



**FORT HUNT PARK SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PUBLIC SCOPING REPORT
FINAL**

July 2015

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FORT HUNT PARK SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN PUBLIC SCOPING REPORT COMMENT SUMMARY

**FINAL
JULY 28, 2015**

INTRODUCTION TO SCOPING PROCESS

Project Description

Fort Hunt Park is located in Fairfax County, Virginia on the George Washington Memorial Parkway approximately 11.5 miles south of Washington, DC, 6 miles south of Old Town Alexandria, and 2.5 miles east of Mount Vernon Estate. Fort Hunt Park is a 105-acre park under the jurisdiction of the NPS. It is bounded by the Potomac River to the south and east and residential areas of Fort Hunt to the north and west.

Originally part of George Washington's Mount Vernon estate, the land that is Fort Hunt Park has undergone several transformations. Batteries at Fort Hunt defended the Potomac River during the Spanish-American War; the Civilian Conservation Corps operated a camp there during the Great Depression; and soldiers at Fort Hunt interrogated prisoners, trained pilots, and conducted intelligence operations during World War II. Today the park is a popular recreational and picnic area, and its surrounding forests serve as habitat for birds and other wildlife. The park provides a range of different recreational opportunities that include bicycling, volleyball, softball, jogging, picnicking and bird watching. Existing facilities at the park include five picnic areas, four pavilions, a loop road, nature trails, baseball fields, a playground, two volleyball courts, a maintenance yard, restrooms, and a park police station and paddocks. In addition, the property contains several historic structures including four gun batteries, a Battery Commander's Station, and the Non-Commissioned Officer's (NCO) Quarters from the Spanish-American War era.

Purpose and Need

The goal of this project is to develop a Site Development Plan (SDP) for Fort Hunt Park. The purpose of the SDP is to evaluate ways to enhance visitor experience by providing opportunities for in-depth information about the park's history, to protect the park's cultural and natural resources, and to increase park operational efficiency and safety.

The purpose of the SDP would be accomplished by maintaining current facilities and locating future facilities at Fort Hunt Park while balancing recreational activities with education and research activities. This comprehensive planning effort would incorporate new historical and archeological resource data obtained by the park. Increases in visitation and competing park uses need to be assessed in order to preserve park resources and enhance visitor experiences. Through interpretation, education and new facilities, the visitor's will gain a greater understanding of the rich history of Fort Hunt Park.

Scoping Period

The scoping period for the SDP began on January 26, 2015, and extended through March 4, 2015. Materials posted on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website

included boards and a video presented at the public meeting, as well as the scoping announcement and press release.

DESCRIPTION OF SCOPING MEETING

A public scoping meeting was held on April 5, 2015 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Martha Washington Public Library, located at 6614 Fort Hunt Road in Alexandria, Virginia. A press release was sent to local publications. It is estimated that approximately 80 people attended the meeting, with 56 attendees registering in the sign-in sheet.

The scoping meeting was conducted using an open-house format. Attendees could circulate throughout the room to speak to NPS and consultant representatives to address specific issues, as well as review the alternatives. A brief video outlining the project ran on a loop, providing attendees with the opportunity for a brief review of the project. Eleven boards stood on easels around the rooms. The boards addressed the following:

- Purpose and Need
- Recreation and Natural Resources
- Site History
- Fort Hunt Park Existing Conditions
- NEPA and Section 106 Processes
- How to Comment
- Alternative Concept 4: Interior Visitor Services
- Alternative Concept 5: Gateway Visitor Services
- Common to All Action Alternatives
- Revised Alternative Concepts following public input and new analysis

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Introduction

Ninety pieces of correspondence from seven states were received during the public comment period. The majority of the comments (approximately 80%) were received from Virginia, with many of the provided addresses located near the park. Another 10% of comments were submitted by Maryland residents. Several groups including Friends of Fort Hunt Park, National Parks Conservation Association, and the Potomac Valley River Bend (PVRB) Civic Association provided comments.

Agency comments were received from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR). VDHR encouraged further consideration of Alternative Concept 5 as the use of the historic NCO quarters would likely serve as a greater incentive for its preservation. VDHR further noted that the agency agreed with the NPS approach to development of the plan in previous consultations, and that VDHR concurs that the NPS planning process will not restrict consideration of alternatives to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any future undertakings' adverse effects on historic properties.

Comment analysis assists the planning team in organizing, clarifying, and addressing technical information pursuant to NEPA regulations. It also aids in identifying the topics and issues to be evaluated and considered throughout the planning process.

The following summary of comments is provided to outline the major groupings of comments, along with examples of specific comments to illustrate the trend. Where possible, the number of comments that were received in a specific area is noted; however, it should be noted that this was not a vote-counting process, and while the summaries provide information on the number of comments received, the emphasis was on the content of the comment rather than the number of times a comment was received.

General statements that the comments included

1. **Public involvement:** Commenters referenced the public involvement process, requesting the review date be extended and noting that they were notified not about the comment period and public meeting. Three comments contained similar statements. Seven comments noted the public open house was helpful to explain the proposals to the public and/or expressed appreciation for the changes to the alternatives in response to previous public comments. One comment stated the public open house meeting room and parking areas were too small for the turn out, and requested any future public meetings be held in a larger event space with more available parking.
2. **Support/Preference for No Action Alternative:** Commenters expressed support or a preference for the No Action Alternative, stating that the park does not need major new facilities such as a visitor center. Commenters noted the park is used frequently by local visitors and has high recreational value. The comments also described some maintenance and small scale improvements, such as historic plaques and maintaining existing facilities that could be included in the No Action Alternative. Ten comments contained similar statements. The following comments are representative of those submitted:
 - “I am opposed to the changes proposed for Fort Hunt Park. This park is much used and much loved by the community for picnics and other recreational uses. Even though it has a "national" park designation, it is really more of a "neighborhood" park and should be considered in that light.”
 - “Please leave Fort Hunt Park as it is. There is zero reason to spend taxpayer dollars on a visitor center. It is a bald eagle nesting area and should be left alone. We should not be encouraging additional visitors/tourists. I appreciate the natural beauty and wildlife in the park, and would encourage a few historic plaques to share the history of the park.”
 - “It is not clear to me why you would want to disturb a lovely park that is well used and loved. Granted that it has an entire long history but that could be included in the new museum at Fort Belvoir. Please keep it just the way it is. I object to a Visitor's Center.”
 - “There is absolutely no need to change Fort Hunt Park. It is well used by the people in Northern Virginia, and at certain times of the year the parking lots are full. Do not "fix" what is not broken, and do not spend taxpayers' money unwisely.”
3. **Support/Preference for Alternative Concept 4:** Commenters expressed support or a preference for Alternative Concept 4, citing the large visitor services zone and location in Area C, and fewer parking conflicts with Pavilion A. Five comments contained similar statements.
4. **Support/Preference for Alternative Concept 5:** Commenters expressed support or a preference for Alternative Concept 5, citing the use and preservation of current resources and historical structures, along with the location near the entrance to the park and away

from picnic Area C. Sixteen comments contained with similar statements. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “I found Concept 5 to be an excellent option as it incorporated the NCO House which has a great history. When entering a park it is important to have an opportunity to gather information as to the size, location, and available resources. Concept 5 will offer that to visitor by having visitor services sited at the entrance.”
- “Regarding the new, proposed concepts, I prefer Alternative Concept 5: Gateway Visitor Services. Establishing the visitor services zone near the entrance to the park is practical and a good use of current space; I recommend using the current office space in Pavilion A, since parking is already available.”
- “With respect to Area C: While it might have some utility in drawing visitors into the Park, the establishment of a visitor services function in picnic Area C would detract from the recreational utility of this popular and relatively private picnic area. Because of that, and because it seems to make more sense, we favor the alternative set out in Alternative Concept 5 that locates visitor services near the entrance to the Park.”

5. **Support/Preference for Action Alternatives 4 or 5:** Commenters noted that either Alternative 4 or Alternative 5 would be suitable to meet the needs of the community, park users, and historic preservation needs. Four comments contained similar statements. The following comment is representative of those submitted:

- “I am very pleased to see the latest Alternatives (4 & 5) for Fort Hunt Park's Development Plan and Environmental Assessment. I think either alternative is acceptable and look forward to the improvements without impacting current access and use to the vast majority of the park's grounds.”

6. **Oppose Alternative 4:** One commenter expressed opposition to Alternative 4.

7. **Oppose Alternative 5:** Commenters expressed opposition to Alternative 5, stating that the current office space in Pavilion A and the NCO do not provide adequate space for an interpretive center of the size needed to interpret the park's resources and host the World War II archives and artifacts. In addition, Alternative 5 is located near Pavilion A, which regularly hosts large picnics. Five comments contained similar statements. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “The facilities and locations proposed in Alternative Concept 5 are not appropriate to fulfill a visitor services function. Area A is close to the entrance to the park and contains Picnic Pavilion A, where very large picnics are regularly held. Some of these picnics attract more than a thousand people. Establishing an interpretive center in Area A would lead to competition for parking spaces used by picnickers and others using the park for strictly recreational purposes. It is a highly trafficked area and not conducive to showcasing the site's rich history.”
- “NPCA strongly supports building the interpretive center in Area C rather than Area A so we do not support Alternative Concept 5. Area C has the space to accommodate an interpretive center that is large enough to hold exhibits and host researchers. It will not create conflicts with visitors coming into the park entrance or those who are attending events in the pavilion. It would be difficult to enjoy an interpretive center during the many concerts and private events held at the pavilion throughout the year. And parking could become a problem if the interpretive center is located at the pavilion. Area C is also away from major picnic areas that are full of people and quite noisy throughout the year.

NPCA believes the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) Quarters should be restored and perhaps used for NPS staff offices. It is too small to host the much-needed interpretive center. The NCO Quarters also pose accessibility problems due to its outdoor and indoor staircases; and narrow hallways. The remaining rooms are small and the basement provides additional accessibility problems”

8. **Support for an Interpretive/Visitor Facility:** A number of commenters expressed support for the establishment of an interpretive/visitor facility within Fort Hunt. The interpretive facility should be large enough to educate visitors, include interactive exhibits, host school groups, and accommodate researchers. The comments noted that waysides or kiosks are inadequate to interpret the park’s history, and that the WWII artifacts and oral history interviews that have been collected need to be made available to the public. Twenty-nine commenters provided similar statements, with 17 specifically calling out Area C as the location for the interpretive center, away from large picnic areas at Pavilions A and B as well as near the former World War II buildings. The other comments indicated a preference for the interpretive/visitor facility near the park entrance or did not state a preference.

Comments also noted that the description of visitor services in the action alternatives are vague, and that the alternatives should include an interpretive facility footprint to be evaluated in the EA. Some of the comments supporting an interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park noted that the center’s funding and completion should be prioritized over other elements in the action alternatives, such as realigning Loop Road. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “These comments strongly support creating a new interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history. Such a center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and have secure space for historians, other researchers, journalists and interested members of the public to have access to oral history interviews of veterans who served at PO Box 1142, the World War II top-secret military intelligence installation located on this site.”
- “The comments also question removing two sections of the loop road and realigning them to avoid Historic Land Use Restoration Areas. While it would be useful to do this if funding were sufficient to establish both an interpretive center and realign the road to further protect the historic land use areas and perform archeological research in those areas, the reality is that funding for the National Park Service (NPS) has been declining since 2008. The NPS is having problems maintaining current facilities and has experienced a meaningful decline in staff across the National Park System. The interpretive center has much higher priority than realigning the two sections of the loop road.”
- “While we recognize that NPS has sought comments at this stage of the process on the alternatives to be considered, FFHPI's comments on the alternatives cannot be separated from the ultimate question of what type of visitor interpretation function should be established. The footprint for the facilities needed in this regard will impact the environmental impact assessment and historical impact assessment to be performed on the alternatives before one is selected. We therefore begin below with FFHPI's views in that regard. We then set forth our comments on certain features of NPS's revised alternatives.”
- “Please keep a visitors center low-key. Repurpose the NCO house but share its history with park users.

9. **Preserve and Interpret Park History:** Commenters stated that the park's history needs to be interpreted. Commenters noted that Fort Hunt's relationship to World War II intelligence gathering is little known and needs to be highlighted in a new interpretive center at the park, and that the interrogation techniques used at PO Box 1142 have relevance to present-day discussions on intelligence gathering. Other commenters cited interpretation of the Civilian Conservation Corps history on the site, and also noted the full range of site history from before the Revolutionary War through the early stages of the Cold War. Seventeen comments contained similar statements. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “Further the NPS previously performed meaningful research on PO Box 1142, where high value German prisoners of war, including U-boat commanders and generals were brought for strategic interrogation. It conducted more than 70 oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans, former German prisoners of wars and other relevant persons, as well as collecting key artifacts from those interviewed. Currently, the NPS is contracting to have high quality transcripts made of all the interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. This historically important material should be preserved and displayed in an on-site interpretive center, given the important but little known role of PO Box 1142 in winning the war.”
- “As you know, Fort Hunt Park has a vast history that is currently not available to today's park visitor. An interpretive center is essential to share the many chapters of Fort Hunt Park's past. Stories of George Washington's River Farm Plantation, the Spanish-American War, World War I Bonus Marchers, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the secret interrogation center during World War II all should be available to the public when they pay a visit to the park. Current signage is inadequate in revealing Fort Hunt Park's history.”
- “The story of the interrogation camp is an important one to tell as a little known aspect of WWII intelligence gathering at a place so close by that very few locals have known about. The fact that high stakes interrogations took place here without resort to “enhanced interrogation techniques” at a time of immense national peril contributes something important to our current concerns over intelligence needs.”
- “I was intrigued by the stories of German-speaking interrogators, a number of whom were Jews who immigrated to the US from Nazi-controlled Europe. Some of these men had lost members or all of their family to the scourge of Nazism but were still humane and dignified while interrogating German POWs. The interrogators used psychology, not torture, to obtain information. This was in stark contrast to the way the US military treated prisoners of war during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It was a compelling story that deserved to be told.”

10. **Removal of Existing Park Facilities:** Commenters expressed opposition to the removal or reduction of existing park facilities, including restrooms, parking, picnic areas, and ball fields. Some comments noted that restrooms and parking should be expanded, that relocated restrooms should continue to be accessible to Area E and be located where they serve the highest number of visitors, and that, if removed, the ball field should be relocated to another area of the park. Comments also noted that demand for parking sometimes exceeds capacity at the park. 21 comments contained similar statements. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “The removal of any restrooms is completely unacceptable, especially adjacent to the Pavilions C&D if anything they should be expanded. This proposal removes any means

of address the public's needs especially those using those pavilions. New restrooms in area C is too far from Area D which would be unserved.”

- “The green area sounds good as long as the requests for a ball playing field are considered for another area. And I think moving the restrooms really depends on the appropriate place to serve the highest number of visitors.”
- “Removing parking and picnic areas is not going to solve the usage "demand" problem perceived by NPS - - it will only make it worse.

The West Potomac HS cross country team meets at Area E parking / restroom on many days during August and even in September. This shaded area is the preferred meeting place for them because Area A, although it has restrooms, also has blazing hot sun and very little shade.

Other cross country events are held here as well. If you remove parking, that will create a worse parking problem.

I see no rationale given for removing the baseball diamond. Why take this away?”

- “I understand that preserving history is important. Why are all the options including things like taking away parking and ball fields that are heavily used by the neighboring communities? Do you have any idea of how many people will actually visit this site? It seems like a real waste to take a way a local resource and make the park a memorial that people may or may not use. Our local 6th grades have their end of the year celebrations at this park. I used to meet with the Alexandria Playgroup every year for a member meet and greet picnic. We used Pavillion C all the time because our schedules were busy and we could show up with out a reservation.”

