

At Little Falls, a great stone aqueduct carried the canal 60 feet above the Passaic River. After many years of service the aqueduct was demolished when the canal was abandoned in the 1920s.

However, by the early 1900s the canal had become obsolete. In the early 1920s, after almost 100 years of service, a plan was adopted to close and dismantle the canal. The ownership of the canal's vast water resources including Lake Hopatcong, Lake Musconetcong and Greenwood Lake passed to the State of New Jersey.

Today, the Morris Canal Greenway project, a state-wide partnership among local communities, nonprofit organizations and historical societies like the Canal Society of New Jersey, seeks to preserve and interpret the historic remains of the canal and create opportunities for public recreation. ■

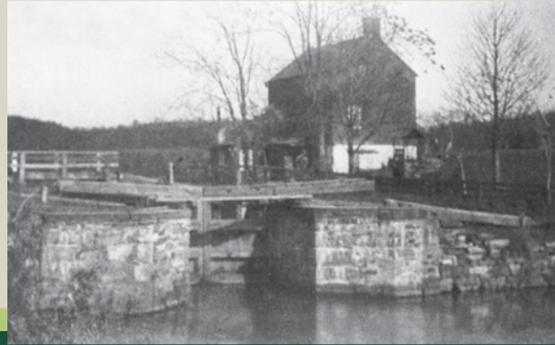
At Mountain View, the Erie Lackawanna Railroad – Boonton Line crossed the Morris Canal Pompton Feeder on a counter-weight lift bridge.



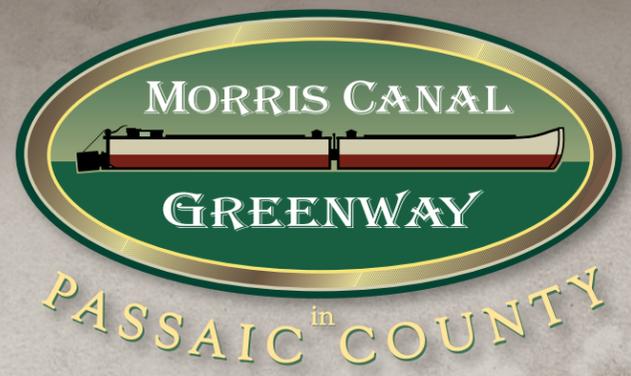
THE MORRIS CANAL GREENWAY IN PASSAIC COUNTY

For years Passaic County communities have been working independently to preserve their historic Morris Canal sites. The goal of the new Morris Canal Greenway is to bring these projects together into a county-wide history and recreation pathway.

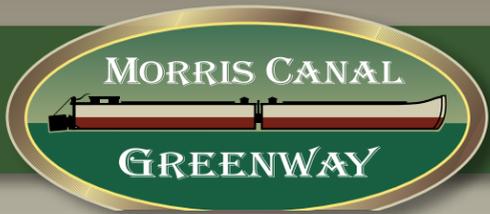
- 1987** – Clifton Morris Canal Park is established.
- 1994** – Little Falls creates the Morris Canal Park along Main Street in its downtown business district.
- 1998** – Little Falls completes the Morris Canal bikeway from near Main Street at Lower Notch Road to Stewart Avenue.
- 2006** – Woodland Park receives a county open space grant to design a Morris Canal Greenway trail.
- 2011** – Little Falls completes Morris Canal Bikeway along Wilmore Road to the Peckman Preserve and Cedar Grove Road to Main Street.
- 2011** – Clifton Morris Canal Park is dedicated as Morris Canal Park & Jack W. Kuepfer Sr. Nature Preserve.
- 2011** – Passaic County Planning Board adopts feasibility study as Master Plan element.
- 2012** – Passaic County receives federal grant to complete all on-road greenway improvements in Paterson and Clifton.



At the northern end of the Pompton Feeder a guard lock allowed canal boats to pass from the river into the canal.



The Morris Canal Greenway in Passaic County is an ongoing effort to create a passive recreational pathway along the route of the historic Morris Canal.



