



# Theodore Roosevelt Island

## Cultural Landscape Report/ Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect

July 2017

### About the Project

The National Park Service (NPS) is initiating a Cultural Landscape Report/ Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect (CLR/EA) for Theodore Roosevelt Island (TR Island). The purpose of the project is to provide guidance and recommendations for the long-term stewardship and preservation of the park. The project will result in recommendations for preserving historically significant features within the site and improving or modernizing certain visitor amenities, access areas, and conditions.

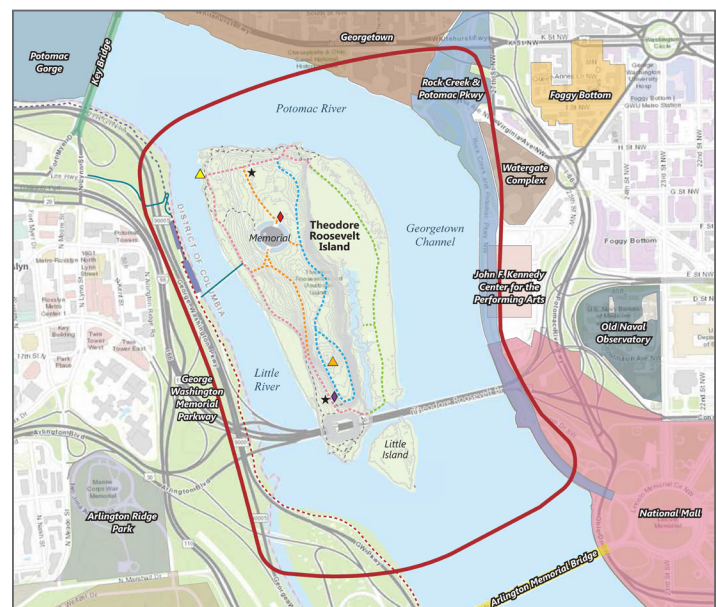
TR Island is a memorial to the 26th president of the United States, spanning the jurisdictions of Washington, DC and Rosslyn, Virginia. The park is administered by the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP).

### Park Management Philosophy

**Preserve and maintain** Theodore Roosevelt Island's natural environment and historic features while providing public access, education, interpretation, and other low impact uses that are compatible with the cultural landscape and natural surroundings.

### Project Area

The Cultural Landscape Report/ Environmental Assessment will provide historical analysis and treatment recommendations for the Study Area outlined in red on the map below.





## Project Purpose

- Provide *guidance for preserving* the cultural landscape.
- *Identify and document* landscape characteristics, patterns, and features that convey historical significance.
- *Recommend a treatment approach* from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (SOI Standards) to guide long-term stewardship.
- *Provide a framework* for NPS to appropriately *apply preservation measures* when planning updates at the site.
- Ensure the improvement planning process properly *considers the significance* of the cultural landscape and historical features of these sites so that the historical context may be preserved.
- Promote a better *visitor experience*.

## Project Need

- *Preserve* the park's historically significant features.
- *Improve and modernize* certain visitor amenities, access areas, and conditions.



## Issues in Project Area

### Historic Comfort Station Functionality

- Poorly functioning and only open seasonally
- Not universally accessible



### Circulation

- No universally-accessible land trails
- Social trails degrading natural and cultural resources
- Rehabilitate Bridge 31 on Mt. Vernon Trail of the George Washington Memorial Parkway for safer pedestrian/bicycle travel
- No shoreline access by land or water



