



Grant for Coltsville Pedestrian Signs



The City of Hartford, in conjunction with iQuilt and Coltsville National Historical Park, successfully competed for a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant. FLAP grants are funded through the Federal Highway Administration and administered by the Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division. They are designed to “improve state and local transportation facilities that provide access to and through federal lands for visitors, recreationists and resource users.”

The “Coltsville National Historical Park Wayfinding and Safety” project will extend the existing Hartford downtown pedestrian wayfinding system to the Coltsville area. The \$135,000 project will improve crosswalks and other pedestrian infrastructure so visitors can easily and safely walk from downtown Hartford to your new national park.

Project design and execution will be conducted by the three partners and their principle representatives: Sandra Fry, Principle Planner and Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, Hartford Department of Development Services; Jackie Mandyck, Managing Director, iQuilt Partnership; and James Woolsey, Superintendent, Coltsville National Historical Park. If you would like additional information on the project please contact any of the three individuals.



Forge and foundry buildings below and flanking the onion dome.

National Park Service Begins Building Assessment for Visitor Center

Located within the historic Colt Armory industrial complex, just behind the East Armory and its iconic “Blue Dome,” are two structures known as the Forge and Foundry Buildings (or Building 8 and 10). These structures are the only remaining portions of the original 1850s era factory built by Sam Colt. The rest of the complex was built or rebuilt at various times over the years as they replaced structures or expanded.

These buildings will be the site of the park’s visitor center. Here visitors will find helpful park rangers to assist in visit planning and exhibits to explain Coltsville’s historical significance. The owners of the Colt Armory, Colt Gateway LLC, will donate these structures to the National Park Service (NPS). This donation was specifically referenced in the legislation authorizing Coltsville, and the NPS must take possession of the buildings and property before the park can be established. The buildings, however, are in very rough shape. To prepare for what will be a lengthy rehabilitation process, the NPS is already working on two projects for the eventual restoration.

The first step is an in-depth historic structures report for both buildings. Research for the report is already underway. This report will detail the history of the buildings and how they changed over time. It will inform NPS decision making as the buildings are restored.

Next will be a formal evaluation of both structures along with recommendations for rehabilitation. There will be two specific outputs. We know the

entire project will take several years so it is important to responsibly mothball the structures. This emergency stabilization work will ensure there is no more deterioration and that the buildings are not safety hazards. This will be followed up by a larger report that will recommend specific long-term preservation strategies and provide “Class C” estimates for the cost of the larger project. With this information in hand the NPS will understand what needs to be done and how much it will cost. We can then work to acquire the money needed to complete the project.



Interior of one of the forge/foundry buildings

Bert’s Back!!!

On May 15th Coltsville’s first Ranger Bert Barnett is returning for a second season as the Coltsville Ranger. Bert was the face of Coltsville last year. Hundreds of visitors enjoyed the tours and many commented that the tours made them proud of the Hartford heritage. Bert will be providing tours, lectures, and other interpretive services this season. In addition, approval has been granted to recruit the first permanent Coltsville Ranger. Recruitment is currently underway for this position.



Michael Zaleski, President and CEO of Riverfront Recapture describes the future riverwalk south.

Riverfront Recapture

Riverfront Recapture was founded in 1981, at a time when there was no recreational use of the Connecticut riverfront in the Hartford area. It was created to lead a public-private effort to connect Hartford and East Hartford to the river in ways that would enhance residents' quality of life and make the region a better place to live, work, and play. A key moment for the organization occurred in 1998 when the Riverfront Recapture assumed responsibility for the management of four parks.

