



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Oregon Caves National Monument
19000 Caves Highway
Cave Junction, OR 97523



April 23, 2012

Greetings:

The Oregon Caves National Monument is inviting public comment on a proposal to address safety issues and improve accessibility at the Chateau. Constructed in 1934, this National Historic Landmark (NHL) hotel became a property managed by the National Park Service (NPS) in 2003. The Oregon Caves Chateau is an outstanding example of rustic architecture, a design that strives to match structures with their natural surroundings. It also is the only building within twenty miles of the Monument where food service and overnight lodging are available to the visiting public during the summer and part of the spring and fall shoulder seasons.

The building is presently equipped with both fire detection and fire suppression systems. However, coverage is limited and most means of egress do not meet current life and safety requirements. There also are limited public and private spaces that meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. Additionally, most interior systems (plumbing, electrical, etc.) are original and have exceeded their service lives. The waste water system has failed in the past and caused water damage to the Chateau.

Now that this NHL is owned by the American people, it is vital that the NPS determines how it can meet safety, accessibility, and preservation needs in a way that is timely, cost-effective, and compatible with its status as a national historic landmark. These improvements could include an elevator, accessibility ramps, emergency exit routes, waste water and electrical system improvements, and replacement of the interior wood fiber, ceiling and wall finishes.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act, the NPS is announcing a 30-day public scoping period to solicit public comments on this proposal entitled *"An Environmental Assessment for the Rehabilitation of the Oregon Caves Chateau to Provide for Visitor Safety"*.

Scoping is the first step for involving individuals, organizations, agencies, and other interested parties in the planning and project assessment process. Public scoping is designed to obtain input on issues and areas of concern related to the project, including a suitable range of alternatives, the nature and extent of potential environmental impacts and benefits, and appropriate mitigation strategies. Because the environmental assessment (EA) will analyze many important issues your participation is encouraged and needed. We look forward to your involvement in this process to ensure that your concerns and ideas regarding the rehabilitation of the Oregon Caves Chateau are adequately considered and evaluated.

During this scoping period, the public is invited to identify any issues or concerns they might have with the proposed project so that the NPS can appropriately consider them in the preparation of the EA. Public review and comments on the EA will also be invited when it is released next year.

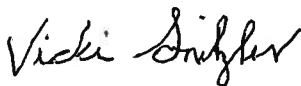
In addition, the NPS invites the public to learn more about the project and provide comments at an open house from **10:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Oregon Caves Chateau on May 12, 2012**. At those times, NPS staff will collect oral and written comments. On that day as well, caves tours will be offered free of charge on a first come, first served basis from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

You may submit comments electronically at the National Park Service's *Planning, Environment, and Public Comment* website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ORCA>) or submit written comments to:

Vicki Snitzler, Superintendent
Oregon Caves National Monument
1900 Caves Highway, Cave Junction, OR 97523
Attn: *EA for the Rehabilitation of the Oregon Caves Chateau to Provide for Visitor Safety*

Please submit your scoping comments by May 21, 2012. Once the EA is developed, it will be made available for public review for a 30-day period. If you wish to be added to the Monument's mailing list for this or other announcements, please be sure to indicate that in your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vicki Snitzler".

Vicki Snitzler
Superintendent