### Orientation & Wayfinding

- Lack of clear wayfinding signage

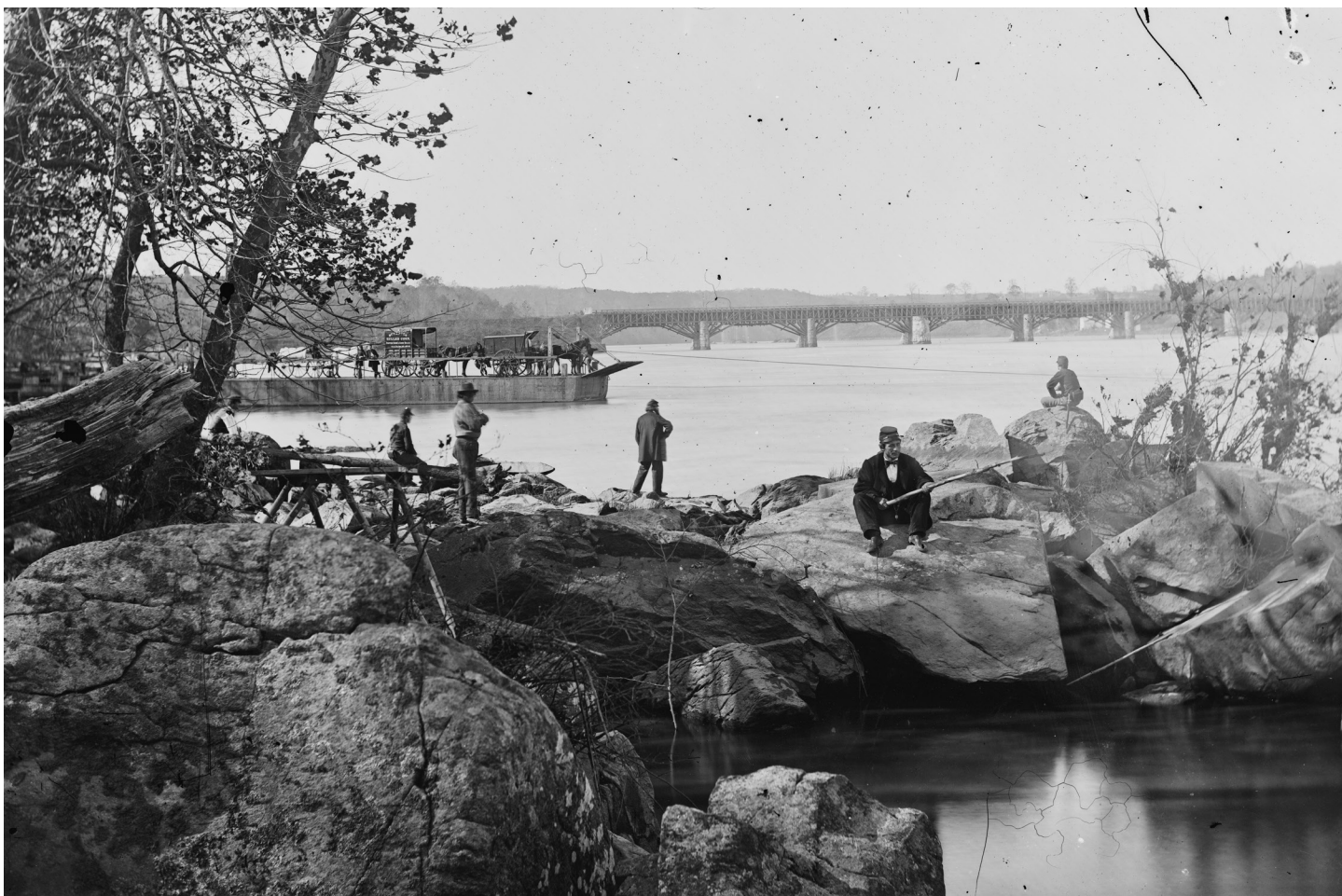
### Interpretation

- Outdated, scarce interpretive materials

### Vegetation Management

- Memorial site's designed landscape is overgrown and missing key plants
- Emerald Ash borer is causing significant tree loss





1860, Georgetown Ferry-boat Carrying Wagons from rocks on Masons Island. (Library of Congress)

## Site History & Significance

### Anacostien/ Analostan Island

TR Island has been in use for many centuries--the earliest known inhabitants were the Necostin people, who utilized "Analostan Island" as a fishing village until about 1717.

### Mason's Island

The Mason family established a ferry from the island to Georgetown in 1748 and John Mason settled on the island in the late 1700s. He established a plantation, constructed a mansion and laid out fields for farming.

During the Civil War (1861-1865), Union troops were stationed on the island. It was also utilized as a camp for the first regiment of black soldiers formally mustered into federal service, the 1st U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) and, later, a fugitive slave camp.

### Theodore Roosevelt Island

After falling into disuse, the Roosevelt Memorial Association (now Theodore Roosevelt Association) purchased the island in 1931. They donated the land to the federal government the following year for the specific use of creating a memorial to President Theodore Roosevelt.

The Olmsted Brothers, a renowned landscape architecture firm, was engaged to design the memorial island. Many of the trails and vegetation on the island today date from this period (1932-1937).

The Memorial Plaza was designed by landscape architect Eric Gugler and sculptor Paul Manship. Its construction began in 1961 and was dedicated in 1967. The pedestrian bridge from the Virginia Mainland to the island was completed in 1979.



1955, Naturalist and Tour Group (Brochure, TR Center)

## Planning Timeline

### Fall 2016:

- Internal scoping
- Public information sessions

### Spring-Summer 2017:

- Draft Cultural Landscape Report, NEPA, and Section 106 Initiation

### Summer 2017:

- Public scoping (July 31 - Sept. 8)
- Draft Cultural Landscape Report & Identify Alternatives

### Fall-Winter 2017:

- Refine Alternatives & Assess Effects
- Draft Cultural Landscape Report

### Winter-Spring 2018:

- Public review of report
- Final Cultural Landscape Report - EA & NPS Decision Document



1967, Theodore Roosevelt Island Memorial (White House. via TR Center)

## How You Can Be Involved

The NPS welcomes your input on what the current issues are within the project area and potential ideas for improvements that will maintain the historical significance and integrity of the park.

## On-Site Open House

Park staff will be available to provide information on the project and how you can participate at the new plaza directly south of the TR Island parking lot on Thursday, August 3rd from 12:30 to 4:00 pm.

## How to Comment

Please submit your comments online at:

[https://parkplanning.nps.gov/tri\\_clr\\_ea](https://parkplanning.nps.gov/tri_clr_ea)

or by mail to:

Brenda Wasler, Environmental Protection Specialist  
Subject: TR Island CLR/EA

George Washington Memorial Parkway  
Headquarters

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The NPS will also be hosting a Facebook Live event (<https://www.facebook.com/NPSGWMP/>) on Monday, August 14, 2017

**Comments are requested no later than September 8, 2017.**



1953, TRI-Island visitors and park ranger in wood duck launch on Potomac River (National Park Service)