



"The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage."

For over fifty years, Independence National Historical Park has cared for our national icons and the historical lands on which they stand. In 2005, INHP took over responsibility for Washington Square. Working with the community, INHP will add Washington Square to the Superintendent's Compendium, which outlines permitted activities in areas throughout the park. Together, we will work to protect and preserve this historical square in the heart of Philadelphia.

Cultural Landscape

Washington Square is one of the original squares in the 1682 plan for the City of Philadelphia as designed for William Penn. It became a Potter's Field or Strangers' Burial Ground in 1706 and also served as a burial ground for the town's free and enslaved Africans. During the Revolutionary war it doubled as a military cemetery; more than 2,000 soldiers – both patriots and prisoners of war – were buried there and a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the American Revolution was established in 1953.

Washington Square is also home to a "Moon Tree," a sycamore tree planted in 1975 to honor the U. S. Bicentennial from seeds transported to the moon and back on the Apollo XIV mission in 1971. INHP is proud to act as stewards for Washington Square and to ensure respect for this valuable land.

Following the principle of heritage education, a key component of the NPS mission, we will ensure that this history is sufficiently highlighted and interpreted.

Resource Preservation

The mission of the NPS includes preserving our natural resources to "leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." At 6.64 acres, and with 1.6 miles of paved trails, Washington Square takes up nearly 13% of the total acreage that INHP oversees. INHP spends close to \$35,000 each year on Washington Square with over \$17,600 going towards the upkeep and replacement of plants and grass. Turf renovations needed during the past year due to natural resource degradation through use totaled \$2,592.72 with seed and fertilizer costs of \$268.00 and \$2,324.72 in labor costs.

Civic Engagement

Citizen involvement is a guiding principle throughout the NPS. INHP relies heavily on volunteers to supplement the work of park employees. In 2007, 30 dedicated volunteers donated well over 300 hours in Washington Square. These volunteers work tirelessly because of their belief in the NPS and the ideals that make up INHP. Community involvement will continue to be a vital component of our efforts in Washington Square.



Park Uses

Washington Square attracts hundreds of visitors a day from across the street and from around the world. The great variety of visitors to Washington Square creates a variety of park use requests. According to the NPS Management Policies (2006), "When proposed

park uses and the protection of park resources and values come into conflict, the protection of resources and values must be predominant." Whether it's a wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Veteran's Day, or a Juneteenth gathering, Washington Square means different things to different people. Students, both from local schools and from around the world enjoy the many educational and recreational opportunities that Washington Square provides. As a green space in an urban setting, Washington Square is a vital and integral part of the Philadelphia community, serves as a haven within the city and provides open space and trees for visitors to learn, rest, recreate, reflect, and relax.