

SUSQUEHANNA DISCOVERY CENTER DESIGN CONCEPTS



PROJECT PARTNERS:



ACQUISITION, PLANNING, & INITIAL IMPROVEMENTS FUNDED BY:

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE / CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS

PENNSYLVANIA COMMONWEALTH FINANCING AUTHORITY

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION

COUNTY OF YORK / OPEN SPACE & LAND PRESERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

EXPLORE YORK / YORK COUNTY TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM

POWDER MILL FOUNDATION

J. WILLIAM WAREHIME FOUNDATION

ARTHUR J. & LEE R. GLATFELTER FOUNDATION

HIGH FOUNDATION

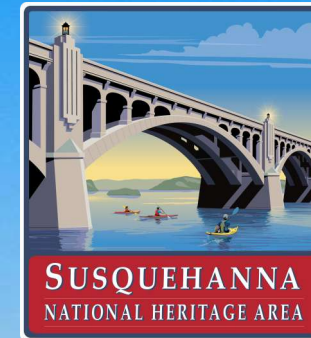
MORE INFORMATION:

SUSQUEHANNA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

5989 SUSQUEHANNA PLAZA DRIVE, YORK, PA 17406 / 717-252-0229 / INFO@SUSQNH.A.ORG

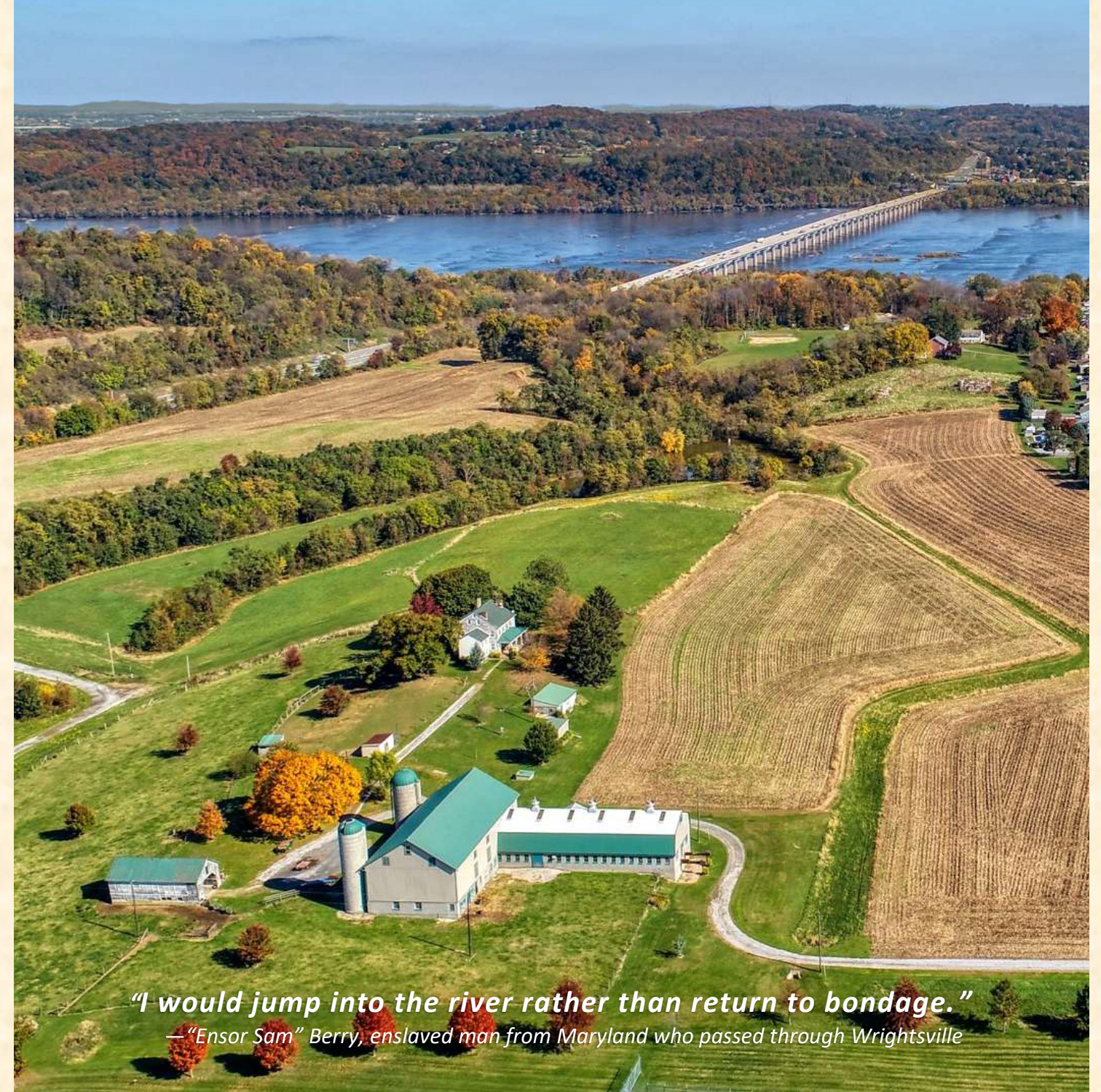
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SNHA 5-25