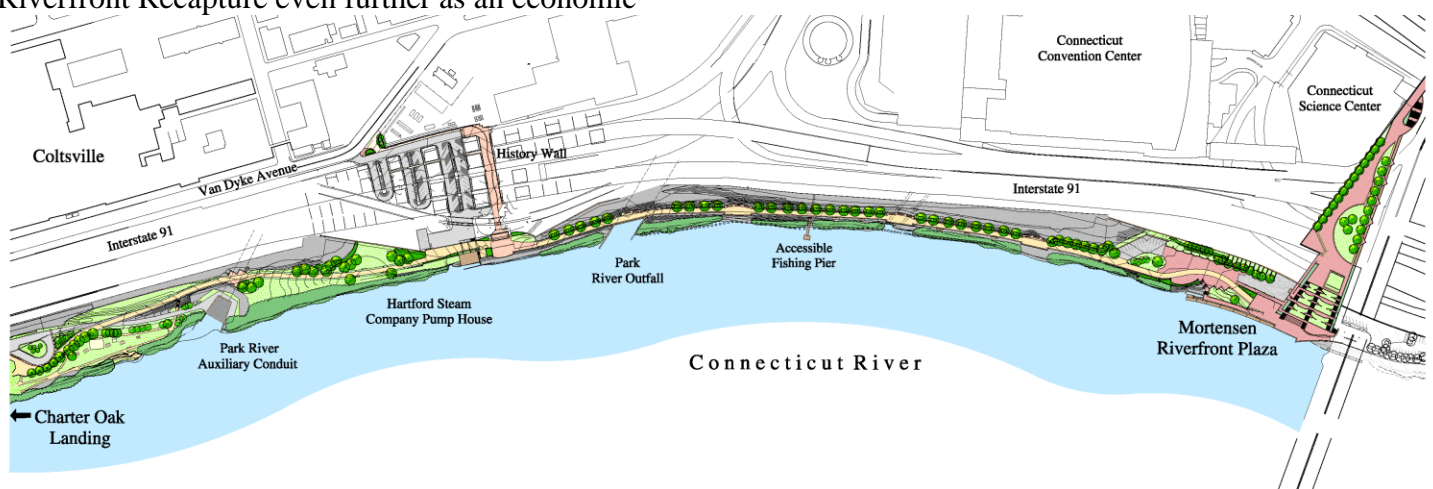
Michael Zaleski joined the organization as President and CEO in June 2015. With a background in economic development, he is excited about taking Riverfront Recapture even further as an economic

engine for the region and making the four parks more widely-utilized destinations for residents and visitors.

Riverfront Recapture currently manages four parks, three in Hartford and one in East Hartford, and each park caters to different audiences. Riverside Park is home to many recreational sports and activities including volleyball and cricket leagues; Mortensen Riverfront Plaza is known for large events and as a commuter walkway, and Charter Oak Landing, the park closest to Coltsville, is a great spot for fishing, picnics, and evening concerts.

Michael Zaleski's next goal for the Riverfront Recapture is "to create a unique destination that draws people to the riverfront parks". As a key to accomplish this goal, he emphasizes the creation of programs, events, and activities that can be enjoyed at the parks. One of the programs that has been hugely successful is the community rowing program, which is the second largest in New England. An area for expansion is the proposed new future Riverwalk South (pictured below), which would include direct access to Coltsville, and a history wall focused on the storied history of the riverfront.

Zaleski shared that the most important aspect of the effort is the approximately 2,000 volunteers a year who support the program. He indicated that he is pleased because "people care" about the parks.



FUTURE RIVERWALK SOUTH

Colt-Baxter Steam Engine

At the end of the Civil War, Elizabeth Colt was looking to diversify Colt Arms and utilize the now excess manufacturing capacity. One of the efforts was to manufacture the Baxter Steam Engine, at times labeled the Colt-Baxter Steam Engine.

William Baxter designed the engine in 1868, with Colt Arms starting to manufacture the engine in 1871. It was a combination of engine and boiler in a single movable unit. In July 1871, 100 Baxter engines were found widely scattered over the country. By the fall of 1872 more than 50 were in New York City alone, and a year later over 800 were in daily use, a figure that increased to thousands in May 1874, as well as many in use abroad. There are indications that as many as 250,000 of these very popular engines were produced by Colt Arms.

The Colt-Baxter was made in sizes graduated at 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 horsepower and boilers could be bought "oversized" if the user needed steam for other uses in production. They were favored by small shops as they were self-contained, convenient, and embodied many unique engineering principles.

The engines were designed to be "transportable", taking up a space about 5 feet by 5 feet, and standing 9 feet tall. They ranged in weight from 1,280 pounds for the 2-horse-power to 4,300 pounds in the 10 horse-power. The engines were designed with interchangeable parts.

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