11. Playground Improvements: Commenters expressed support for the playground improvements included in the plans, noting the playground is in poor condition. Ten comments contained similar statements. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “I am glad to see that improving the playground equipment is part of all the plans as it is in poor shape and may even be considered dangerous by todays standards.”
- “I would like to see new playground equipment (especially for younger children) as well as the planting of shade trees to allow for easier summertime use of the equipment. An improved playground is important to the neighborhoods surrounding Fort Hunt because we do not have many public playgrounds available for use during the school day. Most playgrounds in the area are at public schools. Thank you for your consideration.”

12. Lower Loop Road: Nine commenters expressed support for the continued closure of Lower Loop Road to vehicular traffic, with some also referencing including a fitness trail. One commenter opposed establishing a fitness trail, noting it would be underutilized and is unneeded. Two commenters expressed concern regarding the location of the fitness trail as it would bring more visitors to the natural areas of the park, with potential impacts to those natural resources. It was instead suggested the fitness trail be located in proximity to the playground, which could also increase the fitness trail’s use.

13. Potomac River sight line: Three commenters expressed concern regarding the removal of trees to re-establish the sight line between the Potomac River and Battery Robinson, stating it could create negative environmental impacts or adversely impact the natural look and feel

of the park due to the removal of trees and vegetation. Two comments noted that the bald eagle nesting area is close to the proposed sight line, and as such it was suggested the sight line be moved in a more eastwardly direction to lessen the disruption for the eagles and keep more forested area intact. One commenter asked for clarification on how open the view will be. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “My only concern about the concepts is the proposed restoration of the historic 'sight line' to the Potomac River from Battery Robinson. I understand the historical significance and educational benefit of this proposal. I am concerned, however, that many of our beautiful trees and vegetation would be cut down to make this 'sight line' possible. I would recommend this alteration be approached as carefully as possible to minimize the negative environmental impact to the park. As this Concept matures, I would like to review the length and width of the 'sight line' and ensure the proposal does not adversely affect the natural 'look and feel' of the park.”
- “The sight line from Battery Robinson and the river should be on a more eastward route so as not to disturb the eagles' nest.”

14. **Interpretive trail:** Comments received expressed both support for and opposition to, the interpretive trail. Those in opposition felt the trail is unnecessary as visitors can already walk between sites.

15. **Historic Land Use Restoration Area:** Comments in support of and in opposition to the realignment of Loop Road and the repurposing of the ball field into a multi-purpose space were received. Those in support referenced the need for historic resources protection and enhanced site interpretation, and those opposed questioned the need for the action, the costs versus the benefits, and the historical and archeological value, with some comments noting there is no explanation of what makes the area significant and others noting that the archeological remains are already protected. There were 13 comments with similar statements. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “Good idea to move the road to protect Area E and to revegetate ball field.”
- “The proposed road movement in area D appears to be easy pickings for complaints. After talking to Mr. Verita the archeological staff person I completely changed my point of view. I think the road move is justified on the grounds that the current road bed contains items of historical significance. I believe that makes the movement worthwhile and important to do.”
- “I understand that the ball field and picnic areas to be eliminated in Concepts 4 and 5 are archaeological sites with buried foundations of WWII buildings. I further understand that the foundations are to remain buried even after the renovation project. It makes no sense to me to spend millions of taxpayer dollars just to put a different cover over the buried buildings, e.g. grass instead of a road, parking lot, or dirt infield. What is the purpose of all these changes if the building foundations remain buried? Further, it makes equally less sense to eliminate often-used recreational facilities due to the presence of buried building foundations that will remain buried. I fail to grasp the enlightened concept here. I vote no on this idea.”
- “The field behind battery Mt. Vernon concerns me. You say that is a historic section of land, but you say nothing in the caption about what is significant. In the caption you say you want to make it a "multipurpose field" by removing the ball field. If you take out the ball field, you will make a LESS "multipurpose field". Leave the ball field, and add

whatever else you need to make a "multipurpose field". In the same location must you move the road 20 feet?"

- "Any archeological remains that may be under the sections of the loop road proposed for removal are well encapsulated. Further, if funds were available, preliminary archeological research could be performed, particularly on both sides of the section of the road that passes through the former site of Enclosure A. This would be the logical and cost-effective action to take before deciding whether to remove the road section.

Further, four concrete blocks that appear to be the footings for the guard tower of Enclosure B are in a wooded area well within the current loop road. This area could be fenced off and used for interpretive purposes, perhaps as a part of an interpretive trail with a wayside or cell phone interpretation."

16. Natural resources impacts: Commenters expressed concern that bald eagle habitat and other natural resources could be disturbed due to construction activities and alternative elements such as the Potomac River sight line. There were 11 comments with similar statements. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- "Do not disturb the Eagle Habitat at Fort Hunt Park with years of heavy construction!"
- "I'm concerned about disrupting the wild life at the park. They have so few places with all the building now. There are eagles, fox, deer, and of course the Blister Beetle which is only found at Ft Hunt Park."

17. Suggestions for alternative elements: Commenters provided suggestions for inclusion in the alternatives:

- Kiosks attached to the current pavilions
- Series of pools with water features, slides and a sandy beach area
- Install grills
- Bring contemporary talent to the summer concert series
- Utilize social media and other PR strategies to advertise all the park has to offer
- Remove or improve the chain link fence within the park
- Install an artillery piece that the surviving artillery revetments were designed to protect
- Provide a walking route on the portion of road open to two-way traffic
- Mark trails with blazes or small posts
- Place the visitor center in the middle of the first two parking lots to provide nearby parking near the park entrance
- Site the visitor center in a previously disturbed area to protect the remaining natural areas
- Use the present gravel road as the interpretive trail and run the trail to the old guard tower. Rehabilitate the tower and use it as an observation/interpretive site for a view of all the historical sites, an overview of the whole park, the batteries, and especially the layout of the interrogation camp
- If the visitor services are located in area C, suggest the visitor center be a replica of a POW barracks and interrogation place to help tell the story
- Improve the U.S. Park Police stables and facilities
- Keep the trails in the woods, and add more, if possible

18. Park maintenance and operations: Commenters suggested maintenance and operations actions that could be undertaken at the park. Some commenters indicated spending funds

on park maintenance rather than new facilities or removal of existing facilities is desirable. Suggestions included invasive species and poison ivy removal; Battery preservation/restoration; implementing sustainable operations such as avoidance of chemical pesticides and utilizing renewable energy sources; enforcing pedestrian, bicycle and car lanes; addressing park infrastructure, including terra cotta pipes that create sinkholes on private property; and preventing illegal dumping on parkland. There were 13 comments with similar statements.

19. **Noise:** Commenters noted that noise in the park needs to be monitored and noise restrictions enforced. There were four comments with similar statements. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “In the interim seasons before any site development takes place, I request that Fort Hunt Park develop the capacity to monitor loud music that disturbs neighbors close to the park on many weekend afternoons. It is understandable that groups meeting in the park want to enjoy music at their gathering but when that music is blasted so loud that the surrounding neighbors are deprived of the ability to enjoy their backyard then the volume should be reduced. The purchase and use of a meter to measure the noise level is a necessary tool that Fort Hunt Park needs now. Groups could be informed of the noise level restrictions and make decisions about holding events at the park with those restrictions in mind. I'm sure the animals would appreciate noise restrictions too.”
- “I hope that the opening of the lower road to recreation will not mean more area for parties and very loud music closer to the houses along Charles Augustine. We have noticed a large increase of non-historical use of the park and a reduction in the beauty and quiet of the park from years past.”
- “Increase popularity of Fort Hunt Park has changed our pastoral setting into a public thoroughfare. On weekends the sounds of birds are drowned-out by traffic, announcements from loudspeakers and diverse music from the park. ”Fort Hunt Road is subject to cars, bikers, and joggers with no means of separation. As per our scenic easement agreements with the Park Service, it is our hope that we can work together to create a natural evergreen bugger zone between Fort Hunt Park and its neighbors.”

ATTACHMENT 1: COMMENT SUMMARY TABLE

Comment Topic	Sub-topic	Number of comments	Percent
1. Public Involvement	1a. Lack of public notice	3	1.4%
	1b. Public involvement is helpful	7	3.3%
	1c. Request larger facility for future public meetings	1	0.5%
2. Support/Preference for No Action Alternative	2. Support/Preference for No Action Alternative	10	4.7%
3. Support/Preference for Alternative Concept 4	3. Support/Preference for Alternative Concept 4	5	2.4%
4. Support/Preference for Alternative Concept 5	4. Support/Preference for Alternative Concept 5	16	7.6%
5. Support/Preference for Action Alternatives 4 or 5	5. Support/Preference for Action Alternatives 4 or 5	4	1.9%
6. Oppose Alternative 4	6. Oppose Alternative 4	1	0.5%
7. Oppose Alternative 5	7. Oppose Alternative 5	5	2.4%
8. Support for an Interpretive/Visitor Facility	8. Support for an Interpretive/Visitor Facility	29	13.7%
	8a. Specified Area C as the interpretive center location*	17	8.1%
9. Preserve and Interpret Park History	9. Preserve and Interpret Park History	17	8.1%
10. Removal/Reduction of Existing Park Facilities	10. Removal/Reduction of Existing Park Facilities (Oppose)	21	10.0%
11. Playground Improvements	11. Playground Improvements (Support)	10	4.7%
12. Lower Loop Road	12a. Support Closure	9	4.3%
	12b. Oppose fitness trail	1	0.5%
	12c. Change fitness trail location	2	0.9%
13. Potomac River sight line	13a. Tree removal concerns	3	1.4%
	13b. Move sight line to avoid bald eagles	2	0.9%
	13c. Clarification on sight line width	1	0.4%
14. Interpretive trail	14a. Support Interpretive trail	7	3.3%
	14b. Oppose interpretive trail	1	0.5%
15. Historic Land Use Restoration Area	15a. Support Historic Land Use Restoration Area	2	0.9%
	15b. Oppose Historic Land Use Restoration Area	3	1.4%
	15c. Questions/suggestions re: Historic Land Use Restoration Area	8	3.8%
16. Natural resources impacts	16. Natural resources impacts	11	5.2%

17. Suggestions for alternative elements	17. Suggestions for alternative elements	15	7.1%
18. Park maintenance and operations	18. Park maintenance and operations	13	6.2%
19. Noise	19. Noise	4	1.9%
Total		211	100%

*As a subset of the total 28 comments supportive of an interpretive center, the 17 comments in favor of Area C are not added to the total.

**ATTACHMENT 2: PEPC CORRESPONDENCE REPORT SHOWING ALL CORRESPONDENCES
RECEIVED**

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 1

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
ALEXANDRIA, VA 223082447
USA
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 01/30/2015 Date Received: 01/30/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The comment period opened 4 days ago but there is no set of alternatives to comment upon, only an announcement that there will be a meeting. It would be good if you open a comment period to give the public some information so we can comment.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 2

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: Byron Hot Springs aka "Camp Tracy"
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
San Francisco, CA 94123
USA
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/01/2015 Date Received: 02/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for preserving what remains of the WWII military interrogation center at Ft. Hunt.

The sister facility located in Byron, Contra Costa County, California known as "Camp Tracy" is in poor condition. The 160-acre was lost to the bank in foreclosure during the mortgage meltdown of 2009 and is for sale. There are no offers. The historic core of buildings including the Hotel where the officers, interrogators, and prisoners were housed is still there. The local vandals are doing their best to deface it.

"Camp Tracy" needs to be saved as an important piece of WWII home front history, Nisei contribution to the war effort, and founding of the Military Intelligence Service at the Presidio San Francisco during WW II. There is an MIS museum at the NPS Presidio San Francisco where the initial class of Japanese-Americans were trained in interrogation and interpretation for the war effort.

Should you know of anyone who would like to purchase the property, please contact me at [REDACTED] or email me at [REDACTED]. The property is listed with Colliers Real Estate brokerage in Los Angeles. There is no listed asking price but it is reasonable to assume that an offer at current agricultural land prices would be well received. My desire as a local historian is to see the property saved from residential housing, becoming a sand mine, or leveling these historic structures to the ground. For more information on the history of the property, go to www.byronhotsprings.com.

Ideally, if we could get the historic core of 45 acres purchased by a land conservancy or interest the National Park Service in this - - great. This is Senator Feinstein's area and Congresswoman Pelosi's home area. This would be a great complement to the Rosie the Riveter national monument and Kaiser Shipyard National Park property in Richmond, Contra Costa County,

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

California. The Byron Hot Springs aka "Camp Tracy" property is approximately 60 miles due east of the City of San Francisco in a rural area.

Thank you for your concern and please pass this information on to any and all interested parties.


Historian, Byron Hot Springs

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 3

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/02/2015 Date Received: 02/02/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

where is the document to review? only documents available are two versions of a press release!?!?

I found out about this ONLY because NPS has not followed proper review procedures in the past and as a result I check the website the first of EVERY month to prevent any "surprises"!!! (like this one ... document for review that's not available to review!!!)

please put document online for review, fix your press release statement to give proper instructions, reset the review date in accordance with the date the document is ACTUALLY available for review

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 4

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Date Sent: 02/03/2015 Date Received: 02/03/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

These alternatives remain short sighted. These picnic areas are highly used and one of the only ones that are available in this area especially for minority and low income families, and other families that are touring this historically rich area.

The removal of any restrooms is completely unacceptable, especially adjacent to the Pavilions C&D if anything they should be expanded. This proposal removes any means of address the public's needs especially those using those pavilions. New restrooms in area C is too far from Area D which would be unserved.

Why spend money for new roadway connections when it appears unwarranted in Areas D&E. Spend more money on invasive species removal and Battery restoration.

Absolutely no to alternative 4. Alternative 5 needs some changes as noted above but is more acceptable. Still prefer NO Build.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 5

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I love Fort Hunt Park and am a current user. Its history is rich and it's scenic and a wonderful place to run and play. However, it is also home to the saddest playground I have ever witnessed. Missing swings, a simple slide and a monkey bar structure. Perhaps you could improve the playground? Or at least fix it?

If I win the Powerball I will pay for it myself. But in the meantime, please consider fixing and improving the playground in your plans. History and children's entertainment can co-exist.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 6

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Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I to the park.

The prop at the entranceprefer Concept 5 because:

1. The location of the Visitor zone. I think the NCO house is a natural draw.
2. The proposed road movement in area D appears to be easy pickings for complaints. After talking to Mr. Verita the archeological staff person I completely changed my point of view. I think the road move is justified on the grounds that the current road bed contains items of historical significance. I believe that makes the movement worthwhile and important to do.

The NPS did a great job at the Open House thank you.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 7

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/06/2015 Date Received: 02/06/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am very pleased to see that the considered alternatives and rationale for making changes are more harmonized than the original proposed alternatives and rationale.

I think either current alternative 4 or alternative 5 are suitable and meet the needs of the community, users, and historic preservation.

I do prefer alternative 5 for the following reason: it contributes greater to historic preservation versus alternative 4 (assuming the new visitor services are put into the NCO quarters); it would be nice to see this building restored and put back to greater public use and appreciation.

Thanks!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 8

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/09/2015 Date Received: 02/09/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Thank you for that meeting on 2/5 at Martha Washington Library. I do not agree that the park needs to be changed as much as either 4 or 5 proposes. The restrooms and the parking needs to stay at the current level, if not expanded. Informational kiosks would be nice if they were attached to the current pavilions. Maintenance and improvements to the playground is one thing I'd like to see continued. [REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 9

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/10/2015 Date Received: 02/10/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The National Park Service is to be commended on the structure and orchestration of the meeting held on February 5, 2015 to share proposals regarding the Fort Hunt Park site proposal with the community. Thank you for the effort and time each of the Park Service employees expended to attend an evening meeting to ensure the public had a complete understanding of the project and to partner with the community as Fort Hunt Park is enhanced.

I found Concept 5 to be an excellent option as it incorporated the NCO House which has a great history. When entering a park it is important to have an opportunity to gather information as to the size, location, and available resources. Concept 5 will offer that to visitor by having visitor services sited at the entrance. I am glad to see that improving the playground equipment is part of all the plans as it is in poor shape and may even be considered dangerous by todays standards.