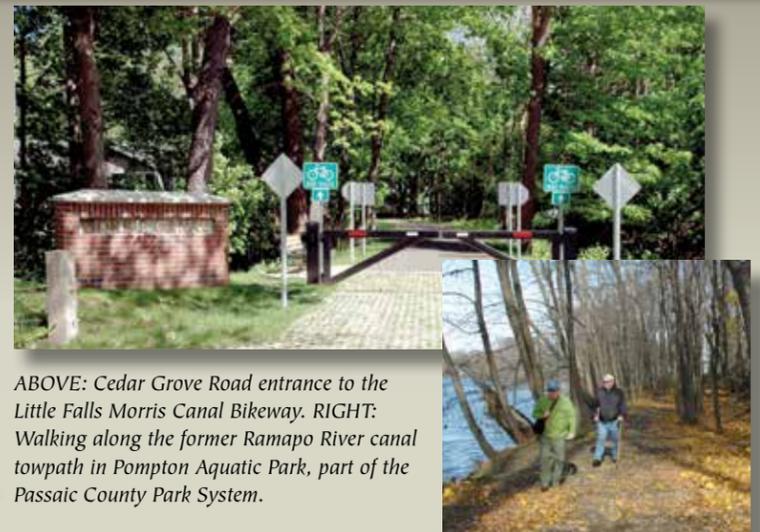
MORRIS CANAL IN PASSAIC COUNTY

THE MORRIS CANAL

In 1824 the Morris Canal & Banking Company was chartered to build a canal that would carry coal mined in Pennsylvania to developing markets along the eastern seaboard. The canal would pass through the heart of New Jersey's iron district and provide the long-needed transportation system that would create new commercial activity and enable rustic settlements like Stanhope and Dover to grow into thriving industrial towns.

When completed in 1831, the canal extended 102 miles across the rugged Highlands of New Jersey, from Phillipsburg on the Delaware River, uphill to its summit level at Lake Hopatcong, and then down to New York Harbor at Jersey City. To accomplish this, a system of 23 lift locks and 23 inclined planes was built to overcome the impressive elevation change of 1,674 feet. The canal's famous water-powered inclined planes were an engineering marvel that enabled canal boats to be raised or lowered up to 100 feet at a time.

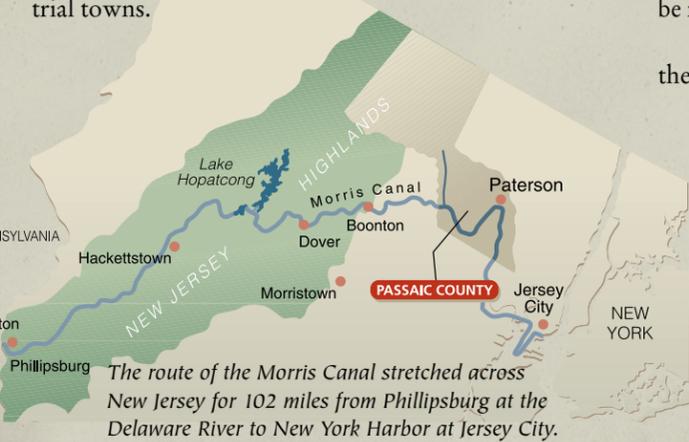
In what became Passaic County in 1837, the canal company



ABOVE: Cedar Grove Road entrance to the Little Falls Morris Canal Bikeway. RIGHT: Walking along the former Ramapo River canal towpath in Pompton Aquatic Park, part of the Passaic County Park System.

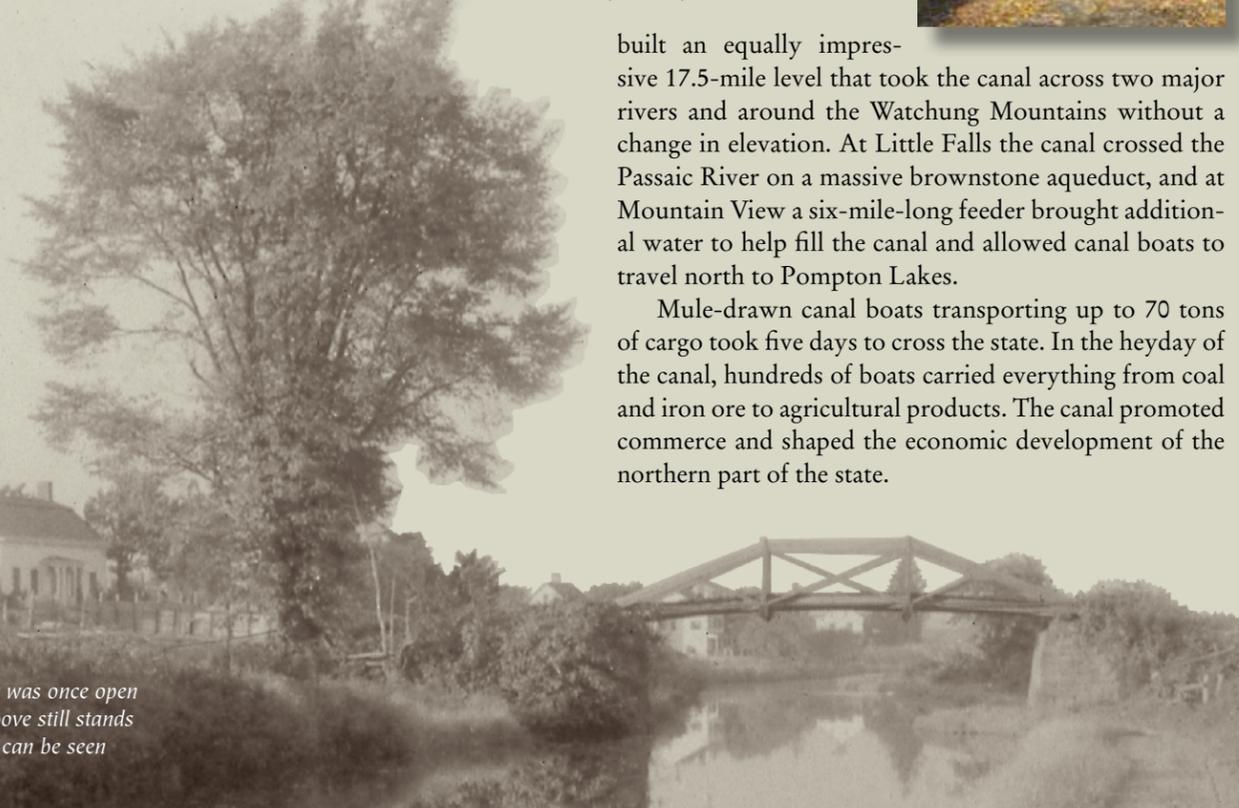
built an equally impressive 17.5-mile level that took the canal across two major rivers and around the Watchung Mountains without a change in elevation. At Little Falls the canal crossed the Passaic River on a massive brownstone aqueduct, and at Mountain View a six-mile-long feeder brought additional water to help fill the canal and allowed canal boats to travel north to Pompton Lakes.

