
CAMP COLUMBIA

Morris, Connecticut



Camp Columbia, the former engineering field school of Columbia University, is now owned by the State of Connecticut and managed by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). When the DEP obtained guardianship of the 600 acre parcel in Morris and Bethlehem, Connecticut, it provided them with an opportunity to develop a comprehensive management plan to celebrate the camp's history and guide future use. Historical Perspectives, Inc. (HPI) was engaged to assist the Connecticut DEP on suitable public use, the disposition of extant structures, and recommend an appropriate designation for the property that would both represent its public purpose and reflect its renowned past.

Camp Columbia was operated as an engineering field school by Columbia University from 1891 until the late twentieth century. The presence of the university and its students greatly affected the town of Morris during that time, and its residents continue to feel a strong connection to the site. Much less understood is the history of the land prior to the arrival of Columbia University, which includes a century of settlement and farming, and probable precontact occupation by Native Americans. HPI's assessment of the standing structures and archaeological sensitivity of the site, and assistance in the preparation of a strategic management plan, served to facilitate preserving the camp's rich cultural history.