In the interim seasons before any site development takes place, I request that Fort Hunt Park develop the capacity to monitor loud music that disturbs neighbors close to the park on many weekend afternoons. It is understandable that groups meeting in the park want to enjoy music at their gathering but when that music is blasted so loud that the surrounding neighbors are deprived of the ability to enjoy their backyard then the volume should be reduced. The purchase and use of a meter to measure the noise level is a necessary tool that Fort Hunt Park needs now. Groups could be informed of the noise level restrictions and make decisions about holding events at the park with those restrictions in mind. I'm sure the animals would appreciate noise restrictions too.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 10

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Date Sent: 02/11/2015 Date Received: 02/11/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Thank you for listening to the previous comments you have been receiving.
The visitor center should be at front of the park, not the back.
The road should only be rerouted to protect artifacts after the current road has deteriorated.
Please dine "how open" the view will be over the battery robinson overlooking the river. Will it be clear cut or just line of sights.
I do not think recreational amenities is a high priority but could be added later. Those used on the parkway path trail are not frequently used.
I support a low impact interpretive trail
This park is not heavily used and would encourage NPS to place more funds into natioanl parks that are more heavily used by the people
No electrical hook ups in pavilions in back of park so as to not disturb its neighbors and in tribute to the park
What is the carrying capacity of the park now and after the renovation
Who is the target audience for the renovation.
What is the timeline
Is there a cost estimate
What was the cost for the first concept inn 2011 Was it contracted out or done within NPS
Again, thanks for listening, concept 5 is something to work with.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/13/2015 Date Received: 02/13/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

As a resident directly adjacent to Fort Hunt Park and the backloop area D road, we are very pleased with the new plan that will keep the area D loop closed to traffic and repurposed as a fitness trail.

Preservation of Fort Hunt historical landmarks is also important. Promoting those landmarks and improving visibility of their importance in History to our public is commendable.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 12

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/13/2015 Date Received: 02/13/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Thanks for your careful work on this project, and for taking public comments into account. As someone who lives in the Ft. Hunt neighborhood and has kids, we spend a lot of time at Fort Hunt. My kids love exploring the forts, spending time hiking through the dirt trails in the woods, riding their bikes around the loop, and practicing with sports teams on the fields. I hope that any changes to the forts themselves can balance improving safety and increasing historicity while still keeping accessibility. I was glad to see that the playgrounds will be upgraded and made more safe. I hope that modernizing and adding additional equipment will also be part of the plan. There are very few non-school playgrounds in our area and it would be great if the Ft. Hunt playground had a little more to offer kids.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

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Date Sent: 02/14/2015 Date Received: 02/14/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

It's difficult to comment on the revised proposals because they contain vague statements and options. What is a "multipurpose open recreational space", "interpretation/recreational trail"? A visitors center and kiosk seem unnecessary.

There are some things you should be doing at the park. First, enforce the pedestrian/bike lane vs cars. Currently, cyclists assume they are supposed to be in the car lane and there's a real hazard when cars pass cyclists by driving in the pedestrian lane. Second, English Ivy has overtaken most of the forest and is killing trees. Some effort at removal of invasive vegetation is needed; I'm sure you can get volunteers for the project. Third, enforce parking closing times and noise level restrictions. Forth, look around the park and notice the houses bordering the park that use parkland as a dumping place for construction material and waste and/or co-opted parkland.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/16/2015 Date Received: 02/16/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan Environmental Assessment

I appreciated the National Park Service sponsoring the Alternative Concepts Public Review Meeting on 5 February 2015. During the meeting, I spoke to several park representatives and they informed me about the latest Concepts for Fort Hunt Park. The Concepts are much better than those we reviewed in 2011. I appreciate the Park Service's response to public comments and the resulting changes incorporated into the Concepts. I believe we will end up with a better solution because of this collaborative process.

Regarding both new concepts, I am pleased with several aspects: first, keeping the lower loop road closed to vehicular traffic; second, repurposing previous parking areas as fitness areas, along the lower loop; third, maintaining one-way traffic circulation on the main loop, with a lane for vehicles and a separate lane for bikers and pedestrians; fourth, constructing an interpretative trail; and fifth, upgrading Area A playground equipment.

Regarding the new, proposed concepts, I prefer Alternative Concept 5: Gateway Visitor Services. Establishing the visitor services zone near the entrance to the park is practical and a good use of current space; I recommend using the current office space in Pavilion A, since parking is already available.

My only concern about the concepts is the proposed restoration of the historic 'sight line' to the Potomac River from Battery Robinson. I understand the historical significance and educational benefit of this proposal. I am concerned, however, that many of our beautiful trees and vegetation would be cut down to make this 'sight line' possible. I would recommend this alteration be approached as carefully as possible to minimize the negative environmental impact to the park. As this Concept matures, I would like to review the length and width of the 'sight line' and ensure the proposal does not adversely affect the natural 'look and feel' of the park.

[REDACTED] 16 February 2015

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I prefer Alternative Concept 5, and especially like the idea of re-purposing the NCO building. My concern is with removing parking from Area E if it is not replaced. Often the picnic site at Area C is reserved and the only place to park close by is Area E. I'm happy that you are leaving the closed road alone -I use it every weekend for dog walking. (I wish you would spray for poison ivy along a swath at least 10 ft wide on either side of this road.) I encourage you to keep the trails in the woods, and add more, if possible.

I've been coming to this park since at least 1958 and I feel deeply connected to it. It is an incredible resource. If more emphasis is going to be placed on the battery areas, the structure need to be taken care of better.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Date Sent: 02/17/2015 Date Received: 02/17/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am very pleased to see the latest Alternatives (4 & 5) for Fort Hunt Park's Development Plan and Environmental Assessment. I think either alternative is acceptable and look forward to the improvements without impacting current access and use to the vast majority of the park's grounds.

Thank you for hearing the opinions of our local residents and making adjustments to those alternative concepts previously advertised in 2011/12 timeframe.

- [REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I recently viewed the pictures of the revised alternative concepts for Ft. Hunt Park and was very pleased to see that the neighbors' comments from past meetings had been considered and incorporated. Thank you very much. Especially I was glad to see the Loop Road will continue to be closed to traffic. I appreciate the idea of a Visitor's Center to help explain the history and the importance of the park to this community. The green area sounds good as long as the requests for a ball playing field are considered for another area. And I think moving the restrooms really depends on the appropriate place to serve the highest number of visitors.

Once again thank you for taking citizens' comments into consideration. I look forward to the next stage of changes to be made.

[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

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Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

SUMMARY

These comments strongly support creating a new interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history. Such a center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and have secure space for historians, other researchers, journalists and interested members of the public to have access to oral history interviews of veterans who served at PO Box 1142, the World War II top-secret military intelligence installation located on this site.

The comments also question removing two sections of the loop road and realigning them to avoid Historic Land Use Restoration Areas. While it would be useful to do this if funding were sufficient to establish both an interpretive center and realign the road to further protect the historic land use areas and perform archeological research in those areas, the reality is that funding for the National Park Service (NPS) has been declining since 2008. The NPS is having problems maintaining current facilities and has experienced a meaningful decline in staff across the National Park System. The interpretive center has much higher priority than realigning the two sections of the loop road.

COMMENTS

Visitor Services Zone

Fort Hunt Park is a very special unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). Not only is it a popular picnic and recreational site, it has an important and unique history. It represents a microcosm of American history from before the Revolutionary War through World War II into the early stages of the Cold War. Other than the limited wayside signs near the remains of the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904, there is not any interpretation at the park that will enable visitors to begin to understand this history.

The initial draft Fort Hunt Park site development plan issued by the National Park Service (NPS) in 2011 included a new visitor facility with a footprint no larger than 6,400 square feet in three of the four alternatives. Although that plan was withdrawn, Alternative Concepts 2, 3 and 4 issued in June 2012 all included a visitor contact station, but in three different areas of the park.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS in February 2015 call for visitor services zones but are vague about their nature. Alternative Concept 4 indicates that visitor services could range from "a wayside, interactive information kiosk, and/or an unspecified visitor services facility within Area C." Alternative Concept 5 establishes the zone near the entrance to the park that could include the NCO Quarters and/or current office space in Pavilion A to support a visitor services function.

It is not clear why the NPS no longer seems to support a center for interpreting the history of Fort Hunt Park and educating the public of its role in the history of our nation from George Washington's time to the Cold War.

This seems at odds with the pivotal research that the NPS previously performed on the top secret military intelligence installation (PO Box 1142) located at the site in World War II, including conducting more than 70 oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans, former German prisoners of wars and other relevant persons, and collecting key artifacts from those interviewed. To its credit the NPS is currently working to have high quality transcripts made of all the interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. What would the NPS plan to do with this historically important material if an on-site interpretive center is not created?

A wayside is totally insufficient to interpret the important and unique history of Fort Hunt Park. The waysides that currently exist by the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station barely address even the most rudimentary history of the site. While a kiosk would provide somewhat more information, it is still inadequate. What is needed is a high-tech interpretive center that incorporates interactive exhibits to let the visitor participate in important historical events and researchers to access the oral histories and related material.

The best location for the needed interpretive center is Area C, which is sufficiently remote from Pavilions A and B, where large picnics are held every weekend in the summer. In Area C the center would neither conflict with the recreational use of the park nor compete for parking spaces used by picnickers. It is an uncongested and quiet area near the site of one of the World War II buildings (Enclosure A) in which high value World War II prisoners of war were temporarily detained and interrogated. As such it is a more appropriate location in which to appreciate the historical significance of Fort Hunt Park.

The facilities and locations proposed in Alternative Concept 5 are not appropriate to fulfill a visitor services function. Area A is close to the entrance to the park and contains Picnic Pavilion A, where very large picnics are regularly held. Some of these picnics attract more than a thousand people. As noted above, establishing an interpretive center in Area A would lead to competition for parking spaces used by picnickers and others using the park for strictly recreational purposes. It is a highly trafficked area and not conducive to showcasing the site's rich history. Further, the NCO Quarters is a small two-story building with basement. The stairs to the basement are particularly narrow and steep. The rooms on the first and second floors are small, and it is questionable that they could be modified as the site has historic status. For example, where could a lighted map showing the locations of WWII and other structures be placed? What room could be used as a small auditorium for showing videos on the park's history, including the seven-minute video produced by CBS News and aired in September 2014? The building is not handicapped accessible, and it may be challenging to afford such accessibility, even to the first floor.

Further, the "current office space in Pavilion A" is behind the stage and currently is used as storage space for chairs, sound system equipment, work gloves, work vests, etc. It is also limited in square footage and only accessible by stairs at either end of the stage. If a picnic or program using the stage of Pavilion A were in progress, then a visitor wishing to learn about the park's key would at best have difficulty in accessing such a visitor services zone. This alternative belittles the importance of the history of the park.

Removal and Realignment of Sections of Loop Road

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

It is commendable that the GWMP is interested in performing future archeological research at the site and would like during the site development/environmental assessment process to obtain approval to move two sections of the loop road that currently pass over areas that were within Enclosures A and B, the two buildings in which POWs were briefly detained and interrogated during WWII.

Both enclosures, along with all other buildings constructed for WWII activities, were destroyed at the end of the war. The longer section proposed for removal passes through the middle of the footprint of Enclosure A while the shorter section passes through a very small section of the footprint of Enclosure B.

Given the limited resources available to the NPS now and in the foreseeable future, establishing an interpretive center in area C should have much higher priority than moving sections of the road for possible archeological research and other reasons.

Any archeological remains that may be under the sections of the loop road proposed for removal are well encapsulated. Further, if funds were available, preliminary archeological research could be performed, particularly on both sides of the section of the road that passes through the former site of Enclosure A. This would be the logical and cost-effective action to take before deciding whether to remove the road

Further, concrete blocks that appear to be the footings for the guard tower of Enclosure B (based upon examination of two World War II era maps of PO Box 1142) are in a wooded area well within the current loop road. This area could be fenced off and used for interpretive purposes, perhaps as a part of an interpretive trail with a wayside or cell phone interpretation.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 19

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/18/2015 Date Received: 02/18/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

These comments strongly support creating a new interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history. Such a center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and have secure space for historians, other researchers, journalists and interested members of the public to have access to oral history interviews of veterans who served at PO Box 1142, the World War II top-secret military intelligence installation located on this site.

The comments also raise questions about a number of other actions proposed in Alternative Concepts 4 and 5, which were presented at the February 5, 2015, Open House. Two examples are the following: removing two sections of the loop road and realigning them to avoid Historic Land Use Restoration Areas and restoring a historic sight line from Battery Robinson to the Potomac River. While it would be useful to do this if funding were sufficient to establish both an interpretive center and these projects, funding for the National Park Service (NPS) has been decreasing for over five years. The interpretive center has much higher priority than realigning the two sections of the loop road and restoring the historic sight line.

Fort Hunt Park is a very special unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). It was a part of George Washington's River Farm, a fort built for the coastal defense of Washington, DC, around the time of the Spanish American War, the site at which World War I veterans (Bonus Marchers) camped for three successive years, a training and camping site for an African American ROTC company, a civilian Conservation Corps camp from 1933 through 1942, and a top secret World War II military intelligence installation known only as PO Box 1142. The only physical evidence of its important past are the remains of the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS in early February 2015 call for visitor services zones but are vague about their nature. Alternative Concept 4 indicates that visitor services could range from a wayside, interactive information kiosk, and/or an unspecified visitor services facility within Area C. Alternative Concept 5 establishes the zone near the entrance to the park that could include the NCO Quarters and/or current office space in Pavilion A to support a visitor services function.

A wayside is totally insufficient to interpret the important and unique history of Fort Hunt Park. While a kiosk would provide somewhat more information, it is still inadequate. A high-tech interpretive center is needed that incorporates interactive exhibits to let the visitor participate in important historical events that occurred at the site and to provide access for researchers to access the oral histories and related material.

What is really needed is an interpretive center. The best location for this interpretive center is Area C, which is far enough away from Pavilions A and B, where large picnics are held every weekend in the summer. In Area C the center would neither conflict with the recreational use of the park nor compete for parking spaces used by picnickers. It is an uncongested and quiet area near the site of one of the World War II buildings in which high value World War II prisoners of war were temporarily detained and interrogated. Clearly, it is a more appropriate location in which to appreciate the historical significance of Fort Hunt Park.

Further the NPS previously performed meaningful research on PO Box 1142, where high value German prisoners of war, including U-boat commanders and generals were brought for strategic interrogation. It conducted more than 70 oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans, former German prisoners of wars and other relevant persons, as well as collecting key artifacts from those interviewed. Currently, the NPS is contracting to have high quality transcripts made of all the interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. This historically important material should be preserved and displayed in an on-site interpretive center, given the important but little known role of PO Box 1142 in winning the war.

It is commendable that the GWMP is interested in performing other projects proposed in Alternative Concept 4 and 5, such as moving two sections of the loop road that currently pass over areas that were within the footprints of the two buildings in which POWs were briefly detained and interrogated during WWII. All buildings constructed for WWII activities were destroyed at the end of the war. Also it would be interesting to be able to see the Potomac River from Battery Robinson to provide an idea of the servicemen saw while manning the cannons during exercises. But the importance of doing this to telling the stories of this site is of low priority. Not long after all the batteries were completed, the fort became obsolete for the purpose of providing coastal defense to Washington, DC. Providing maintenance to preventing further deterioration of the four artillery batteries would be a more cost-effective expenditure of NPS limited resources.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 20

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/18/2015 Date Received: 02/18/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am comfortable with either the Alternative Concept 4 or the Alternative Concept 5 plan for FT Hunt Park.

I commend the NPS for listening to public comments regarding the first set of development plans, and for revising their proposed plans clearly taking into account the thoughts and preferences of those who use the Park on a frequent basis.

