock  
Back: ©National Park Service

**Sandwiched between upstate New York’s Adirondacks and Catskills, with views of Vermont’s Green Mountains, Saratoga National Historical Park is—at almost 4,000 acres—one of the county’s largest open public spaces. In 1777, during the American War for Independence, American troops battled and beat a British invasion force at this site, marking the first time in world history that a British army ever surrendered.**

Today, the hallowed ground attracts battlefield buffs as well as hikers, cyclists, cross-country skiers, dog-walkers, and bird-watchers. It’s beautiful in every season, but especially during fall colors, which coincides with the battle anniversaries. Particularly on a foggy day, park visitors can envision what happened in the battles and appreciate how the region contributed to the greater story of the birthplace of America.

Saratoga attracts about 150,000 visitors a year and is preparing to welcome many more to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the battles in 2027. The park includes five units and four satellite locations in Schuylerville, New York including the Saratoga Monument, (erected for the 100-year anniversary of

the battle), the home of General Philip Schuyler, (popularized by the musical “Hamilton”), Victory Woods and the Sword Surrender Site (depicted in the painting “Surrender of General Burgoyne,” by John Trumbull, which hangs in the U.S. Capitol). Saratoga’s most important and popular treasure is the Saratoga battlefield, the site of the stunning Revolutionary War victory in October 1777. Visitors experience this piece of history along the Battlefield Tour, a self-guided, 10-mile driving route.

But the current experience is more than 50 years old. In many cases, the wayside descriptions are illegible, unengaging, and inaccurate; the audio components haven’t worked for years or have been removed altogether. “One of the biggest benefits is being



able to provide that interpretation experience while you're out there on the battlefield," said superintendent Leslie Morlock. For years now, the park hasn't been able to do that well.

**THE CHALLENGE: degrading pathways and inaccessible, eroded interpretation stations**

Along the 10-stop tour, parking and walkways were not constructed to meet current Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS). Pathways with cracks and sinkholes pose tripping hazards and unsafe walking conditions that have already resulted in two visitor injuries in the past two years and may yield more if not repaired. The ABAAS shortcomings expose the park to potential lawsuits from visitors and advocacy groups. The 60 existing interpretive waysides are well beyond their intended design life, and it shows. The signs are painted metal, which must be

stripped and repainted by hand every five years, and the bases are stone and mortar, which require expensive repointing and harbor stinging insects. The failure in interpretation is a failure of the park's core mission: to accurately tell the story of the battles of Saratoga.

**THE PROJECT**

Through an investment that is approximately \$5 million, the Great American Outdoors Act will eliminate \$4 million of the park's maintenance backlog, address safety issues, and modernize infrastructure. The project will update and rehabilitate worn interpretive waysides and all routes, parking areas, trailheads, walkways, and seating to provide universal accessibility to all 10 stops on the Battlefield Tour. The 60 new exhibits will be constructed of durable steel, aluminum, and bronze. They will include replica objects and convey updated information about the battles and landscape, sharing multiple perspectives—such as those of Native Americans fighting on both sides and women in the camps—to better connect visitors with the importance of the site. The design layouts are geared for easier reading by employing color contrast, appropriate fonts and font size, tactile bronze relief maps, braille, and installation heights appropriate for all visitors. Audio description will be provided on an app for public use.



**One of the biggest things is being able to provide that interpretation experience while you're out there on the battlefield.**

- SUPERINTENDENT  
LESLIE MORLOCK

The investment takes into account the sensitive nature of the cultural landscape; while the park is not a cemetery, it is hallowed ground. When possible, the design tried to minimize ground disturbance, and in some areas pathways will be built up so as not to impact the resources. Archeological monitors are present during the work.

**THE IMPACT**

The project, which broke ground this spring and will be completed in 2023, will eliminate most of the existing corrective maintenance expenses and will significantly improve the Battlefield Tour experience for all visitors. It will help prepare Saratoga in many ways for the 250th anniversary and increased attention it will receive by bringing the park safety into compliance, creating accessible interpretive signage, telling a historically accurate and more inclusive story, showcasing its natural and cultural resources, and improving the ease of touring.

The Great American Outdoors Act is successfully repairing infrastructure at hundreds of parks across the country. However, with a nearly \$22 billion backlog, much more is needed. We urge Congress to extend the Legacy Restoration Fund for an additional five years.

Preserving Our Past.



Protecting Our Future.