



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

APR 03 2014

The Honorable Mary Landrieu
Chair, Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair:

We are hereby transmitting the enclosed Wolf House Special Resource Study pursuant to Public Law 110-229, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008. The legislation authorized the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a Special Resource Study to determine if the Wolf House in Norfork, Arkansas, was eligible for designation as a unit of the national park system and to determine the methods and means for its protection and interpretation. The study was undertaken by the National Park Service (NPS).

The Wolf House is located on approximately one acre overlooking the confluence of the White and North Fork Rivers. The two-story, "dogtrot" plan, log building was constructed about 1829 as the first territorial courthouse in what was then Izard County in the Territory of Arkansas. Early county courthouses, often constructed of logs, were frequently the location of the first public services available to settlers of the American frontier. The "dogtrot" plan consisting of an open central breezeway that divided two rooms or "pens" was popular. The breezeway could serve as a respite during hot summer months as well as a place to post public notices. Built by Jacob Wolf, the Wolf House reverted to his ownership and served as his family home when the county court location was moved in 1835. The Wolf House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 for its architecture, and the building is currently managed by Baxter County.

Section 1a-5 of Title 16 of the United States Code establishes the criteria to be considered in the study of an area for potential inclusion in the national park system. A study area must possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources and represent one of the most important examples of a particular resource type in the country; be suitable and feasible for addition to the system; and appropriate for direct NPS management. The evaluation of national significance is the first step in a study process; if this criterion is not met, the study process is concluded.

The NPS evaluated the national significance of the Wolf House as a historic property against applicable National Historic Landmark (NHL) criteria. In order to meet NHL criteria, a property must have a high degree of integrity. The seven aspects or qualities of integrity include: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. For a property considered for its architecture and representation of a building type, it must retain those physical features that characterize the type, period, or method of construction that the property represents.

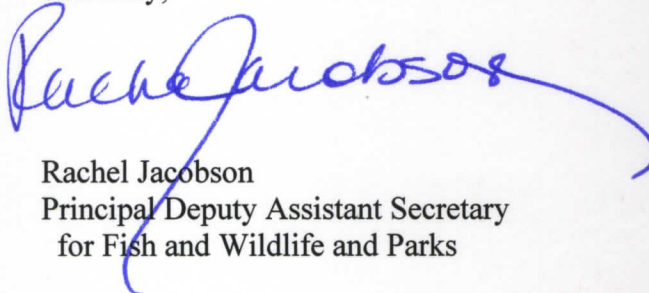
Retention of design, workmanship, and materials are usually most important. The Wolf House has gone through several major periods of change resulting in alterations, some reconstruction, restoration, and replication of materials. Given these factors, the Wolf House does not reach the threshold of high integrity of materials.

In addition, the setting is critical to understanding the context of the Wolf House. Though key elements of the setting of the Wolf House remain, there have been substantial changes to the original site and surroundings since its period of use as a courthouse. These changes include development of a railroad track, several homes, and a large parking lot – all of which disrupt the view from the Wolf House. The site itself has also been altered by the addition of three buildings since the 1970s: a log museum, a blacksmith shop, and the 1828 John Wolf Cabin (moved to the site from approximately 20 miles down the White River). These buildings have altered the scenery and detract from the integrity of the setting. Therefore, the NPS concluded that while the Wolf House is a rare surviving example of a once-common building type, the frontier log courthouse, it does not meet the high integrity standard to be eligible for NHL designation.

As a result, the Wolf House does not meet the national significance criterion for a new unit of the national park system. Due to this finding, the criteria of suitability, feasibility, and need for direct NPS management criteria were not evaluated in detail. No management alternatives were prepared, and no Federal actions are proposed. Opportunities for preservation and interpretation were identified as directed by the legislation authorizing the study.

An identical letter is being sent to the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate; the Honorable Richard N. Hastings, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, House of Representatives; and the Honorable Edward Markey, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources, House of Representatives.

Sincerely,



Rachel Jacobson
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Rick Crawford
The Honorable Mark Pryor
The Honorable John Boozman



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Ranking Minority Member,
Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources
United States Senate
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Dear Senator Murkowski:

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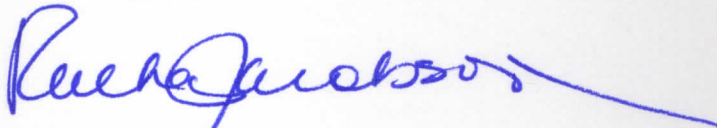
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An identical letter is being sent to the Honorable Mary Landrieu, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; the Honorable Doc Hastings, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, House of Representatives; and the Honorable Peter DeFazio, Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Natural Resources, House of Representatives.

Sincerely,



Rachel Jacobson
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

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The Honorable Doc Hastings
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are hereby transmitting the enclosed Wolf House Special Resource Study pursuant to Public Law 110-229, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008. The legislation authorized the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a Special Resource Study to determine if the Wolf House in Norfolk, Arkansas, was eligible for designation as a unit of the national park system and to determine the methods and means for its protection and interpretation. The study was undertaken by the National Park Service (NPS).

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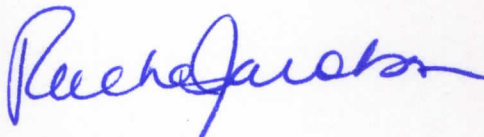
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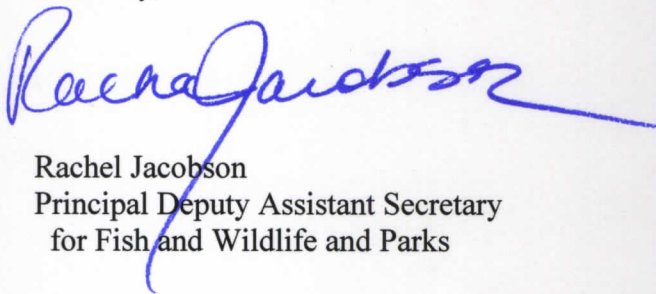
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