I appreciate not taking down any Pavilions. I think a Visitor Services Center would be great, as well as a self-guided walking tour. Most important to me is the keeping of the roadway available to both vehicles and walkers/joggers/bicyclists.

The parking situation at the public open house at Martha Washington Library on Feb 5, 2015 was terrible. I almost turned back home for lack of available parking. Please hold any future forums, if any, at a place with available parking and a bigger room...I felt the room holding the event was too small for the turnout.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Notes:

Correspondence Text

See attached file.



George Washington Memorial Parkway
Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan Environmental Assessment
 Fairfax County, Virginia - Alternative Concepts Public Review Meeting
 February 5, 2015

Name/Title: _____
 Address: _____

 Alexandria VA 22308
 Affiliation: _____
 Callinwood neighborhood
 Phone/email: _____

COMMENTS:

The story of the interrogation camp is an important one to tell as a little known aspect of WWII intelligence gathering at a place so close by that very few locals have known about. The fact that high stakes interrogations took place here without resort to "enhanced interrogation techniques" at a time of immense national peril contributes something important to our current concerns over intelligence needs.

I like the Concept 5 idea of putting visitor services near the entrance to the park. I would suggest using the present gravel road as the interpretive trail, and take the trail to the old guard tower, rehab. the tower in authentic fashion, and use it as an observation/interpretive site over →

Submit comments on-line by following the appropriate links at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/forthunt>

Mail Comments to:
 Attn: Fort Hunt Park EA
 National Park Service
 George Washington Memorial Parkway
 c/o Turkey Run Park
 McLean, VA 22101

Mailed comments must be postmarked by March 4, 2015 to receive consideration.

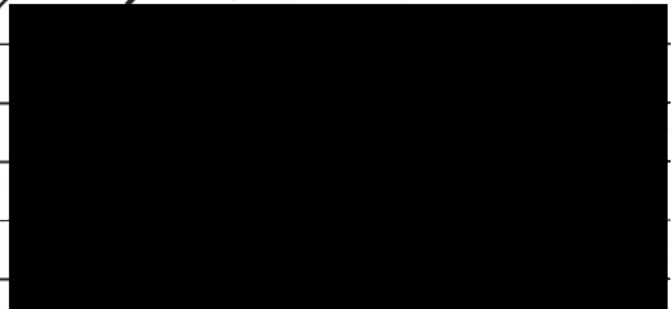


For ~~at~~ a view of all the historical sites, an overview of the whole park, the batteries, and especially the lay out of the interrogation camp.

If the visitor services were to be in the Camp, I'd suggest a visitor center be a replica of a POW barracks and interrogation place to help tell the story. However, if a visitor center is not provided for, visitor services and intro. to the interpretive trail ought to start near the entrance.

I also like retaining the multi-use character of the park given its present use and value to the community.

Thank you for the open house, and the opportunity to comment ~~on~~ on your plans.



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Notes:

Correspondence Text

Concept 5 seems most appropriate given today's use and offers a great way to provide visitor information where all visitors will enter the property. This concept also maintains much of what Ft. Hunt offers to area residents and visitors. Maintaining visitor loyalty offers opportunities to raise money through local partners for area improvements and interpretation. Thank you for listening and paying attention to comments during scoping. Nice information summary and timeline display.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Contains Request(s): No Type: E-mail
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Correspondence Text

See attached document, which was attached to the email sent by [REDACTED]

These comments are submitted to express my strong support for an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park.

I have a special relationship to Fort Hunt Park. During World War II I served at the top-secret military intelligence installation known only as PO Box 1142, which was located at Fort Hunt. I worked for the Army Military Intelligence Service (MIS-Y), monitoring conversations of prisoners of war in their cells before and after their interrogations. For a brief time I was also a courier taking top-secret intelligence documents from PO Box 1142 to the Pentagon. I was born in Austria, but my family immigrated to the US after the Nazi's invaded and occupied Austria. The fact that I spoke fluent German was important in my being assigned to PO Box 1142.

After the National Park Service (NPS) discovered that Fort Hunt Park was a top-secret military intelligence facility in World War II, it undertook to learn about its function and document the stories of the men who served there. I was one of the more than 70 persons who gave oral history interviews; most were veterans who served at PO Box 1142, but a few were former German prisoners of war who were detained briefly at PO Box 1142. I also attended the reunion that the NPS hosted at Fort Hunt Park in October 2007 for more than 30 veterans. At that time NPS staff shared draft plans for creating a visitor and interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park so that the stories regarding PO Box 1142 and the other important history of the site could be shared with the public.

After the reunion I sent an electronic newsletter to other veterans for a number of years to keep them apprised about activities pertaining to PO Box 1142 and in contact with one another. Not many of those veterans are still alive.

Recently I returned to Fort Hunt Park for the second annual Fort Hunt Park Community Day on October 5, 2014, which was sponsored by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI). I support the mission and goals of FFHPI and have served on its Advisory Council since 2014.

Fort Hunt Park is a popular recreational park at which large picnics are held. Nearby residents also hike in the park, walk their dogs there and rides bikes through it.

But Fort Hunt Park is more than a recreational park. It is a special unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). It represents snapshots of American history from before the Revolutionary War into the early stages of the Cold War. Besides its role in World War II, it was a part of George Washington's River Farm, a fort built for the coastal defense of Washington, DC, around the time of the Spanish American War, the site at which World War I veterans (Bonus Marchers) camped for three successive years, a training and camping site for an early African American ROTC company, and a civilian Conservation Corps camp that the King and Queen of England visited in 1939. After the war German scientists were debriefed at PO box 1142 before starting to work for the US as part of Operation Paperclip.

The only physical evidence of its important past are the remains of the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904. And only a few waysides next to these structures provide very limited interpretation of this history.

For nearly ten years I have supported the creation of an interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park. I continue to support it and recommend strongly that the NPS approve the establishment of a center as part of the ongoing site development and environmental assessment process. The purpose of the center would be to showcase the site's important role in American history. This center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and have secure space for historians, journalists and interested members of the public to have access to oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans such as myself. Visitors to the park, even those who go mainly for recreational purposes, should learn about all the stories that have played out at Fort Hunt Park.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS earlier this month propose visitor services zones but are vague about their nature. Alternative Concept 4 indicates that visitor services could range from a wayside, interactive information kiosk, and/or an unspecified visitor services facility within Area C. Alternative Concept 5 establishes the zone near the entrance to the park that could include the NCO Quarters and/or current office space in Pavilion A to support a visitor services function.

A wayside is clearly insufficient to interpret the unique history of Fort Hunt Park. While a kiosk would provide somewhat more information, it is still inadequate. A high-tech interpretive center is clearly what is needed let the visitors participate in important historical events that occurred at the site.

Through my participation on the FFHPI Advisory Council I am aware that the NPS is contracting to have high quality transcripts made of all the oral history interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. This is a worthy project for which the NPS should be commended. This historically important material should be preserved and displayed in an on-site interpretive center rather than placed in a storage center and perhaps forgotten.

The most favorable location for this interpretive center is Area C, which is not close to Pavilions A and B, where large picnics are held every weekend in spring, summer and fall. In Area C the center would not conflict with the recreational use of the park, nor would it compete for parking spaces used by picnickers. It is a quiet area near the site of one of the PO Box 1142 buildings in which high value World War II prisoners of war were temporarily detained and interrogated. Clearly, it is an appropriate location in which to appreciate the historical significance of Fort Hunt Park.

It is commendable that the GWMP is interested in performing other projects proposed in Alternative Concepts 4 and 5, such as moving two sections of the loop road that currently pass through areas that were within the footprints of the two buildings in which POWs were briefly detained and interrogated during WWII. Also it would be interesting to be able to see the Potomac River from Battery Robinson to provide an idea of what the servicemen saw while manning the cannons during readiness exercises. But the importance of undertaking such projects is of lower priority than creating the interpretive center and telling the stories of the site's history. With its limited resources the NPS should spend its funds in the most effective way to educate the public and demonstrate the interconnectedness of Fort Hunt Park with numerous other historical National Park units.

In summary, it is very important to approve an interpretive center for Fort Hunt Park. All other projects are of lesser priority and should be considered only after the interpretive center becomes a reality.

[REDACTED]

44124

[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

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Correspondence Text

I am the son of Colonel Blair Henderson, the commander of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 2313 from 1938-39 at CCC Camp NP-6 on the site of Fort Hunt. NP-6 existed from 1933 until 1942. While my father was its commander, the King and Queen of England visited the camp in June 1939 with President and Mrs. Roosevelt to learn more about the CCC and how it could be adapted for use in England. I allowed the National Park Service (NPS) to make copies of my father's photographs of this event and other events during his tenure at NP-6 to add to its historical collection for Fort Hunt Park. This part of the park's history needs to be interpreted, as does the rest of its rich and unique history.

I have lived near Fort Hunt Park for 30 years and have often visited the park and made use of its recreational opportunities. While growing up I camped at Fort Hunt Park as a Boy Scout. As a Scout Leader, I ran activities at the park, and my grandson was also involved at the park as a Boy Scout. I wholeheartedly support preserving and enhancing the recreational resources.

But Fort Hunt Park is more than a recreational park. It is a very special unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). It represents snapshots of American history from before the Revolutionary War through World War II into the early stages of the Cold War. Besides serving as a CCC camp, it was a part of George Washington's River Farm, a fort built for the coastal defense of Washington, DC, around the time of the Spanish American War, the site at which World War I veterans (Bonus Marchers) camped for three successive years, a training and camping site for an early African American ROTC company and a top secret World War II military intelligence installation known only as PO Box 1142. After the war German scientists were debriefed there before starting to work for the US as part of Operation Paperclip.

The only physical evidence of its important past are the remains of the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904. And only a few waysides next to these structures provide limited interpretation of this history.

Hence I believe that it is crucial for the NPS to approve the establishment of an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

Park to showcase the site's important role in American history. This center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and have secure space for historians, other researchers, journalists and interested members of the public to have access to oral history interviews of veterans who served at PO Box 1142, the World War II top-secret military intelligence installation located on this site. They should also learn about NP-6 and my father's story, which included a subsequent audience with King George VI when he was stationed in England during World War II. Visitors to the park, even those who go mainly for recreational purposes, should learn about these stories.

I am a member of the Advisory Council of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc., (FFHPI) and clearly support its mission and goals. The President of FFHPI and I have given numerous presentations on the history of the park to interested groups in the Alexandria area. Most of the audience had no idea of the park's significant history.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS in early February 2015 call for visitor services zones but are not definitive about their nature. Alternative Concept 4 indicates that visitor services could range from a wayside, interactive information kiosk, and/or an unspecified visitor services facility within Area C. Alternative Concept 5 establishes the zone near the entrance to the park that could include the NCO Quarters and/or current office space in Pavilion A to support a visitor services function.

How does one interpret nearly two hundred years of American history with a wayside? It is clearly insufficient to interpret the unique history of Fort Hunt Park. While a kiosk would provide somewhat more information, it is still inadequate. A high-tech interpretive center is needed that incorporates interactive exhibits to let the visitor participate in important historical events that occurred at the site and to provide access for researchers to access the oral histories and related material.

The best location for this interpretive center is Area C, which is not close to Pavilions A and B, where large picnics are held every weekend in the warm months. In Area C the center would not conflict with the recreational use of the park, nor would it compete for parking spaces used by picnickers. It is a quiet area near the site of one of the World War II buildings in which high value World War II prisoners of war were temporarily detained and interrogated. Clearly, it is an appropriate location in which to appreciate the historical significance of Fort Hunt Park.

Further the NPS previously performed meaningful research on PO Box 1142, where high value German prisoners of war, including U-boat commanders and generals were brought for strategic interrogation. It conducted more than 70 oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans, former German prisoners of wars and other relevant persons, as well as collecting key artifacts from those interviewed. Currently, the NPS is contracting to have high quality transcripts made of all the interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. This historically important material should be preserved and displayed in an interactive manner in an on-site interpretive center rather than placed in a storage center and perhaps forgotten.

It is commendable that the GWMP is interested in performing other projects proposed in Alternative Concept 4 and 5, such as moving two sections of the loop road that currently pass over areas that were within the footprints of the two buildings in which POWs were briefly detained and interrogated during WWII. All buildings constructed for WWII activities were destroyed at the end of the war. Also it would be interesting to be able to see the Potomac River from Battery Robinson to provide an idea of what the servicemen saw while manning the cannons during exercises. But the importance of undertaking such projects is of lower priority than creating the interpretive center and telling the stories of the site's history. And the NPS has limited resources. Its funds should be spent the most effective way to educate the public and demonstrate the interconnectedness of Fort Hunt Park with numerous other cultural National Park units.

In summary, it is of utmost importance to approve an interpretive center for Fort Hunt Park. All other projects are of lesser priority and should be considered only after the interpretive center becomes a reality.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

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Notes:

Correspondence Text

Alternative 4 seems like a good idea since it creates a large visitor services zone. I would like to come to the park and have a visitor center that provides an insightful look at the history of Fort Hunt park. There is a lot of history concerning fort hunt park that folks in the area don't know about but may be interested in if provided the information and facilities to do so. Please also consider marking the trails with small posts of blazes of some sort.

It is my hope that the park service will also manage the grounds of Fort Hunt Park without the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, since it is right next to the Potomac. The park should also strive to incorporate renewable technologies to power existing facilities.

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Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
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Correspondence Text

These comments are submitted to express my strong support for an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park.

I have a special relationship to Fort Hunt Park. During World War II I served at the top-secret military intelligence installation known only as PO Box 1142, which was located at Fort Hunt. I worked for the Army Military Intelligence Service (MIS-Y), monitoring conversations of prisoners of war in their cells before and after their interrogations. For a brief time I was also a courier taking top-secret intelligence documents from PO Box 1142 to the Pentagon. I was born in Austria, but my family immigrated to the US after the Nazi's invaded and occupied Austria. The fact that I spoke fluent German was important in my being assigned to PO Box 1142.

After the National Park Service (NPS) discovered that Fort Hunt Park was a top-secret military intelligence facility in World War II, it undertook to learn about its function and document the stories of the men who served there. I was one of the more than 70 persons who gave oral history interviews; most were veterans who served at PO Box 1142, but a few were former German prisoners of war who were detained briefly at PO Box 1142. I also attended the reunion that the NPS hosted at Fort Hunt Park in October 2007 for more than 30 veterans. At that time NPS staff shared draft plans for creating a visitor and interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park so that the stories regarding PO Box 1142 and the other important history of the site could be shared with the public.

After the reunion I sent an electronic newsletter to other veterans for a number of years to keep them apprised about activities pertaining to PO Box 1142 and in contact with one another. Not many of those veterans are still alive.

Recently I returned to Fort Hunt Park for the second annual Fort Hunt Park Community Day on October 5, 2014, which was sponsored by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI). I support the mission and goals of FFHPI and have served on its Advisory Council since 2014.

Fort Hunt Park is a popular recreational park at which large picnics are held. Nearby residents also hike in the park, walk

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

their dogs there and rides bikes through it.

But Fort Hunt Park is more than a recreational park. It is a special unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). It represents snapshots of American history from before the Revolutionary War into the early stages of the Cold War. Besides its role in World War II, it was a part of George Washington's River Farm, a fort built for the coastal defense of Washington, DC, around the time of the Spanish American War, the site at which World War I veterans (Bonus Marchers) camped for three successive years, a training and camping site for an early African American ROTC company, and a civilian Conservation Corps camp that the King and Queen of England visited in 1939. After the war German scientists were debriefed at PO box 1142 before starting to work for the US as part of Operation Paperclip.

The only physical evidence of its important past are the remains of the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904. And only a few waysides next to these structures provide very limited interpretation of this history.

