

Friends of Hopewell Quarry

Strategic Plan (2024-2029)

INTRODUCTION

Mission:

The mission of the **Friends of Hopewell Quarry** (FOHQ) is to preserve the Hopewell Quarry—a historic resource—as protected open space and, through it, serve the public in perpetuity.

Values Statement:

Friends of Hopewell Quarry is committed to the fundamental belief that access to clean and safe greenspace is a human right. We strive to preserve this historic resource as protected open space for the public and create an inclusive environment where visitors, volunteers, and staff of diverse backgrounds—regardless of culture, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, or ability—feel safe and welcome. We provide free amenities, lifeguards, and bilingual services to ensure a secure experience for all. Our stewardship of the land honors the traditional territory and current practices of the Lenni-Lenape peoples, fostering volunteerism and community involvement. We engage local communities and stakeholders to monitor environmental health and listen to underrepresented voices, particularly those from low-income and communities of color. Acknowledging the impact of human behavior on climate change, we aim to support those disproportionately affected and create a safe, accessible greenspace for all, working collaboratively towards environmental justice.

Vision:

Our vision is to provide seasonal freshwater swimming and recreational opportunities year-round in a parklike setting to the public with high regard for environmental stewardship, accessibility and cultural diversity. We strive to provide professional quality community programming to educate, inspire and promote the Quarry, the community, and the environs. We are dedicated to ensuring that our facilities, spaces, and places are open, welcoming, and engaging to all community members. We strive to provide water safety and swimming instruction to all.

History:

Since community members came together in 2016 to preserve the Hopewell Quarry, several important objectives have been achieved:

- Founding the Friends of the Hopewell Quarry (FoHQ) as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, making donations to FoHQ tax deductible.
- Securing New Jersey State Green Acre funds, Mercer County Open Space assistance funds, donations and loans from generous community members enabling the purchase of the Hopewell Quarry property in August 2021.
- Preserving the only public freshwater swimming lake in Mercer County, New Jersey.
- Beginning long-overdue stewardship upgrades to the grounds by replacing invasive species with native plants, trees, and gardens.
- Making the Quarry more accessible to an economically diverse audience with day pass options.
- Participation in the NJ Family First Discover Program allowing lower income families to receive discounted passes.
- Critical facility upgrades including a hand railing into the Quarry, replastering the kids' pool, replacing swim docks, and numerous safety upgrades.
- Expanding Quarry Programs; expanding the number of swimming classes and the ages served; establishing a wellness program; programing courses in the months other than June through August; educating the community about the environment and biodiversity of the Quarry property.
- Developing strategically beneficial relationships with the other Delaware and Hopewell Valley environmental groups and nonprofits, bringing many first-time visitors (campers and adults!) to the Quarry as well as technical and financial assistance.

Background and Methodology:

As FoHQ moves forward from its start-up period and the early infrastructure upgrade phase, we seek to continue critical property upgrades, implement ongoing pond restoration measures, stabilize earned and contributed revenue, further develop our operational systems and governance, hone our

vision for the Quarry's future, and find the most effective means of delivering programming to a wide-ranging and increasingly diverse audience.

During 2023, the FoHQ formed a Strategic Planning Committee and underwent a process of surveying internal and external stakeholders through emails to constituents, one-on-one interviews, community listening sessions, surveys, and a SWOT analysis led by external volunteer consultants. This strategic plan sets forth a broad vision for FoHQ's next five years. Action plans are then proposed for each goal, defining necessary steps, resources, and time frames to achieve the strategic plan.

Strategic Priorities

GOALS

1. **Strengthen organizational structure to ensure proficient governance and operational effectiveness.**
 - a. Build the **Board** by strengthening recruitment and developing new leaders.
 - i. Inventory current board member skills, expertise and involvement
 - ii. Create a matrix of desired board member skills, expertise and involvement
 - iii. Recruit 1 new board member(s) each year to fill gaps in matrix
 1. Areas of strategic need include fundraising, finance, NP management, land and water management, law and science.
 2. We have identified this may be an area where we need help from a consultant.
 - iv. Ensure there is a succession plan for executive board roles and board members
 - v. Improve onboarding and orientation for new board members
 - vi. Create a board handbook including term limits for members and executive roles
 - vii. Create a board engagement plan including goals for philanthropy, engagement and community outreach.
 - viii. Provide ongoing opportunities for board training

