

National Endowment for the Humanities

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Historic Hudson Valley, Inc.

Philipsburg Manor Mill Pond Restoration Project

639 Bedford Rd.

Pocantico Hills, NY 10591

CHA-296061

BACKGROUND

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awards grants and cooperative agreements to support research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities. The proposed activity is supported with financial assistance authorized under the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-209) to enable infrastructure development and capacity building, including through the design, purchase, construction, restoration, or renovation of facilities needed for humanities activities and historic landscapes.

Philipsburg Manor, a National Historic Landmark site, located in Sleepy Hollow, New York, is a former provisioning plantation with a manor house, wharf, mill, barn, and a modern visitors center owned and operated by Historic Hudson Valley, Inc., a 501(c)3 a non-profit educational organization. In 1964, the site was restored to recreate its historic appearance circa the 1730s-40s, when it included a dam across the Pocantico River to create a millpond and hydropower for the Philipsburg Manor gristmill.

In recent years, a series of storms, culminating with Hurricane Ida in 2021, deposited large amounts of sediment and debris into the millpond. The millpond, which is intended to have 14 acre-feet of reservoir capacity, is now filled with approximately 13 acre-feet of solid material that allows almost no waterflow. As a result, the Philipsburg Manor Mill Pond (PMMP) is no longer functional as a reservoir and has lost flow, volume and water pressure needed to turn the waterwheel that powers the mill. This creates added stress for the dam, makes the areas downstream of the millpond vulnerable to storm flooding, and significantly disrupts the historic landscape at Philipsburg Manor.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed project will remove approximately 20,000 cubic yards of sediment and debris from the PMMP, restoring the property to its original function and historic appearance and reservoir capacity. Utilizing both mechanical and hydraulic dredging methods, the sediment will be dewatered using geotubes that retain the dredged sediments and allow the water to return to the Pocantico River. The sediments in the pond were sampled and tested using a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) approved protocol. The chemical analysis was reviewed by the NYSDEC, and the sediments have been categorized as general fill. The sediments will be dewatered on the Village of Sleepy Hollow Commons in the

area used for overflow parking by Historic Hudson Valley. The solids will be removed from the site post dewatering and will be disposed of at the facility permitted to compost organic matter and produce landscaping soils.

CONCLUSION

NEH hereby adopts the amended New York State Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) prepared by Historic Hudson Valley, Inc., in place of a NEH NEPA Condensed Environmental Assessment without further modification for the proposed action described above. After reviewing the FEAF and the supporting materials provided by the grant applicant, NEH finds that the assessment properly documents the proposal’s status of compliance with NEPA and related environmental laws and requirements listed therein.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (44 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508) and the National Endowment for the Humanities NEPA Implementing Procedures, NEH determines, with the mitigation measures described in Part III, the proposed action will have no significant adverse impact on the quality of the human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.



Ann Piesen, MCP

7/8/2024

Date

Federal Preservation and Environmental Officer
National Endowment for the Humanities