For nearly ten years I have supported the creation of an interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park. I continue to support it and recommend strongly that the NPS approve the establishment of a center as part of the ongoing site development and environmental assessment process. The purpose of the center would be to showcase the site's important role in American history. This center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and have secure space for historians, journalists and interested members of the public to have access to oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans such as myself. Visitors to the park, even those who go mainly for recreational purposes, should learn about all the stories that have played out at Fort Hunt Park.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS earlier this month propose visitor services zones but are vague about their nature. Alternative Concept 4 indicates that visitor services could range from a wayside, interactive information kiosk, and/or an unspecified visitor services facility within Area C. Alternative Concept 5 establishes the zone near the entrance to the park that could include the NCO Quarters and/or current office space in Pavilion A to support a visitor services function.

A wayside is clearly insufficient to interpret the unique history of Fort Hunt Park. While a kiosk would provide somewhat more information, it is still inadequate. A high-tech interpretive center is clearly what is needed let the visitors participate in important historical events that occurred at the site.

Through my participation on the FFHPI Advisory Council I am aware that the NPS is contracting to have high quality transcripts made of all the oral history interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. This is a worthy project for which the NPS should be commended. This historically important material should be preserved and displayed in an on-site interpretive center rather than placed in a storage center and perhaps forgotten.

The most favorable location for this interpretive center is Area C, which is not close to Pavilions A and B, where large picnics are held every weekend in spring, summer and fall. In Area C the center would not conflict with the recreational use of the park, nor would it compete for parking spaces used by picnickers. It is a quiet area near the site of one of the PO Box 1142 buildings in which high value World War II prisoners of war were temporarily detained and interrogated. Clearly, it is an appropriate location in which to appreciate the historical significance of Fort Hunt Park.

It is commendable that the GWMP is interested in performing other projects proposed in Alternative Concepts 4 and 5, such as moving two sections of the loop road that currently pass through areas that were within the footprints of the two buildings in which POWs were briefly detained and interrogated during WWII. Also it would be interesting to be able to see the Potomac River from Battery Robinson to provide an idea of what the servicemen saw while manning the cannons during readiness exercises. But the importance of undertaking such projects is of lower priority than creating the interpretive center and telling the stories of the site's history. With its limited resources the NPS should spend its funds in the most effective way to educate the public and demonstrate the interconnectedness of Fort Hunt Park with numerous other historical National Park units.

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

In summary, it is very important to approve an interpretive center for Fort Hunt Park. All other projects are of lesser priority and should be considered only after the interpretive center becomes a reality.

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Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
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Notes:

Correspondence Text

Fort Hunt Park deserves to become one of the premier recreational locales in the DC metro area. It is already stunningly beautiful, and has limitless potential. Just build on what is already there by turning it into a true family-oriented playful space.

- 1.) Install a state of the art fully accessible (ADA compliant) playground
- 2.) Construct a fabulous series of pools to accommodate visitors of all ages, complete with water features, slides and a sandy beach area (there is an enormous need for swimming options in our area given how restricted membership is at some neighborhood pools)
- 3.) Install grills to encourage families to spend the entire day outdoors playing and picnicking
- 4.) Revive the summer concert series by bringing in more contemporary talent (to a venue that will already be packed because it's the go-to outdoor spot in the area)
- 5.) Really utilize social media and other excellent PR strategies to advertise all that the park has to offer.

Simply put, Fort Hunt Park is underutilized, but that could change with the addition of creative, playful and accessible options that would breathe life into a space that is crying out for love, laughter and fun!!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

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Correspondence Text

These comments strongly express my support for creating a new Visitor Interpretive Center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park in order to exhibit the PO Box 1142 Activity, located on this site, and its's important role in American history during WWII. This center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and have secure work space for historians, other researchers, journalists and as well as interested members of the public. For example, access to oral history interviews of veterans who served at PO Box 1142, the during World War II would be made available.

All buildings constructed at Ft. Hunt for WWII activities were destroyed at the end of the war. The only current physical evidence of Ft. Hunt's past are the remains of four artillery emplacements and their battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904. It is difficult to see the value contributed to American history of marking only these battery emplacements (see foot note below). However, the park is quite lovely and honoring General Hunt's contributions at the Battle of Gettysburg is commendable.

There is essentially no representation of the far more historically significant PO Box 1142 activity. Consequently, constructing an interpretive center should be given the highest priority over other possible site improvements. This will then mark this location's significant role in successfully ending WWII and provide very substantial justification for this park being a National Historical Site.

A good location for this interpretive center would be in Area C where it would not interfere with large picnics held every weekend in the summer. Moreover located here, the center would neither conflict with the recreational use of the park nor compete for parking spaces used by other visitors. It would be near the site of one of the World War II buildings in which high value World War II prisoners of war were detained and interrogated.

Meaningful research has documented activities at PO Box 1142. High value German prisoners of war included German Senior Officers, U-boat commanders, and important war effort managers and scientists. Many oral history interviews of veterans who served at PO Box 1142, former German prisoners of war, and other relevant persons, has been collected along

with key artifacts from those interviewed. This historically important material needs to be displayed in an on-site interpretive center, given the important but little known role of PO Box 1142 in winning the war.

Foot Note: Considering the date of the battery operational deployment, the width and depth of the Potomac River, as well as the length of passage to reach this location, indicates that a credible river-based threat was extraordinarily unlikely; e.g. contrast with the batteries constructed on Corregidor Island in Manila Bay.

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Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

February 21, 2015

Superintendent Alex Romero
Attn: Fort Hunt Park EA
National Park Service
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Re: Comments on Scoping for Revised Site Development Plan Alternatives for Fort Hunt Park

Dear Superintendent Romero:

On behalf of Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI), I am pleased to submit these comments on the revised alternatives for a Site Development Plan (SDP) for Fort Hunt Park (the Park) introduced in connection with National Park Service's (NPS) February 5, 2015 open house. As you know, FFHPI is a consulting party and the official friends group for the Park.

NPS has published revised alternatives, referred to as Alternative Concept 4 and Alternative Concept 5, which along with the No-Action Alternative are those now under consideration. We understand that, once NPS decides on the alternatives, it will undertake an Environmental Assessment (EA) of those alternatives and an evaluation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. While variously stated in the meeting board/power point presentations at the February 5 open house, the need for a new SDP is explained in the more detailed one as follows:

-"Peak visitation periods exceed the park's carrying capacity, which creates a need to balance the different types of visitor use (recreation, permitted picnicking, interpretation) with resource protection."

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- "Recent discovery of the site's rich history has created expanded opportunities and a demand by the public for additional interpretation." The other presentation emphasizes in this regard "the site's significance as a World War II secret interrogation center."

- "Changes in current park uses and expanded interpretation have created a need for changes to existing facilities and/or the addition of new facilities."

The purpose of the SDP is said in the same presentation as being "to improve the visitor experience and define specific resource conditions to provide direction for park management."

Alternative Concept 4 would place an "enhanced visitor services zone" within the area designated a "Area C." Visitor services could range from "a wayside, interactive information kiosk, and/or visitor services facility." Reservations would be reduced in the picnic area in Area C. A new restroom might be constructed in Area C.

Alternative Concept 5 would establish a visitor services zone near the entrance to the Park that could include the NCO Quarters and/or current office space in Pavilion A to support a visitor services function. An accessible pedestrian path would be created there.

Under both action alternatives, the following would also be done or considered, among other things:

A chronological "interpretation/recreation" trail would be constructed.

Two "Historic Land Use Restoration Areas" would be established"

Area E restrooms and parking would be removed to enhance long-term protection and interpretation of resources within the Historic Land Use Restoration Areas.

Playground equipment would be upgraded in Area A.

Ballfield D would remain and would be re-vegetated to create a multi-purpose, open recreational space.

The historic sightline would be restored from Battery Robinson.

Sections of the loop road would be realigned to avoid Historic Land Use Restoration Areas.

Recreational amenities and access would be enhanced on the lower shared use trail.

FFHPI congratulates NPS for its efforts to complete this long-running project during 2015, for NPS's effort in the revised alternatives to respond to public reactions to previous alternatives and for the serious consideration reflected in the revised alternatives to achieving a balanced approach to a new SDP for the Park. While we recognize that NPS has sought comments at this stage of the process on the alternatives to be considered, FFHPI's comments on the alternatives cannot be separated from the ultimate question of what type of visitor interpretation function should be established. The footprint for the facilities needed in this regard will impact the environmental impact assessment and historical impact assessment to be performed on the alternatives before one is selected. We therefore begin below with FFHPI's views in that regard. We then set forth our comments on certain features of NPS's revised alternatives.

I. THE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE PARK JUSTIFIES, AND FFHPI URGES NPS TO UNDERTAKE, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FACILITY CAPABLE OF EDUCATING VISITORS AND PROVIDING A RESOURCE FOR HISTORIANS

We begin with this foundational point- - in light of the historical significance of the Park and the fact that so little is known by the public about that history, NPS should construct a facility of such a size and capability that it can serve as a place where that history can be effectively explained to visitors through interactive exhibits and relevant videos and where professional historians and other researchers can access records relating to that history. There should be adequate parking at or very near the facility. And it must be ADA compliant.

A. The Historical Importance of Fort Hunt Park

NPS identified the major historical periods in the open house power points.

- This was the site of prehistoric Native American occupation.
- This was part of George Washington's River Farm, home to some of his slaves.
- This site housed coastal artillery and an army fort in the late 1890s and early twentieth century, which were part of Washington, D.C.'s coastal defenses around the time of the Spanish American War. Only the four batteries and battery commander's station still survive, all of which are in deteriorated condition.
- This was the site of an African American ROTC training camp in the 1930s.
- This is where the World War I Bonus Marchers camped in 1932 when they came to protest Congress's failure to have given them promised bonuses and when the army under General Douglas MacArthur drove them from their camps near the capital.

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They also camped there in the two smaller marches of 1933 and 1934.

- As the depression overtook the country, the Roosevelt Administration established the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Washington area unit NP-6 was based here, from which base of operations the Corps built significant portions of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The King and Queen of England visited that camp in 1939.
- From 1942 until 1946, the U.S. Army and Navy used this site as a super secret military intelligence operation known only as "P.O. Box 1142."

The NPS PowerPoint slides touch on the activities conducted at P.O. Box 1142. Yes, this was an interrogation center, as stated. But it was a very special kind of interrogation center. This was not like the battlefield interrogations of captured enemy soldiers. Instead, when the U.S. captured German generals, submarine captains or other Germans having potentially high strategic value information, they were brought to P.O. Box 1142. Here, specially trained interrogators who spoke fluent German spent long hours gaining the trust of the captives or using other non-coercive methods that over time resulted in significant strategic intelligence that helped our country win the War.

For example, interrogators from the Office of Naval Intelligence worked with Army interrogators to gain significant technical and operational information concerning German U-Boats that helped the Navy develop tactics to defeat them. The navy learned, for example, about German acoustic torpedoes, German advances to intercept Allied radar and German U-Boat tactics.

Moreover, P.O. Box 1142 was not merely an interrogation center. Here, intelligence was also collected from other sources on the German military, economy and civilian morale. For example, the German Army "Order of Battle" was prepared here for use by U.S. forces on and after D-Day. And here, intelligence was gathered about potential bombing targets. Here also, the military conducted what has been called "The Escape Factory" to communicate secretly with and to provide escape and evasion implements to U.S. servicemen shot down over Nazi Europe and/or captured by the Nazis.

As the War came to an end and the Cold War began, P.O. Box 1142 was used to debrief German scientists and engineers and spies joining the American side in what was becoming a contest with the Soviet Union. Recent books have reported on these American efforts, known as "Operation Paperclip."

During the War, P.O. Box 1142 consisted of many structures. After World War II, because of the secrecy of the operations there, the military bulldozed all but a few of those structures. The servicemen who had served there were sworn to secrecy. However, in the 1990s, facts about P.O. Box 1142 began to come to light. As you know, NPS has devoted, and is devoting, significant resources researching the World War II use of the site. NPS commissioned a report entitled "By the River Potomac," prepared by Matthew Laird and issued in 2000. It is currently available online at (<https://archive.org/details/byriverpotomachi00lair>). NPS staff also conducted oral histories of many of the then surviving servicemen and even several former prisoners of war, most of which are in video form. Currently, efforts to transcribe those histories are underway, so historians can assemble a coherent story of what happened there based on the interviews. NPS also has significant archives of materials from the World War II and previous periods, all of which are soon to be catalogued. NPS is, of course, one of the nation's premier institutions entrusted with the mission of telling the American people and foreign visitors about American history. The National Park System contains a large number of historical parks, where rangers do an excellent job in that regard. NPS has long followed the principle that history can best be told at the place where it happened. History happened at Fort Hunt Park, and that history must be told there.

B. Specific Comments on Alternatives

Alternative Concept 4 allows for the possibility that a facility could be constructed that would permit the interpretative activities needed to address the history of what happened on this site. But we have these comments about that alternative:

(1) The alternative is described as including visitor services that could range from merely a kiosk to a visitor services facility.

The Alternative should be revised to reflect that it includes a visitor facility, not merely signage or a kiosk. This change will assure that the EA and Section 106 assessments are conducted taking such a facility, not merely a kiosk, into account. In FFHPI's view, the stories to be told here could not adequately be told by a kiosk alone. While wayside signs and/or a kiosk should lead visitors to the interpretative facility, a facility of sufficient size and other capabilities is essential to telling these stories adequately. In addition to display space for interactive exhibits and an area to view relevant videos, such a facility must have storage and working areas to store the oral histories and other archival materials and to provide historians a place to work with those materials. Accordingly, NPS should perform its environmental impact assessment and historic resources assessment based on an interpretative facility of a size large enough to accomplish these objectives. Note that the original NPS concept in 2011 was to create a visitor center with a footprint of not more than 6400 square feet.

(2) Such a facility could be located in Area C. That area would minimize impacts to the Park's recreation facilities yet be

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close to the principal prisoner enclosures during World War II. In addition, other features of Alternative Concept 4 would enhance other recreation areas, creating the type of balance NPS seeks among uses.

(3) While not part of NPS's current assessments, FFHPI reminds NPS that FFHPI has offered to raise the money needed to finance the type of facility we support as described above.

FFHPI does not support Alternative Concept 5 and does not believe any changes to that alternative would make it viable. The NCO Quarters is a National Historic Landmark. This would make it difficult to reconfigure that small space to make it suitable for the type of interpretative facility FFHPI supports. Moreover, the multi-story interior spaces there do not lend themselves to such display spaces or to storage and work areas for archival materials and their use. ADA compliance would be difficult or impossible there. As to the "office space" in Pavilion A, that space is much too small to meet the needs described above and is only accessible by stairs at either end of the stage, so would not be available to visitors when the stage was in use.

Both Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 call for moving two segments of the loop road, apparently to make way for future archeological research. While FFHPI agrees that archeological research on this site is appropriate at some later date, we question spending limited resources in the near term on moving a road to accommodate such future efforts. FFHPI instead believes NPS's resources should be used to further the progress towards the visitor services facility discussed above. But if NPS believes that including this possibility in the current EA/Section 106 process would be efficient and would not cost a significant sum at this time, FFHPI does not object to NPS's doing so.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the FFHPI on the current and past Alternative Concepts for Site Development Plan (SDP) and Environmental Assessment for Fort Hunt Park.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

Official letter also to be submitted by regular mail

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I am submitting comments to express my support for an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park. My second choice would be for such a center in Area A.

As a National Park Service retiree with extensive experience in cultural resources management, I am a dedicated supporter of the National Park System and its key role in preserving and enhancing the cultural and natural resources of our nation and educating our citizens as to its cultural and natural history.

I am also a member of the Advisory Council of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI) and believe that its history should be interpreted for visitors not only to educate them about the site but also to demonstrate its connectivity to other National Park units that tell other stories about the same aspects of American history.

I appreciate the variety of recreational opportunities at Fort Hunt Park and favor preserving and enhancing those resources.

