

section h

SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY

The National Park Service's publication *Criteria for Parklands* serves as a screening tool for potential additions to the National Park System and states, "An area that is nationally significant also must meet the criteria for suitability and feasibility to qualify as a potential addition to the National Park System."

Suitability

The *Criteria for Parklands* states that for a proposal to be *suitable* an area must represent a cultural theme or type of recreational resource that is not already adequately represented in the National Park System or by another land-managing entity. The National Park Service publication goes on to explain that each proposal will be considered on a case-by-case basis by comparing it to existing NPS areas, looking for differences or similarities in character, quality, quantity, or a combination of resources and opportunities for public enjoyment.

The site is well known and recognized by scholars and Pacific Northwest residents as a significant location associated with World War II history on the home

front, Japanese American history, and the history of Bainbridge Island. The addition of the memorial site to the NPS, under alternatives B and C, would enhance the interpretive values and visitor opportunities within the United States and the National Park System.

The importance of the memorial site and its stories lies in its ability to greatly complement and interpret critical pieces of the history of the internment of Japanese Americans during the war by focusing on the before, during, and after stories within the home context of the Japanese American community. Thus, the memorial site fills a gap in resources by providing the actual physical site of these events, and augments NPS interpretive capacity at both Minidoka and Manzanar. While Minidoka and Manzanar provide compelling stories



Prior to the ferry's arrival, the U.S. Army carefully checked to see if all the Nikkei residents of the island who were to be "relocated" were accounted for. Segregated by family, all were issued identification tags.

Photo courtesy National Archives and Records Administration

about the internment of people at the remote WRA camps during World War II, Bainbridge Island's memorial site has the opportunity to tell, in depth and with firsthand local oral histories, the development of the pre-war community, the beginning of mass removal of Japanese Americans, the World War II experiences of the Japanese Americans and the Bainbridge Islanders, and the re-integration of Japanese Americans after their internment. Enhancing the connections between the memorial site and Minidoka and Manzanar is the fact that the Bainbridge Island residents removed from the island in 1942 resided in both internment camps during the war. Thus, the interpretive values of both NPS units, which were established because of their importance to telling the story of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, would be very much enhanced and expanded by the memorial designation of the Bainbridge Island site under alternatives B or C.

Visitor opportunities would be enhanced and expanded by having an authentic and significant site associated with the

internment and incarceration history in a major metropolitan area. Visitors would travel on a short ferry ride from Seattle to Bainbridge Island to visit the original site. The memorial site is easily accessible to the public and has the opportunity to attract a wide audience of visitors and school groups from the Seattle metropolitan area: a benefit that neither Minidoka or Manzanar, nor any of the other WRA camps can boast. Additionally, approximately 40,000 Japanese Americans live in the Seattle metropolitan area. The ability to connect with these populations for interpretation, outreach, and preservation of historic resources is critical to the long-term management of the site.

There are other sites that commemorate the history of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. These include the Japanese American Historical Plaza along the Portland, Oregon, waterfront and the National Japanese American Memorial in Washington, DC. These two memorials function as commemorative places to honor those who were interned. It must be noted

that neither of these sites is historically significant or historically connected with the internment story. Furthermore, they do not provide the educational information necessary to understand this history, nor connect the history with the actual places where it occurred. These memorials are beautifully crafted, but they lack national significance and authenticity of place.

Integrity

There is a concern over the historical *integrity* of the site. The ferry dock is essentially gone, and there are other intrusions on the historic scene that compromise its integrity. The major intrusion, the well house, is being removed by the city; the overgrown vegetation will be removed to reveal the historic contours seen in the historic photographs. With the construction of the memorial, the site will be impacted to provide a contemplative and interpretive setting suitable for a memorial site. However, the larger setting on Eagle Harbor, the location of

the Taylor Avenue off one of the primary island roads, and some key historic features (the road corridor, cedar tree, nearby Japanese-American properties, etc.) remain largely unaltered. Earlier discussions with the National Historic Landmark program reviewed these concerns and refocused the community and the team's efforts from designation as an NHL to the creation of a memorial. As a memorial, the setting and location provide a powerful framework for commemorating and interpreting the events that occurred here 62 years ago.

Feasibility

The test for the *feasibility* of creating a new unit of the National Park System is tied to the site's size and configuration to assure protection, preservation, and public access, as well as having the potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Other factors to consider are land ownership, acquisition costs, access, threats to the resource, and staff or development requirements. The eight-acre site is of sufficient size

and configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment.

This site's feasibility for management as a unit of the National Park System is based on the Nikkei community's 60-plus years of unbroken connection to the site and their integration into the Bainbridge Island lifestyle, as well as the community's unwavering support before, during, and after the internment and incarceration period.

