



## Project Description: Removal of Big Meadows Cottages

The National Park Service proposes to demolish five historic buildings in the Big Meadows area, and we welcome any comments you may have about the project and its effects to historic properties and the human environment as part of scoping for the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA).

The five buildings are known as the Big Meadows Cottages or the Maids Cabins. The cabins sit behind the Crescent Rock Cottage (see maps for specific location). The park's concessionaire, Virginia Sky-Line Company, built Cottage A (BM-1156) and B (BM-1157) around 1933 and Cottage C (BM-0314), D (BM-0315), and E (BM-0316) around 1939; all were constructed at Swift Run Gap. In 1955, the Virginia Sky-Line Company moved the cottages to their present location, removed the original porches, and added a bathroom extension to the rear of each cottage. These cottages are contributing structures in the Skyland Drive National Historic Landmark District (entered in the National Register of Historic Places on September 19, 1997, amended October 6, 2008). The period of significance for the district is 1931-1952.

See maps and historic and current photographs at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/SHEN>.

These buildings were used by the park's concessionaire as employee housing and, for the last 10 years, as storage. In 2013, the park reacquired control of the buildings. The cottages are currently in poor condition. The park does not have an identified purpose for these cabins and cannot justify the cost to rehabilitate them for another potential use. The "Draft Cultural Landscape Report for Big Meadows" (2015) recommends removal of these cabins. Aside from the poor condition of the cabins, the report states "...they were not part of the National Park Service master plan for Big Meadows...As employee housing, they were never a highly visible element of the landscape and were not essential elements of the historic Big Meadows development."

Shenandoah National Park currently maintains approximately 300 historic structures across the entire park. The park will mitigate any lead paint, asbestos, or hazardous materials in the buildings before demolition. After the proposed removal of the buildings, the area will be restored with native vegetation.

The National Park Service will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office to mitigate the adverse effect from the demolition of the buildings. The agreement requires the park to document the buildings according to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey including taking



photographs of the buildings, gathering drawings, and assembling a short history. In addition, the National Park Service will document the location of the cabins as an archaeological site.

Currently, the National Park Service is proposing to draft a categorical exclusion for NEPA compliance for this project and will also be collecting any comments about this course of action.

Comments on the action are welcomed. Comments should be posted online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/SHEN> or sent to: Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park, Attn: Big Meadows Cottages, 3655 U.S. Highway, 211 East, Luray, VA 22835.

After the public comment period has closed, the National Park Service will complete its consultation with the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation (ACHP), affected tribes, and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and finalize the Memorandum of Agreement. The National Park Service will notify the public of its decision through a press release and posting to the planning website.