But Fort Hunt Park is more than a recreational park. It is a special unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). It represents snapshots of American history from before the Revolutionary War through World War II into the early stages of the Cold War. It was a part of George Washington's River Farm, a fort built for the coastal defense of Washington, DC, around the time of the Spanish American War, the site at which World War I veterans (Bonus Marchers) camped for three successive years, a training and camping site for an early African American ROTC company, a civilian Conservation Corps camp that the King and Queen of England visited in 1939 and a top secret World War II military intelligence installation known only as PO Box 1142. After the war German scientists were debriefed there before starting to work for the US as part of Operation Paperclip.

The only physical evidence of its important past are the remains of the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904. And only a few waysides next to these structures provide limited interpretation of this history.

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Hence I believe that it is crucial for the NPS to approve the establishment of an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history. Mindful of the costs associated with such a facility, the center should be modest in size but large enough to include an area for modest exhibits to educate visitors and have space for the public and school groups to review the oral history interviews of veterans who served at PO Box 1142. A lavatory would be necessary. Visitors to the park, even those who go mainly for recreational purposes, should learn about all the stories that have played out at Fort Hunt Park.

Waysides are useful to interpret the history of Fort Hunt Park and should be used judiciously throughout the park. The best location for this interpretive center is Area C, which is not close to Pavilions A and B, where large picnics are held every weekend in the warm months. In Area C the center would not conflict with the recreational use of the park, nor would it compete for parking spaces used by picnickers. It is a quiet area near the site of one of the World War II buildings in which high value World War II prisoners of war were temporarily detained and interrogated. Clearly, it is an appropriate location in which to appreciate the historical significance of Fort Hunt Park.

I understand the idea of locating a visitor facility in Area A where there are the most visitors. However, reusing the historic NCO Quarters is likely impractical given the potential conflicts with access, floor space, exhibit requirements, and toilet. The existing space in the picnic pavilion is not suitable for interpretation or exhibits. I believe an addition would be necessary to the pavilion to accommodate the requirements and I question the size of such a dual use development on the parade grounds and surrounding areas.

Further, the NPS previously performed meaningful research on PO Box 1142, where high value German prisoners of war, including U-boat commanders and generals were brought for strategic interrogation. It conducted more than 70 oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans, former German prisoners of wars and other relevant persons, as well as collecting key artifacts from those interviewed. Currently, the NPS is contracting to have high quality transcripts made of all the interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. If at all possible, this historically important material should be preserved and displayed in an on-site interpretive center rather than placed in a storage center where it would not be readily available.

New concepts propose removing two sections of the loop road that currently pass over areas that were within the footprints of the two buildings in which POWs were briefly detained and interrogated during WWII. Although there is a chance more artifacts will be found, the cost and site disturbance outweigh the benefits.

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As neighbors to Fort Hunt Park, our family is keenly interested in the improvement plans currently being considered. We purchased our house in large part because of its proximity to the park, and we are frequent visitors there.

We attended the recent open house and have reviewed the alternatives plans. Much of what is proposed, such as the historic interpretive trail and a visitor service zone, is agreeable to us; however, a couple aspect of the plans, namely the proposed fitness trail on the closed road and the lack of of attention to the preservation of the wildlife and forest area, concern us.

We like the idea of a fitness area, but we are not pleased with the location. It would bring visitors to the only area of the park that hiking trails, streams, marshes and wildlife. The more people in the area, especially those who are not there for the natural resources, the harder the impact on those areas. Related to these concerns is the proposed sight line to the river from Battery Robinson. That area is very close to where the bald eagles nest, and the project could disrupt them.

We see desirable solutions to these two concerns. In regard to the fitness trail, if it could be moved to be in close enough proximity to the playground, parents could supervisor their children while exercising themselves. In this way, it is likely the fitness equipment would be used even more than if it were on the closed road. To preserve the area in which the bald eagles next, moving the sight lines so the view were in a more eastwardly direction would less disrupt the eagles. This would also keep even more of the forested area intact. We would like to see the hiking area not just preserved but also improved by creating more habitats for a wider array of wildlife.

We have a couple other comments: the visitor service zone should be closer to the park entrance, and we would know more about the historically significant areas to judge whether the expense of moving the road and revegetating the baseball field were warranted.

Thank you for allowing us to submit these comments. We look forward learning the future of our favorite park.

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Thank you for letting us comment on the changes coming to Fort Hunt Park. We live in the neighborhood and the park is one of our favorite places. And we have some thoughts on the plans.

The fitness trail on the closed road doesn't make sense. Not only is there a fitness trail very close by on the bike trail. If you must have one, it should be by the play ground. The field behind battery Mt. Vernon concerns me. You say that is a historic section of land, but you say nothing in the caption about what is significant. In the caption you say you want to make it a "multipurpose field" by removing the ball field. If you take out the ball field, you will make a LESS "multipurpose field". Leave the ball field, and add whatever else you need to make a "multipurpose field". In the same location must you move the road 20 feet?

The sight line from Battery Robinson and the river should be on a more eastward route so as not to disturb the eagles' nest. You are doing nothing to enhance the natural resources. You could improve them by removing the invasive plants.

It also makes more sense to have the visitors' center toward the front of the park.

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I am submitting the following comments to express my strong and continuing support for establishing an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history.

I am an avid supporter of the National Park System and have visited more than 250 National Park units. I have learned so much about geology, the environment and American history from these visits. My first stop at each of the park units is the visitor center where I watch available videos, tour the exhibits and then plan the rest of my visit.

I became interested in Fort Hunt Park in 2010 following an article in the National Parks magazine about PO Box 1142, the top-secret military intelligence installation located there in World War II. One of the PO Box 1142 interrogators, George Mandel, was featured in that article. He later became the head of the department of pharmacology at The George Washington University School of Medicine and interacted closely with my husband, who was also on the medical school faculty. I was intrigued by the stories of German-speaking interrogators, a number of whom were Jews who immigrated to the US from Nazi-controlled Europe. Some of these men had lost members or all of their family to the scourge of Nazism but were still humane and dignified while interrogating German POWs. The interrogators used psychology, not torture, to obtain information. This was in stark contrast to the way the US military treated prisoners of war during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It was a compelling story that deserved to be told.

During my first visits to Fort Hunt Park, I observed it to be almost an orphan unit of the National Park System. There was no entrance sign, nor was a National Park Service (NPS) arrowhead attached to Picnic Pavilion A. It was only upon close inspection of the waysides near the four artillery batteries built in the late 1890s and early twentieth century that a motivated visitor would learn that it was indeed a National Park unit.

Fort Hunt Park is a very popular picnicking and recreational park. Numerous visitors just assumed that it was a part of the Fairfax County recreational park system. This was very sad for a site with such an important history.

The more I learned about the history of Fort Hunt Park the more convinced I became of the importance of its history. Accordingly, several other people and I created the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI) in November 2012 with the express purpose of ensuring that the park's history would be told in a state-of-the-art interpretive center that would also be available to historians, journalists and other interested parties seeking to extend the knowledge of what occurred there. FFHPI believed that emphasis should be placed on the stories of PO Box 1142.

FFHPI and the staff of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) have worked together on a number of issues. For example, FFHPI provided the funds to purchase an arrowhead for Picnic Pavilion A that was installed in March 2014, and GWMP will be installing an entrance sign in the spring of 2015 identifying the park as an NPS unit.

FFHPI has already submitted comments on the Winter 2015 Site Development and Environmental Assessment process. I am submitting these comments as an individual with a long and sustained commitment to the National Park System and NPS.

The NPS has been an effective steward for the more than 400 units in the system and an important source of knowledge on the natural and cultural history of our nation. Different aspects of historical events are told in a number of parks (e.g., World War II on the home front and in the Pacific, various events in the lives of four key presidents, the roles of volcanism and glaciation in shaping our landscapes). The National Park System is truly the best conservation and environmental education idea that America ever had.

Fort Hunt Park is a special unit of the GWMP. It represents a microcosm of American history from before the Revolutionary War through World War II into the early stages of the Cold War. Other than the limited wayside signs near the remains of the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904, there currently is not any interpretation at the park that will enable visitors to begin to understand the extent of this history.

The initial draft Fort Hunt Park site development plan issued by the NPS in 2011 included a new visitor facility with a footprint no larger than 6,400 square feet in three of the four alternatives. Although that plan was withdrawn, Alternative Concepts 2, 3 and 4 issued in June 2012 all included a visitor contact station, but in three different areas of the park.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS in February 2015 call for visitor services zones but are vague about their nature. Alternative Concept 4 indicates that visitor services could range from "a wayside, interactive information kiosk, and/or an unspecified visitor services facility within Area C." Alternative Concept 5 establishes the zone near the entrance to the park that could include the NCO Quarters and/or current office space in Pavilion A to support a visitor services function. It is not clear to me why the NPS no longer seems to support a center for interpreting the history of Fort Hunt Park.

With respect to Alternative Concept 4, a wayside is clearly insufficient to interpret the important and unique history of Fort Hunt Park. While a kiosk would provide somewhat more information, it is still inadequate. What is needed is a high-tech interpretive center that incorporates interactive exhibits to let the visitor participate in important historical events and researchers to access the oral histories and related material.

Area C is the best location for the needed interpretive center since it is sufficiently remote from Pavilions A and B, where large picnics are held every weekend in the summer. In Area C the center would neither conflict with the recreational use of the park nor compete for parking spaces used by picnickers. It is an uncongested and quiet area near the site of one of the World War II buildings temporary detention centers. As such it is a more appropriate location in which to appreciate the historical significance of Fort Hunt Park.

The facilities and locations proposed in Alternative Concept 5 are not appropriate to fulfill a visitor services function. Area A is close to the entrance to the park and contains Picnic Pavilion A, where very large picnics are regularly held. Some of these picnics attract more than a thousand people. Establishing an interpretive center in Area A would lead to competition for parking spaces used by picnickers and others using the park for strictly recreational purposes. It is a highly trafficked area and not conducive to showcasing the site's rich history. Further, the NCO Quarters is a small two-story building with basement. The stairs to the basement are particularly narrow and steep. The rooms on the first and second floors are small, and it is

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questionable that they could be modified as the site has historic status. For example, what room could be used as a small auditorium for showing videos on the park's history, including the seven-minute video produced by CBS News and aired in September 2014? The building is not handicapped accessible, and it may be challenging to afford such accessibility, even to the first floor.

Further, the "current office space in Pavilion A" is behind the stage and is used as storage space for chairs, sound system equipment, work equipment, etc. It is also a limited space and only accessible by stairs at either end of the stage. If a picnic or program using the stage of Pavilion A were in progress, then a visitor wishing to learn about the park's key history would at best have difficulty in accessing such an area. This alternative belittles the importance of the history of the park.

The two new Alternative Concepts seem at odds with the pivotal research that the NPS previously performed on PO Box 1142, including conducting more than 70 oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans, former German prisoners of war and other relevant persons, and collecting key artifacts from those interviewed. To its credit the NPS is currently working to have high quality transcripts made of all the interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. The material so gained should be preserved and displayed in an on-site interpretive center rather than be placed in a storage center and perhaps forgotten.

An effective sound and light show could be developed for the interpretive center incorporating key clips from oral history interviews with photos of the servicemen and facilities at PO Box 1142. Models for such an exhibit could be the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site (NHS) in Buffalo, NY, and the Johnstown Flood National Memorial in PA.

Further, the stories of Fort Hunt Park's role in World War II complement stories of other NPS units that played a role in the war. Such parks include Prince William Forest Park in VA and Catoctin Mountain Park in MD, both of which served as Office of Strategic Services training facilities. Other World War II-related units are Rosie the Riveter NHS and Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, both in CA, and the War in the Pacific National Historic Park in Guam.

With respect to other proposals in Alternative Concepts 4 and 5, it is commendable that the GWMP is interested in performing future archeological research at the site and would like during the site development/environmental assessment process to obtain approval for the potential removal and realignment of two sections of the loop road that currently pass over areas that were within the two buildings in which POWs were briefly detained and interrogated during WWII.

Any archeological remains that may be under the sections of the loop road proposed for removal are well encapsulated. Further, if funds were available, preliminary archeological research could be performed, particularly on both sides of the section of the road that passes through the former site of Enclosure A. This would be the logical and cost-effective action to take before deciding whether to remove the road section.

Further, four concrete blocks that appear to be the footings for the guard tower of Enclosure B are in a wooded area well within the current loop road. This area could be fenced off and used for interpretive purposes, perhaps as a part of an interpretive trail with a wayside or cell phone interpretation.

In summary, it is critical to approve an interpretive center for Area C. Other proposals may have merit but should only be considered once the interpretive center becomes a reality.

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The purpose of these comments is to indicate my strong support for an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park.

My wife and I are keen supporters of the National Park System. To date we have visited more than 320 National Park units. We have learned much about the cultural and natural history of our nation and been inspired to support and encourage the further development of these precious resources. To act on this inspiration, I joined the Board of Directors of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI) in 2013.

There are already a number of National Parks that celebrate both the victories and tragedies of World War II. But none elaborate the strategy-shaping intelligence gathering and processing that was so important during the war-the purpose of P.O. Box 1142. An interpretive center at Fort Hunt should be established to more fully tell the story of a war that shaped the history of the world in the second half of the 20th century. It would complement the existing National Park Service units dedicated to World War II, such as World War II Valor in the Pacific National Memorial, Rosie the Riveter WW II Home Front National Historical Park, Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, Manzanar National Historic Site, Minidoka National Historic Site, and Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site.

Of course, the history of Fort Hunt Park is much more than P.O. Box 1142. As a special unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), it represents the evolution of American history from before the Revolutionary War through World War II into the early stages of the Cold War. The site was a part of George Washington's River Farm. A fort was built for coastal defense of the capital around the time of the Spanish American War that existed until 1917 when its cannon were sent to Europe for World War I. World War I veterans (Bonus Marchers) camped for three successive years in the 1930s while petitioning for early payment of their promised bonuses and an early African American ROTC company trained and bivouacked at Fort Hunt. Fort Hunt was a key Civilian Conservation Corps camp from 1933 until 1942.

And like many historically important parks, Fort Hunt Park also provides unparalleled recreational opportunities for the community-attracting many visitors who gain an appreciation for history they might otherwise overlook.

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It is critical for the NPS to approve the establishment of an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history. This center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and include separate space for historians and journalists to read the oral history interviews of veterans who served at PO Box 1142 in a secure and undisturbed manner. This facility will also enable visitors who go to the park mainly for recreational purposes to learn also about all the stories that have played out at Fort Hunt Park, which should enhance the quality of their visit.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

 Alexandria, VA 22314

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 35

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/25/2015 Date Received: 02/25/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am writing this to request the approval of a state-of-the-art interactive interpretive center to be constructed in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to highlight the history of the park during World War II.

Fort Hunt Park has a long history from George Washington's time through the early years of the Cold War. Part of this fascinating history is its little known use during World War II when it was the site of an interrogation center. This top secret area, known only as PO Box 1142 was where German prisoners of war, including generals and U-Boat commanders were briefly detained for questioning, the answers of which resulted in valuable information that helped the United States and its allies win the war.

In recent years the National Park Service has gathered a large body of information about PO Box 1142, including oral histories and artifacts collected from former interrogators and former prisoners I think it is very important to bring this interesting part of the park's history to light.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 36

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: National Parks Conservation Association
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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USA
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/25/2015 Date Received: 02/25/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

[REDACTED]

Washington, DC 20001
[REDACTED]
February 25, 2015

Superintendent
Attn: Fort Hunt Park EA
National Park Service
George Washington Memorial Parkway
700 George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park Headquarters
McLean, VA 22101

RE: Comments on Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment

Dear Superintendent:

I am writing on behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association to comment on the February 2015 Site Development Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

Plan for Fort Hunt Park. NPCA is a nonpartisan advocacy organization that is dedicated to protecting and enhancing America's national parks for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. NPCA has more than one million members and supporters across the nation, including more than 22,000 Virginians.

