

Cultural Resource Inventory and Management Plan Harkness Memorial State Park Waterford, Connecticut

In 2008, AHS staff conducted a cultural resource inventory of Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford, Connecticut. The purpose was to identify significant above- and below-ground resources and to prepare an Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan (ICRMP) to assist the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in planning Park improvements without adversely affecting significant cultural resources. The 175-acre property is one of the most popular parks in the state, with spectacular views of Long Island Sound. It includes Eolia, the elegant summer mansion of the Harkness family built in 1906, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places based on its former function as the Harkness family estate. Eolia still stands on the Park grounds, as do 18th and 19th century farmhouses, stables, an ice house, and other buildings. Numerous ancillary structures, including a chapel, barns, and greenhouses, as well as a second mansion, have been demolished over the years, but the exact locations of these structures had never been recorded. The Park is also located in a prime area of prehistoric and colonial-period settlement.

The cultural resource inventory included documentary research, interviews, and shovel test pits, and identified buried archaeological resources from the Harkness and pre-Harkness periods. Two prehistoric-period sites were identified, along with multiple historic-period components, some associated with standing structures. AHS staff prepared an ICRMP based on the findings, inclusive of below-ground resources and standing historic structures.