SUSQUEHANNA DISCOVERY CENTER & HERITAGE PARK

CONCEPT PLAN
MAY 2025



*"I would jump into the river rather than return to bondage."
—"Ensor Sam" Berry, enslaved man from Maryland who passed through Wrightsville*

A PARTNERSHIP TO PRESERVE A HISTORIC SITE & LANDSCAPE

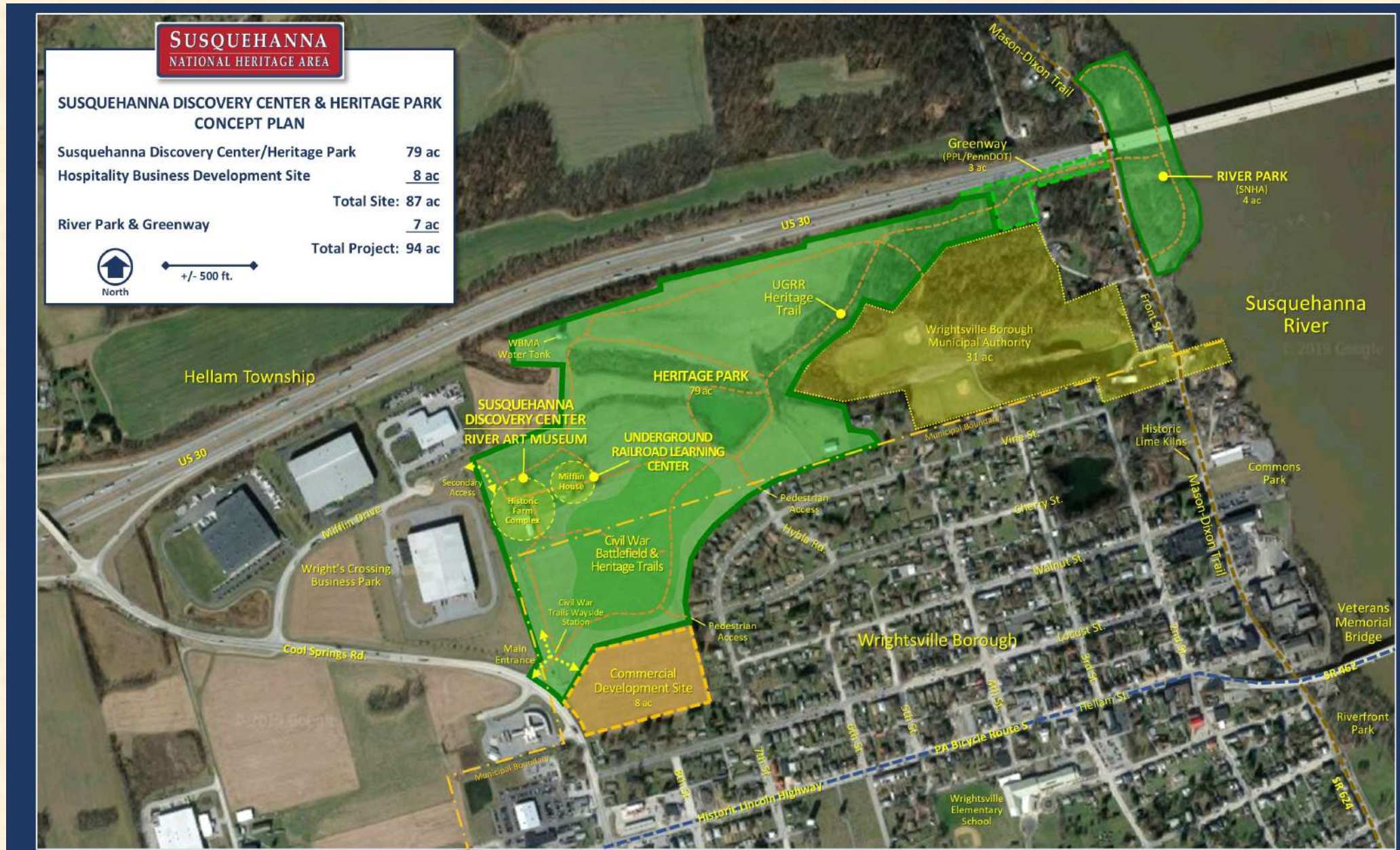
Susquehanna National Heritage Area (SNHA), Preservation Pennsylvania, The Conservation Fund (TCF), York County Economic Alliance, and other partners have worked since 2017 to preserve the Mifflin house and farm near the Susquehanna River in eastern York County, an historic Underground Railroad and Civil War site in Hellam Township and Wrightsville Borough.