NPCA strongly supports Alternative Concept 4 which will provide for enhanced visitor services in Area C. The centerpiece of Alternative Concept 4 should be a new interpretive center that will finally share Fort Hunt Park's historical significance with park visitors. Fort Hunt Park has long been enjoyed for its recreational facilities and NPCA supports these uses. However, today's park visitor has little knowledge of the amazing past Fort Hunt Park has had because Fort Hunt Park's stories have not been shared. It is past time to plan for and to build a true interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park with state-of-the-art exhibits showcasing the many chapters of its past.

The interpretive center should house the oral histories of the veterans who served at Fort Hunt Park when it was a top-secret military installation. The interpretive center should be large enough to allow historians, researchers, and others to study these oral histories and the other numerous artifacts associated with Fort Hunt Park that currently remain in storage. Wayside stations or kiosks would be woefully inadequate mechanisms to share Fort Hunt Park's history. The small signage currently at the park is difficult to find and a poor means to share even a fraction of the park's historical significance.

NPCA strongly supports building the interpretive center in Area C rather than Area A so we do not support Alternative Concept 5. Area C has the space to accommodate an interpretive center that is large enough to hold exhibits and host researchers. It will not create conflicts with visitors coming into the park entrance or those who are attending events in the pavilion. It would be difficult to enjoy an interpretive center during the many concerts and private events held at the pavilion throughout the year. And parking could become a problem if the interpretive center is located at the pavilion. Area C is also away from major picnic areas that are full of people and quite noisy throughout the year.

NPCA believes the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) Quarters should be restored and perhaps used for NPS staff offices. It is too small to host the much-needed interpretive center. The NCO Quarters also pose accessibility problems due to its outdoor and indoor staircases; and narrow hallways. The remaining rooms are small and the basement provides additional accessibility problems.

We support the creation of a new interpretive trail, upgrades to the safety and accessibility of Area A playground equipment, and the restoration of the historic sight line from Battery Robinson to the Potomac River. This will further enhance the visitor experience at the park.

We support the removal and realignment of segments of the park's main loop road, as well as removal of Area E restrooms and the parking area to enhance the long-term protection and interpretation of resources within the Historic Land Use Restoration Areas. However, we strongly believe that this work must take a lesser priority to the siting and building of the interpretive center as the center is long overdue.

As you know, Fort Hunt Park has a vast history that is currently not available to today's park visitor. An interpretive center is essential to share the many chapters of Fort Hunt Park's past. Stories of George Washington's River Farm Plantation, the Spanish-American War, World War I Bonus Marchers, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the secret interrogation center during World War II all should be available to the public when they pay a visit to the park. Current signage is inadequate in revealing Fort Hunt Park's history.

The National Park Service has a tremendous opportunity to interpret and share Fort Hunt Park's fascinating place in our country's history. These stories will easily fill an interpretive center with exhibits of the currently-stored artifacts, the oral histories, and space for researchers. The interpretive center will also house any archeological resources that may be uncovered in the park.

We understand and support the need for recreational opportunities at Fort Hunt Park. We know the National Park Service can continue to provide outdoor recreation while protecting, preserving, and interpreting cultural and historic resources. Fort
Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

Hunt Park exists because of its historical significance. It is past time to honor this history with an interpretive center.

The National Park Service has conducted tremendous work to uncover the incredible stories of Fort Hunt Park. It is inconceivable that NPS would not work to share these stories with park visitors. In conclusion, NPCA strongly supports Alternative Concept 4 with a priority on the building of an interpretive center in Area C. We urge the National Park Service to move forward on this plan and to work to ensure that sufficient financial resources are available to fully implement it.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 37

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Greenbelt, MD 20770
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E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/25/2015 Date Received: 02/25/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

February 25, 2015

Superintendent
Attn: Fort Hunt Park EA
National Park Service
George Washington Memorial Parkway
700 George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park Headquarters
McLean, VA 22101

RE: Comments on Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment

Dear Superintendent:

I am writing to comment on the February 2015 Site Development Plan for Fort Hunt Park. I visit and enjoy Fort Hunt Park often and wish to express my support for a new visitors center.

I strongly support Alternative Concept 4 which will provide for enhanced visitor services in Area C. The centerpiece of Alternative Concept 4 should be a new interpretive center that will finally share Fort Hunt Park's historical significance with park visitors. Fort Hunt Park has long been enjoyed for its recreational facilities and NPCA supports these uses. However, today's park visitor has little knowledge of the amazing past Fort Hunt Park has had because Fort Hunt Park's stories have not been shared. It is past time to plan for and to build a true interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park with state-of-the-art exhibits showcasing the many chapters of its past.

The interpretive center should house the oral histories of the veterans who served at Fort Hunt Park when it was a top-secret military installation. The interpretive center should be large enough to allow historians, researchers, and others to study these oral histories and the other numerous artifacts associated with Fort Hunt Park that currently remain in storage. Wayside stations or kiosks would be woefully inadequate mechanisms to share Fort Hunt Park's history. The small signage currently at the park is difficult to find and a poor means to share even a fraction of the park's historical significance.

I strongly support building the interpretive center in Area C rather than Area A so I do not support Alternative Concept 5. Area C has the space to accommodate an interpretive center that is large enough to hold exhibits and host researchers. It will not create conflicts with visitors coming into the park entrance or those who are attending events in the pavilion. It would be difficult to enjoy an interpretive center during the many concerts and private events held at the pavilion throughout the year. And parking could become a problem if the interpretive center is located at the pavilion. Area C is also away from major picnic areas that are full of people and quite noisy throughout the year.

I believe the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) Quarters should be restored and perhaps used for NPS staff offices. It is too small to host the much-needed interpretive center. The NCO Quarters also pose accessibility problems due to its outdoor and indoor staircases; and narrow hallways. The remaining rooms are small and the basement provides additional accessibility problems.

I support the creation of a new interpretive trail, upgrades to the safety and accessibility of Area A playground equipment, and the restoration of the historic sight line from Battery Robinson to the Potomac River. This will further enhance the visitor experience at the park.

I support the removal and realignment of segments of the park's main loop road, as well as removal of Area E restrooms and the parking area to enhance the long-term protection and interpretation of resources within the Historic Land Use Restoration Areas. However, I strongly believe that this work must take a lesser priority to the siting and building of the interpretive center as the center is long overdue.

As you know, Fort Hunt Park has a vast history that is currently not available to today's park visitor. An interpretive center is essential to share the many chapters of Fort Hunt Park's past. Stories of George Washington's River Farm Plantation, the Spanish-American War, World War I Bonus Marchers, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the secret interrogation center during World War II all should be available to the public when they pay a visit to the park. Current signage is inadequate in revealing Fort Hunt Park's history.

The National Park Service has a tremendous opportunity to interpret and share Fort Hunt Park's fascinating place in our country's history. These stories will easily fill an interpretive center with exhibits of the currently-stored artifacts, the oral histories, and space for researchers. The interpretive center will also house any archeological resources that may be uncovered in the park.

I understand and support the need for recreational opportunities at Fort Hunt Park. I know the National Park Service can continue to provide outdoor recreation while protecting, preserving, and interpreting cultural and historic resources. Fort Hunt Park exists because of its historical significance. It is past time to honor this history with an interpretive center.

The National Park Service has conducted tremendous work to uncover the incredible stories of Fort Hunt Park. It is inconceivable that NPS would not work to share these stories with park visitors. I urge NPS to proceed with Alternative Concept 4 with a priority on the building of an interpretive center in Area C and hope you move forward on this plan and work to ensure that sufficient financial resources are available to fully implement it.

Sincerely,



Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

Greenbelt, MD 20770



PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 38

Author Information

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/26/2015 Date Received: 02/26/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

My wife and I have lived in the Fort Hunt area since 1977 and have resided near the entrance to Fort Hunt Park since 2000. During these years I have come to appreciate not only the natural and recreational advantages of the park, but also its special place in American history. I was glad when GWMP undertook the project to uncover the forgotten history of secret operations at Fort Hunt during World War II (known as P.O. Box 1142). The project reflected credit on not only the staff who conducted it, but also the leadership of the National Park Service. Completion of the research and interpretive work on P.O. Box 1142 is essential for the NPS to accomplish its mission to serve the nation. Necessary to accomplish that goal is the establishment of a robust interpretive center at the Park to tell the story of P.O. Box 1142 in the context of the long history of the site.

Therefore, I am pleased to support the adoption of Alternative Concept 4 which would enable GWMP to enhance visitor services including the possibility of a new facility within Area C. The formation of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc., offers the prospect of private fundraising for the construction, operation and maintenance of an interpretive center at this location to carry out the NPS national mission.

I oppose Alternative Concept 5 which would use only the NCO Quarters and/or current space in Pavilion A to support a visitor services "function." Preservation of the historic NCO Quarters is needed to maintain the sole surviving structure from P.O. Box 1142 and prior years. However, the interior of the building is not suitable for an effective interpretive program for visitors. Its small interior rooms and narrow stairway are unsatisfactory for public access to view interpretive displays. Instead, I recommend restoration of the interior as a facility for storage of historical reference materials and access by researchers. For that purpose it would be appropriate to create a small parking area near the NCO Quarters.

Another disadvantage of Alternative Concept 5 is the suggested use of space in Pavilion A that is characterized as "current office space," but should more accurately be described as unheated storage space. Using this space for a visitor services function would eliminate a storage area that is needed to support recreational activities in the park.

With respect to the common actions, some community residents may have concerns about the adverse impact on recreation caused by the removal of Picnic Area E parking and restrooms and the replacement of the softball field in Area D by an area for "multi-purpose recreation." This impact may be justified eventually to protect Historic Land Use Restoration Areas. However, I recommend that these common actions in Areas D and E be postponed indefinitely in order to maintain community support for implementing Alternative Concept 4 by building and operating an interpretive center with funding from the Friends.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 39

Author Information

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/27/2015 Date Received: 02/27/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am submitting the following comments to express my strong and continuing support for establishing an interpretive center in Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history, particularly during World War II.

I represented the 8th Congressional District of Virginia in Congress from 1991 to 2015. During that time I had an abiding interest in the park because of its rich and unique history. I helped secure funding to support the initial draft Site Development and Environmental Assessment Plan that was issued in 2011. That plan was withdrawn near the end of 2011, and four Alternative Concepts were promulgated in June 2012. In early February 2015 two additional Alternative Concepts were issued for the ongoing Site Development Environmental Assessment process. It is time to make a decision on the nature and extent of interpretation of the history of this special park. That decision should include an interpretive center.

The more I have learned about the research that has been performed on PO Box 1142, the top-secret military intelligence installation at Fort Hunt in World War II, the more convinced I am of its importance in history. The PO Box 1142 interrogation program was a key source for determining the significance of U-boat warfare, including information on U-boat tactics, new equipment, morale and disposition. For example, Navy interrogators gained critical intelligence on the German acoustic torpedo, the schnorchel breathing device and German high-under-water speed U-boats. Army interrogations developed key information for the order of battle books for D-Day and beyond. It also obtained comprehensive evaluations of the Luftwaffe's defensive order of battle and Japanese plans to combat B-29 raids, as well as an assessment of Japan's ability to design/build electronic devices. Such data were key to the war effort.

But what I have found most compelling and inspiring is the manner in which the interrogators extracted the key information from German prisoners. They used psychology, not torture, to get the German prisoners to talk, treating them in a humane and dignified manner. A number of the interrogators were young Jews who had escaped Nazi-occupied Europe. Family members of some of these men were killed in Nazi extermination camps. Yet they too treated the German prisoners with respect and consideration. It is an example of the triumph of the human spirit over the forces of evil and terror. This too is an important story to tell about PO Box 1142, especially since it is in stark contrast to the treatment of some prisoners captured

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Much of the pivotal research on PO Box 1142 was performed by dedicated National Park Service (NPS) staffers, who conducted more than 70 oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans, former German prisoners of wars and other relevant persons and also collected key artifacts from those interviewed. The NPS is currently working to have high quality transcripts made of all the interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. It deserves much praise for undertaking this work. The material so gained should be preserved and displayed in the on-site interpretive center rather than relegated to a storage center.

The interpretive center should be located in a quiet part of Fort Hunt Park, preferably near some of the long gone World War II buildings. It should have state-of-the-art interactive exhibits for visitors and an area in which to watch historical videos. Secure space should be included as well for serious researchers who want to delve deeply into the history of the site.

It is time to take the necessary steps to make the key history of Fort Hunt Park available to all visitors. Approving the interpretive center would be a very appropriate step for the George Washington Memorial Parkway to commence its celebration of the NPS centennial.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 40

Author Information

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Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/28/2015 Date Received: 02/28/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am submitting these comments to express my strong support for an interpretive center in a quiet area of Fort Hunt Park as part of the NPS Winter 2015 Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment process.

I am the widow of H. George Mandel, Ph.D., who served at the top-secret World War II military intelligence installation located at Fort Hunt known only as PO Box 1142. He was an interrogator for the Army Military Intelligence Service (MIS-Y). He arrived at PO Box 1142 in July 1945 after undergoing training at the Camp Ritchie Military Intelligence Training Center in Cascade, MD.

George and his family immigrated to the US from Berlin in the 1930s to escape the Nazis. Before entering military service, he graduated from Yale with a degree in chemistry. His scientific expertise and fluency in German made him an ideal person to interrogate German scientists who were brought to PO Box 1142 and to Fort Strong on Long Island in Boston Harbor as part of Operation Paperclip. Among the scientists he interrogated was Wernher von Braun.

After the National Park Service (NPS) discovered that Fort Hunt Park was a top-secret military intelligence facility in World War II, it undertook to learn about its function and importance and also to document the stories of the men who served there. After being contacted by the NPS, George went with NPS ranger Brandon Bies on a number of occasions to the National Archives in College Park, MD, to review records on PO Box 1142, including those on the servicemen stationed at the facility. George was one of the more than 70 persons who gave oral history interviews to the NPS. We both attended the NPS reunion for veterans at Fort Hunt Park in October 2007. At that time NPS staff had draft plans for creating a visitor and interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park so that the stories regarding PO Box 1142 and its other important history could be shared with the public.

Fort Hunt Park is a popular recreational park, but is so much more than a recreational park. It represents a microcosm of American history from before the Revolutionary War into the early stages of the Cold War.

For a number of years I have supported the creation of an interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park. I recommend strongly that the NPS approve the establishment of a center as part of the ongoing Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment. The purpose of the center would be to showcase the site's important role in American history with an emphasis on PO Box 1142. This center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and include a secure space for historians, journalists and others to examine and study the oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans and other relevant persons and the collected artifacts.

Dedicated NPS rangers have performed much of the pivotal research on PO Box 1142. I understand that the NPS is currently working to have high quality transcripts made of all the interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. It deserves much praise for undertaking these activities, which are important to further research on PO Box 1142. The material so gained should be preserved and exhibited in the on-site interpretive center rather than relegated to a storage center.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS in early February 2015 propose visitor services zones but are vague about their nature. Clearly, a wayside or kiosk is inadequate for interpreting the unique and extensive history of Fort Hunt. And the existing NCO Quarters and storage room behind the stage of Pavilion A are not viable options. An interpretive center is what is needed.

It is commendable that the NPS is interested in performing the other projects proposed in Alternative Concepts 4 and 5, but such projects are of lower priority than creating the interpretive center to tell the site's stories. With its limited resources the NPS should spend its funds in the most effective and enlightening way.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 41

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

With our national transportation infrastructure of roads, bridges and railroads crumbling, trillions of dollars in debt to the Chinese, Veterans dying for lack of care in VA hospitals, these ideas of the NPS to waste taxpayers monies is a very poor idea.

Do not disturb the Eagle Habitat at Fort Hunt Park with years of heavy construction!

Do not reduce the parking and picnic areas at Fort Hunt Park.

Nothing historic ever took place at Fort Hunt Park, unless you were an US Army Finance Student or a Nazi.

