**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Historic Perkasie Park to seek National Historic Register status

*Former religious camp ground was site of Redcoats, famous church struggle, political campaigns, public ceremonies and 134 years of history*

June 13, 2014 (Perkasie, Pa) - The Perkasie Park Association has retained leading historical preservation firm Wise Preservation Planning LLC to lead the Association’s application to the National Register of Historic places, the Association announced today.

If approved, Perkasie Park would become just the second site in Perkasie Borough to be listed currently on the National Register, joining the South Perkasie Covered Bridge, which was accepted in 1980.

The Perkasie Park Association is a non-profit 501c7 corporation dedicated to maintaining the heritage of the historic private facility. The Park was first used by residents in 1872, seven years’ before Perkasie incorporated as a Borough.

The project’s costs will be fully funded by the private Park Association.

“Perkasie Park is an outstanding and long-overdue candidate for the National Register,” said Scott Bomboy, the president of the Association’s board of directors. “The Park was a critical driver of Perkasie’s growth in the 1880s and 1890s, and it just may be the best-preserved example of a religious camp meeting ground left in the state of Pennsylvania.”

“Perkasie Park is a community jewel that for years has been a wonderful place of peace and respite for those wanting to enjoy their summers in the country,” said Representative Paul I. Clymer, who represents Perkasie in the state House of Representatives as part of the 145th legislative district.

Wise Preservation Planning is a critical partner of the application process, said Bomboy, because of its extensive experience in qualifying properties for historical recognition. Wise Preservation, based in Chester Springs, Pa., has successfully prepared nearly 30 National Register and National Historic Landmark nominations, reflecting the firm’s expertise in history, historic architecture, and documentation.

“It’s a lot of work to prepare a nomination. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has very high standards and often requires several revisions. After state review, the National Park Service closely scrutinizes nominations before they can be listed on the National Register,” said Robert Wise, president of Wise Preservation.

As part of the partnership, the Perkasie Park Association has spent the past 15 months compiling more than 1,000 pages of original documents and hundreds of original photographs to support the application process.

“It’s great that the Perkasie Park Association is able to provide so much information about the Camp’s early history. Fortunately the Camp looks much as it did in the past; architectural integrity is critical to the National Register evaluation process,” said Wise.

Adds Seth Hinshaw, Wise’s Senior Preservation Planner and a noted scholar in religious architecture, “People today have no idea about the importance of camp meetings to the religious and social life of families in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Camp Meetings were spiritual retreats, usually found in very natural settings, which attracted thousands of urban and rural families alike. It’s wonderful that Perkasie is one of the few that survives to maintain this aspect of the nation’s spiritual heritage.”

Perkasie Park’s roots date back to the winter of 1777-1778, when the Stout family used the current park’s woods to hide their livestock from Redcoats who had taken over the family’s barn.

Less than a century later, the Park became the first public-gathering facility in the village of Perkasie, when it was used in 1872 to host gatherings and church picnics. In 1882, the current Perkasie Park Association was formed to organize camp meetings, family reunions and Sunday school picnics on the 22-acre facility.

During the 1880s and 1890s, Perkasie Park attracted as many as 25,000 people on its annual camp meeting Sunday, along with 6,000 horses. The *Doylestown Intelligencer* called the annual camp meeting the second-biggest event in Bucks County, after the annual county fair. It was also the site of a well-publicized church feud within the Evangelical Association church, which ended in 1922. (The Evangelical Association and a successor organization later merged with the United Methodist Church.)

After the turn of the last century, the Park was also used for political rallies and public ceremonies. In 1923, Gifford Pinchot, the founder of the National Park Service, began his successful Pennsylvania gubernatorial campaign at Perkasie Park.

Today, the Park Association maintains its Victorian traditions by holding regular seasonal religious services, and making considerable investments in maintaining a 132-year-old facility that contains 60 historic cottages and an outdoor auditorium that is on the Bucks County Heritage Conservancy list.

The Association and Wise Planning expect the registration application process to take about a year.

**For more information, contact**:  
  
Scott Bomboy, President, The Perkasie Park Association, 200 South Ninth Street, Perkasie, PA. Phone: 215-527-1016. E-mail: [sbomboy@yahoo.com](mailto:sbomboy@yahoo.com). Media can use images, with credit, available at [www.perkasiepark.com](http://www.perkasiepark.com).

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