Kinsley Properties of York had been developing a business park around the site since the 1990's with the Blessing family, long-time owners of the farm. As development moved east toward the historic farmstead, demolition of the house, barn, and outbuildings was proposed, leading to much community debate and legal challenges. In early 2019, the Blessings, Kinsley, and Hellam Township agreed to a two-year moratorium on demolition to allow preservation partners time to develop a concept plan and secure funding.



As an alternative to demolition and industrial development, the preservation partners proposed the acquisition and adaptive use of the farm by SNHA as a gateway visitor center and Underground Railroad/Civil War heritage park with trails to the river and an 8-acre parcel in Wrightsville reserved for future hospitality business development. The plan includes the 87-acre Mifflin farm and 7 acres of other public and semi-public lands, including riverfront land owned by SNHA. After acquisition funding was secured, TCF purchased the property in April 2022 and the site was transferred to SNHA in December 2023 for implementation of the concept plan over 5-10 years.

SUSQUEHANNA DISCOVERY CENTER & HERITAGE PARK AT THE HISTORIC MIFFLIN FARM



A PLACE TO SHOWCASE AMERICA'S 55TH NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

After much community engagement and planning, project partners agreed the Mifflin site presents a special opportunity to develop a new SNHA visitor destination - a place to learn about our region's important role in American history and enhance our area's economic vitality. The site will feature:

SUSQUEHANNA DISCOVERY CENTER - Adaptive use of the historic barns as a world-class visitor center for America's 55th National Heritage Area, including heritage exhibits, program space, silo lookouts, gift shop, café, and offices.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD LEARNING CENTER - Restoration of the Mifflin House as a place for learning about our region's role in the Underground Railroad, with an interpretive trail to the river tracing the historic route of those seeking freedom.

RIVER ART MUSEUM - Integrated art galleries featuring more than three centuries of Susquehanna-inspired art and illustration highlighting the river's scenic beauty and commercial appeal.

HERITAGE PARK - Preservation of the Mifflin landscape as a heritage park featuring the Civil War battlefield where Union defenders fought invading Confederates in June 1863, just before the covered bridge across the river was burned to stop their advance. This the stage for the Battle of Gettysburg.

TRAILS & RIVER PARK - Trails linking the Mifflin site to the Susquehanna through a greenway along US 30 and river park with paddle craft launch, viewpoints, picnic areas, and fishing access.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SITE - Future development of well-designed hotel, restaurant, and retail businesses that will complement the Discovery Center, attract economic investment, and enhance tax revenue for Wrightsville.



ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS	
Acquisition & Related Costs	\$5,300,000
Planning, Design & Development (Visitor Facilities/Trails/Access/Pkg)	\$42,000,000
Total:	\$47,300,000