- b. Provide the resources to maximize **staff** effectiveness.
 - i. Hire additional staff members into year-round and seasonal positions
 - 1. Hire FT operations manager
 - 2. Hire PT assistant manager
 - 3. Rewrite ED job description as part-time role to focus on marketing, fundraising and finance, and remove ongoing operational functions now covered by operations manager.
 - ii. Assess and implement technological tools, software and processes to improve ease of marketing, fundraising, communications and membership sales to our constituents.
 - iii. Consider grants to upgrade software systems to allow improved collection of demographic data of our client base needed to apply for DEP and other grants.
 - iv. Create succession plan for staff
- c. Increase non-board **volunteer** engagement and strengthen volunteer capacity to serve organization needs.
 - i. Increase members of grounds stewardship and create an annual calendar for workdays, along with events to celebrate involvement.
 - ii. Partner with other local organizations and scientists to train “citizen scientists” who help monitor and mitigate environmental challenges.

2. **Strengthen fiscal health**

- a. Increase overall annual budget by 2029.
- b. Increase contributed income to meet costs and critical needs through a complement of individual, government, foundation, and corporate gifts and grants.
 - i. Increase **Individual** giving annually
 - ii. Increase Giving from **Foundation and Government** Sources
 - 1. Increase number of grant applications annually
 - 2. Hire part-time grant-writer or assign volunteer to research opportunities for average of 10-20 hours per month
 - 3. Research new opportunities and utilize grant management spreadsheet:

- a. Discuss funding opportunities at board meetings
- b. Create calendars for due dates for applications, reports and site visits

Create and implement **corporate** giving program

- 4. *Opportunities for corporations to engage and volunteer staff retreats, group memberships, service days, in-kind donations.*
- 5. Focus on matching gift opportunities with local and national corporations

iii. Implement basic **Planned Giving** program

- 1. Intentionally create opportunities and avenues to discuss deferred and non-cash giving, including stocks, IRAs, beneficiary designations and other legacy gifts

iv. Create Events program

- 1. Create special events for donors, staff and volunteers to celebrate and honor their contributions

c. Increase earned income through diversified and strategic programming and retail opportunities.

- i. Using feedback from community surveys, implement new and/or phase out appropriate programs
- ii. Seek funding or gifts in kind to underwrite programs
- iii. Collaborate with event planner to offer facilities for weddings and corporate events
- iv. Explore 3-season usage of the Quarry property and facilities
- v. Audience-specific events like adult-only swim hours
- vi. Increase number of swim lessons offered

3. **Preserve, protect, and enhance the Quarry property.**

- a. Develop and implement a lake management plan and water quality monitoring program
- b. Evaluate safety protocols to ensure a safe workplace, guest and volunteer experience for everyone on the property.
- c. Review the Property/Site Needs Assessment and complete the recommendations.

- d. Renew Board Discussions for Master Plan.
 - i. Engage a consulting firm to develop a long range and a five-year property master plan to support our goals.
 - ii. Develop a preservation /renovation/ alternative use plan for buildings and related infrastructure consistent with mission and program objectives.
 - e. Conserve the physical property and showcase its storied history through commemorative initiatives.
 - f. Develop a plan to preserve respite and solitude alongside access by a growing audience.
 - g. Expand the volunteer stewardship program to replace invasive species with native species; develop signage explaining the project.
4. **Strengthen marketing and promotion.**
- a. Develop a marketing plan to increase community awareness of the Quarry property as a hidden jewel for outdoor recreation and education, including water safety for all.
 - b. Upgrade website to reflect current priorities, initiatives and values
 - i. include strategic plan, mission, vision, Quality Management, and EDI statement
 - c. Consider a marketing committee of the Board of Directors.
5. **Expand programming that serves the community**
- a. Maintain commitment to quality programming while broadening, deepening, and diversifying audiences.
 - b. In furtherance of improved environmental justice, seek funding to underwrite free and sliding-scale swim and camp access to under-served communities.
 - c. Make facilities available for partner programs on and off-season.
 - d. Create and adopt a formal inclusion policy to ensure that the Quarry and its recreation facilities, programs and activities are accessible, welcoming, and inclusive to all.
6. **Build strategic partnerships.**
- a. Further increase community engagement through partnerships with businesses, corporations, nonprofits, camps, educational entities, and environmental and government agencies.

- b. Create FoHQ Advisory Board, including water and environmental specialists and emeritus board members.
- c. Continue to develop contact with key organizational leadership with partner organizations
- d. Continue to grow existing partnerships and forge new relationships with conservation and natural resource organizations for our own growth, knowledge and financial support, or for advisory board roles.