The commitment, dedication, and strength of the greater Bainbridge Island is a model of public- and private-sector partnerships that is supported at all levels of local, regional, state, and federal participation. Multi-level and ongoing efforts are moving this site toward a public place. It will memorialize a nationally significant event, and it represents the very soul of collaborative and cooperative grass-roots efforts to bring governmental focus to bear, supporting and responding to the diverse voices of the citizenry. The Northwest citizens have spoken in

their long-standing efforts and support to see that this site is preserved and have demonstrated their commitment through fund raising, local ordinances, community and state legislative resolutions and other political responses.

Given the breadth of public support there are a variety of management structures that make this site feasible as a valid concept for long-term management through partnerships. These partnerships would build upon existing foundations where the local government owns the land and provides on-site cooperative and on-going operational support. Community involvement and the federal government would provide on-site expertise for overall management guidance and facilitate technical and educational services.

The site would not be feasible as a new, full-blown, stand-alone unit of the National Park System because of the support costs. If the site became a satellite unit of Minidoka Internment National Monument, it would be feasible to manage with some administrative

assistance from Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Seattle. Because there would be no land acquisition costs and no involvement in site maintenance programs, the National Park Service could function as a true partner because of the partnership agreements. By designating the site as a unit of Minidoka Internment National Monument, it would stand the feasibility test.

The proposed size of the approximately eight-acre memorial is adequate to protect the historic scene, allowing the necessary development of a memorial area and accommodating the anticipated numbers of potential visitors. It meets the feasibility test.

The site offers an easily accessible and aesthetically engaging location from which to learn about the Japanese American community on Bainbridge Island before and after World War II, as well as the history of the internment and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

The Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial site offers a outstanding opportunity for a true partnership management arrangement. Presently it is understood that the actual site will be owned jointly by the City of Bainbridge Island and the Bainbridge Island Park & Recreation District and by agreement managed by the Memorial

Committee. The National Park Service through the use of agreements could assist the Memorial Committee to develop interpretive material that would be included in the Memorial Committee's visitor interpretive facility. There would be no acquisition costs and access to the area is straightforward, i.e., bicycle, private auto or future public transportation within the rural/suburban landscape, could easily handle the anticipated number of visitors. Because the visitor interpretive facility will be staffed by the Memorial Committee, the addition of National Park Service interpreters would enhance the capability of the memorial to serve the needs of the public.



Mrs. Kitamoto comforts her children prior to leaving the island, bound for Manzanar. The interpretive story is a human story about Japanese American immigration and settlement on Bainbridge Island and their forced removal from the island during World War II.

Photo courtesy National Archives and Records Administration

section i

INTERPRETATIVE THEMES

The primary interpretive themes address settlement, World War II, redress, and memorialization. No single entity can adequately cover the full interpretive story; however, all memorial partners, by stressing their own perspectives and capabilities, can present a complete interpretive package to the public: the Bainbridge Island World War II Nikkei Internment and Exclusion Memorial Committee can represent the people and their stories; the Bainbridge Island Historical Society can use the context of Bainbridge Island to tell the story; and the National Park Service can address how the Bainbridge Island story fits into the national context of the story (the Constitutional issues, the internment camps, World War II, the homefront.)

The first theme, ***Settlement and Exploration***, would cover:

1. The First People—the Suquamish Nation
2. The First Explorers—Captain George Vancouver, Lt. Charles Wilkes, USN, and the Hudson's Bay Company
3. Settlement of Bainbridge Island
 - a. Early sawmills on the island—1854
 - b. Stores and farms—1861 to present
 - c. Mosquito Fleet, ferries and transportation
 - d. Asian settlement—Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese beginning in 1857
 - i. Port Blakely Mill and *Nihonmachis*, 1883–1925
 - ii. Life on the farm: strawberries, greenhouses, and commerce, 1908–1942)
 - iii. Society and culture: schools, church, and recreation, 1908–1942

The second theme, ***World War II and Civil Liberties***, would cover

- a. Military importance of Bainbridge Island
- b. Arrests, relocation and the denial of civil and Constitutional rights
- c. Departure from Eagledale Ferry Dock
- d. The Camps
- e. Local support of the internees
- f. Return to the island
- g. The aftermath
- h. Protection of civil liberties

The third theme, ***Redress and Commemoration***, would cover

- a. Redress and presidential actions regarding the internment and incarceration
- b. The efforts of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Committee and the Bainbridge Island World War II Nikkei Internment and Exclusion Memorial Committee
- c. The City of Bainbridge Island and the Bainbridge Island Park & Recreation District Involvement
- d. The National Park Service recognition, studies, and commemoration
- e. “*Nidoto Nai Yoni*”: Let it not happen again