Mule-drawn canal boats transporting up to 70 tons of cargo took five days to cross the state. In the heyday of the canal, hundreds of boats carried everything from coal and iron ore to agricultural products. The canal promoted commerce and shaped the economic development of the northern part of the state.



The route of the Morris Canal stretched across New Jersey for 102 miles from Phillipsburg at the Delaware River to New York Harbor at Jersey City.

In Clifton, the Morris Canal paralleled Broad Street and passed through what was once open farmland. Although the farms are gone, the gambrel-roof farm house seen above still stands along Broad Street as a reminder of Clifton's rural past. To the right a bridge can be seen that allowed the farmer access to his field on the other side of the canal.



MORRIS CANAL GREENWAY



THE MORRIS CANAL GREENWAY

Starting in 1831 the 102-mile-long Morris Canal became one of New Jersey's first major transportation systems. Since then the canal has been overshadowed, first by railroads, then by interstate highways. Fortunately, in many places the route of the canal has not been obliterated. It is now listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. Today, the Morris Canal

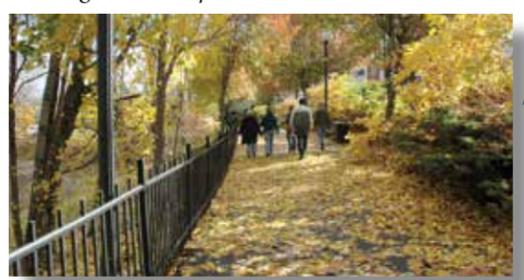
Greenway project plans to turn the former route of the canal into a recreation corridor that will transport hikers and bicyclists instead of canal boats.

In 2011, the Passaic County Department of Planning and Economic Development completed a feasibility study that identifies a proposed Morris Canal Greenway along the former route of the canal through six Passaic County communities, including the boroughs of Pompton Lakes and Woodland Park, cities of Clifton and Paterson, and both Little Falls and Wayne townships. The study has been adopted as an element of the Passaic County Master Plan.

Passaic County has many outstanding canal assets and 57% of the proposed Greenway route is already accessible and walkable. There are already several municipal canal parks and bikeways in Little Falls, Woodland Park and Clifton. Approximately four miles of trail are now complete. Many more miles are in the planning stages, and soon interpretive and directional signs will help hikers and bicyclists further enjoy their Greenway experience.

In the future, Passaic County aims to open additional sections of this historic canal route for public use, and bring Greenway projects in different communities together as a county-wide system.

The Little Falls Morris Canal Park provides a pleasant walk along the route of the canal from the Main Street business district to a Passaic River overlook near the former site of the canal's great stone aqueduct.



Passaic County's Greenway will eventually link up with other Morris Canal Greenway projects already underway in Warren, Sussex, Morris, and Hudson counties, forming a state-wide corridor along the entire route of the canal.



A short, water filled section of the canal is preserved at Clifton's Morris Canal Park & Jack W. Kuepfer Sr. Nature Preserve.

MORRIS CANAL GREENWAY

www.passaiccountynj.org/MorrisCanalGreenway

www.facebook.com/MorrisCanalGreenway