I call on the Department of Interior Inspector General to look into the motives of the management of this program and their relationship with proposed contractors.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Please leave Fort Hunt Park as it is.
There is zero reason to spend taxpayer dollars on a visitor center.
It is a bald eagle nesting area and should be left alone.
We should not be encouraging additional visitors/tourists.
I appreciate the natural beauty and wildlife in the park, and would encourage a few historic plaques to share the history of the park.
Thank you!

[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 43

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Mr. Romero,

As a resident of the area I am not in agreement with the potential changes. We live in a age where the norm is to be surrounded by buildings and less by nature. I think the national patrimonium has to be restored and protected for the future generations but cutting down green areas and providing less parking spaces would not increase visitor experience. I hope you and your decision-making staff will soon realize the damaging impact on the natural and physical environment.

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 44

Author Information

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Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am submitting comments to express my strong support for an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park.

I am a professional historian and former National Park Service Bureau Historian in WASO. I strongly support the key role of the National Park System in preserving and enhancing the natural and cultural resources of our nation and educating our citizens as to our natural and cultural history.

I am also a supporter of Fort Hunt Park and recently joined the Advisory Council of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI) because of my keen interest in its history, particularly its military history.

I have lived in Alexandria for nearly thirty years and have enjoyed the recreational opportunities at Fort Hunt Park. I wholeheartedly support preserving and enhancing those resources.

But Fort Hunt Park is more than a recreational park. It is a special unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). It represents snapshots of American history from before the Revolutionary War through World War II into the early stages of the Cold War. It was a part of George Washington's River Farm, a fort built for the coastal defense of Washington, DC, around the time of the Spanish American War, the site at which World War I veterans (Bonus Marchers) camped for three successive years, a training and camping site for an early African American ROTC company, a civilian Conservation Corps camp that the King and Queen of England visited in 1939 and a top secret World War II military intelligence installation known only as PO Box 1142. After the war German scientists were debriefed there before starting to work for the US as part of Operation Paperclip.

The only physical evidence of its important past are the remains of the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904. And only a few waysides next to these structures provide limited interpretation of this history.

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

Hence I believe that it is crucial for the NPS to approve the establishment of an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history. This center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and have secure space for historians, journalists and interested members of the public to have access to oral history interviews of veterans who served at PO Box 1142, the World War II top-secret military intelligence installation located on this site. Visitors to the park, even those who go mainly for recreational purposes, should learn about all the stories that have played out at Fort Hunt Park.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS in early February 2015 in conjunction with the site development and environmental assessment process for Fort Hunt Park call for visitor services zones but are not definitive about their nature. Alternative Concept 4 indicates that visitor services could range from a wayside, interactive information kiosk, and/or an unspecified visitor services facility within Area C. Alternative Concept 5 establishes the zone near the entrance to the park that could include the NCO Quarters and/or current office space in Pavilion A to support a visitor services function.

A wayside is clearly insufficient to interpret the unique history of Fort Hunt Park. While a kiosk would provide somewhat more information, it is still inadequate. A high-tech interpretive center is needed that incorporates interactive exhibits to let the visitor participate in important historical events that occurred at the site and to provide access for researchers to access the oral histories and related material.

The best location for this interpretive center is Area C, which is not close to Pavilions A and B, where large picnics are held every weekend in the warm months. In Area C the center would not conflict with the recreational use of the park, nor would it compete for parking spaces used by picnickers. It is a quiet area near the site of one of the World War II buildings in which high value World War II prisoners of war were temporarily detained and interrogated. Clearly, it is an appropriate location in which to appreciate the historical significance of Fort Hunt Park.

Further the NPS previously performed meaningful research on PO Box 1142, where high value German prisoners of war, including U-boat commanders and generals were brought for strategic interrogation. It conducted more than 70 oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans, former German prisoners of wars and other relevant persons, as well as collecting key artifacts from those interviewed. Currently, the NPS is contracting to have high quality transcripts made of all the interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. This historically important material should be preserved and displayed in an on-site interpretive center rather than placed in a storage center and perhaps forgotten.

Respectfully,



Alexandria, VA 22315

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 45

Author Information

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am strongly opposed to this plan. You are proposing to destroy a beautiful, peaceful treasure that I have enjoyed for my entire life. After creating a pile of mud for several years and spending too much public money, it will take a decade to restore the natural beauty of the area.

If you want to make a change, I suggest you cut the property in half and make changes to the front part of the property near the fort and the entrance, but leave the back half alone.

My objections are:

1. wastes taxpayer funds
2. destroys the current beauty and natural setting

Thank you.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 46

Author Information

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I strongly support the key role that the National Park Service (NPS) plays in preserving and enhancing the natural and cultural resources of our nation and educating our citizens as to our natural and cultural history. I am also a friend of and volunteer for the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI) and support its mission and goals.

I wholeheartedly support preserving and enhancing the historic, natural and recreational resources of Fort Hunt Park, which is a special unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). It represents microcosm of American history from before the Revolutionary War through World War II into the early stages of the Cold War.

The only physical evidence of its important past are the remains of the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904. And only a few waysides next to these structures provide limited interpretation of this history.

Hence I believe that it is crucial for the NPS to approve the establishment of an interpretive center in a quiet area of Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history. This center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and have secure space for historians and journalists to review the oral history interviews of veterans who served at PO Box 1142, the World War II top-secret military intelligence installation located on this site and the artifacts submitted by the interviewees. Visitors to the park, even those who go mainly for recreational purposes, should learn about all the stories that have played out at Fort Hunt Park.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS in early February 2015 in conjunction with the site development and environmental assessment process for Fort Hunt Park call for visitor services zones but are not definitive about their nature. Alternative Concept 4 indicates that visitor services could range from a wayside, interactive information kiosk, and/or an unspecified visitor services facility within Area C. Alternative Concept 5 establishes the zone near the entrance to the park that could include the NCO Quarters and/or current office space in Pavilion A to support a visitor services function.

A wayside is definitely insufficient to interpret the unique history of Fort Hunt Park. While a kiosk would provide somewhat more information, it too is not adequate. A high-tech interpretive center is needed that incorporates interactive exhibits to let the visitor participate in important historical events that occurred at the site and to provide access for researchers to access the oral histories and related material.

The best location for this interpretive center is Area C, which is not close to the busy Pavilions A and B, where large picnics are held every weekend in the warm months. In Area C the center would not conflict with the recreational use of the park, nor would it compete for parking spaces used by picnickers. It is a quiet area near the site of one of the World War II buildings in which high value World War II prisoners of war were temporarily detained and interrogated. That building, along with other World War II era buildings, was torn down after the war.

The NPS previously performed meaningful research on PO Box 1142. It conducted more than 70 oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans, former German prisoners of wars and other relevant persons, as well as collecting key artifacts from those interviewed. Currently, the NPS is in the process of having high quality transcripts made of all the interviews. FFHPI will be assisting in this activity. Further, the NPS will be cataloguing the artifacts and other related material. This historically important material should be preserved and displayed in the on-site interpretive center rather than placed in a storage center where it could be forgotten.

It is commendable that the GWMP is interested in performing other projects proposed in Alternative Concept 4 and 5, such as moving two sections of the loop road that currently pass over areas that were within the footprints of the two buildings in which POWs were briefly detained and interrogated during WWII. Also it might be useful to park visitors to be able to see the Potomac River from Battery Robinson to provide an idea of what the servicemen saw while manning the cannons during exercises. But the importance of undertaking such projects is of lower priority than creating the interpretive center and telling the stories of the site's history. For five years the NPS has experienced a declining budget. With limited resources, its funds should be spent the most effective way to educate the public and demonstrate the interconnectedness of Fort Hunt Park with numerous other cultural National Park units.

In summary, it is very important to approve an interpretive center for Fort Hunt Park. All other projects are of lesser priority and should be considered only after the interpretive center becomes a reality.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 47

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I like to think of myself as being very engaged in the community. I attend every PTA meeting and will even be PTA President at the local Elementary school next year. I am working with the School Board on the upcoming boundary study and am a member of the MVCCCA Education committee.

I was very surprised when a fellow neighbor posted the link for comments on this project. I have heard nothing about it in quite awhile.

I understand that preserving history is important. Why are all the options including things like taking away parking and ball fields that are heavily used by the neighboring communities? Do you have any idea of how many people will actually visit this site? It seems like a real waste to take away a local resource and make the park a memorial that people may or may not use. Our local 6th grades have their end of the year celebrations at this park. I used to meet with the Alexandria Playgroup every year for a member meet and greet picnic. We used Pavillion C all the time because our schedules were busy and we could show up without a reservation.

Please do not waste money on a site that will not get used. We love Fort Hunt and to remove the community from it is a bad idea.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 48

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

NPS Leadership,
I have written Senator's Kaine and Warner and I pray one or both have the time to stop this wasteful undertaking and censor those responsible for allowing the theme to continue in the face of constant opposite public opinion. The NPS has again overstepped its legal authorities and is heavy handedly imposing a useless and wasteful change to Fort Hunt Park. In the 1940's as a young man on duty and again in the 1970's as a local residence as I walked the area near daily that is now up for discussion. Nothing you propose is even remotely historical and nothing you could do to the site will lend any useful significance to the property which is today a successful park just as it is. I implore you to take a step back and listen to the locals who have a respect and understanding of this property far beyond your own. Go ahead, spend 1/20th your budget or even a 1/10th and improve what you have, but don't ruin the property with your unnecessary change. Spend a little money and have a display at the Geo. Washington Presidential Library and improve the current park with a few walking paths and seating areas. Include historical markers if you'd like. Remove the unsightly chain-link fence separating the property from lower Fort Hunt Road. Put a few exercise or fitness trail items throughout and emplace a few speed humps. Leave the parking. And for God's sake don't touch the ball fields. It took private money and an a couple understanding politicians own time to have them installed. Why on earth would you disturb them now? Identify safety concerns and address them. Trim a few of the 80 plus year old pin oak trees and perhaps include a day Ranger on the busy weekends to provide some historic talks and walks. Take the rest of the savings from not destroying Area E and the ball fields and put the money in escrow and commit now to maintaining the Park and provide a considerable line of accounting to the Park Police to encourage them to stay and improve their stable and office. But please stop now your foolish wasteful unnecessary and unwanted changes to this piece of our history. Respectfully, [REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 49

Author Information

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am opposed to the changes proposed for Fort Hunt Park. This park is much used and much loved by the community for picnics and other recreational uses. Even though it has a "national" park designation, it is really more of a "neighborhood" park and should be considered in that light.

Removing parking and picnic areas is not going to solve the usage "demand" problem perceived by NPS - - it will only make it worse.

The West Potomac HS cross country team meets at Area E parking / restroom on many days during August and even in September. This shaded area is the preferred meeting place for them because Area A, although it has restrooms, also has blazing hot sun and very little shade.

Other cross country events are held here as well. If you remove parking, that will create a worse parking problem.

I see no rationale given for removing the baseball diamond. Why take this away?

As a bird watcher, I use the closed loop frequently and am glad to see there are no plans to remove that. I am also in full support of maintaining current natural areas as natural areas.

If NPS wants to put up unobtrusive interpretive signs to alert visitors to the historic architectural features, go ahead, but don't spend thousands of taxpayer dollars on radical changes the people don't want.

Thank you.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 50

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I favor the "no-build" option #1. Specifically there should be no closing of any of the existing picnic areas or moving of paved roads. The picnic areas are crucially important to Fort Hunt Parks hosting of large groups coming from across the national Capital Area. Historical orientation facilities referring to World War II functions at Fort Hunt should be located at the existing NCO Quarters and Pavillion A building with the following exception.

Park Service interest in highlighting the history of Fort Hunt should go back to the pre-WW II history of Fort Hunt, particularly its configuration as a coastal artillery installation and where Fort Hunt fit in to the overall coastal artillery development of U.S. coastal defenses dating back to colonial times and serving all the way up to their replacement by long range aviation. One action that would give a real boost to historical interest in Fort Hunt would be to locate and re-install one of the artillery pieces that the surviving artillery revetments of Fort Hunt actually were designed to protect. (Check with the U.S. Army, with West Point which used to have one of these pieces at Trophy Point, and the museum at Lewes,DL.)

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

There is absolutely no need to change Fort Hunt Park. It is well used by the people in Northern Virginia, and at certain times of the year the parking lots are full. Do not "fix" what is not broken, and do not spend taxpayers' money unwisely.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 52

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I have used Fort Hunt Park for at least 35 years. There are times when there is not enough parking for all guests. Please do not remove any parking or picnic structures. Removal of parking and structures/rest rooms would be detrimental to the whole park and make visiting less enjoyable and be a huge waste of funds.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 53

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

No funds should be spent to demolish current picnic areas, pavilions, ball fields, restrooms, or parking lots. The loop road should not be realigned. The closed lower road should be opened to walk and bicycle. Okay to add an interpretive trail with interactive kiosk and to use NCO House as a visitor center. Pavilion A is already handicapped accessible. Add no additional needs for parking in Area A, particularly when concerts and parties are scheduled, which already fill the nearby lots. No objection to opening the viewshed to the river but first clear the poison ivy out of the Park and set up a program to keep it cleared. The park is used a lot, and well. The public enjoys that facility. In no way does that detract from expanding interpretive offerings or protecting the resource. If anything, getting rid of facilities, especially restrooms, would endanger the resource.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

My family, scout units, and neighbors regularly enjoy using Fort Hunt Park. I do not support the alternatives as proposed if they close the loop road to vehicular traffic or if they close parking, rest rooms, or playing fields.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 55

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

My greatest concern is the removal of parking. Is the purpose of the redevelopment to reduce local resident use? The vast majority of usage is by local residents who come to use the roadway for exercise - running, biking, dog walking, etc.. With lot A usually reserved for pavilion a groups, it is difficult to find any parking on most weekends.

I feel like to proposed changes are geared towards tourists who may (and that's very questionable) come for new educational features and not for the needs of residents who use it daily/weekly.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I prefer Alternative 5. However, I don't understand removing one of the three restrooms if the park is getting a greater number of visitors. There needs to be a facility in the old D and E area.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 57

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/01/2015 Date Received: 03/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

A much improved plan from earlier iterations; thank you. The additional interpretation and preservation efforts are welcome when they do not impact seriously the very heavily used recreational functions of this park. These functions and capacities are highly valued by the local community, as use data demonstrates.

Any loss of parking space or bathrooms would be much better received by the community if there is an explicit commitment to replace them elsewhere. The conversion of a ball field to multiple use and the concept for the lower loop road are good ones that should generate a good amount of support.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 58

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/02/2015 Date Received: 03/02/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I would like to see new playground equipment (especially for younger children) as well as the planting of shade trees to allow for easier summertime use of the equipment. An improved playground is important to the neighborhoods surrounding Fort Hunt because we do not have many public playgrounds available for use during the school day. Most playgrounds in the area are at public schools. Thank you for your consideration.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 59

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/02/2015 Date Received: 03/02/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

First, thanks to the Park Service personnel who keep Fort Hunt Park in such great shape. They are a credit to the Park Service and their work is particularly appreciated by those of us who live in proximity to the Park.

The new Park Service concepts for development of Fort Hunt Park are excellent and, from the perspective of a resident of the community bordering the Park, better in several respects than the concepts previously considered in 2011. The new concepts address the concerns that many in our community expressed about the previous proposals. Thank you for listening!

Both of the new concepts satisfy the concerns expressed about the 2011 concepts:

- - keeping the lower loop road closed to motor vehicle traffic;
- - maintaining the main loop road with one-way traffic circulation and separate lanes for vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists;
- - maintaining grounds for athletics; and
- - maintaining the pavilions and picnic areas.

We strongly urge the Park Service to ensure that these features of the Park endure.

We applaud the Park Service intent to improve the visitor experience, particularly with respect to historical interpretation. In that regard, Alternative Concept 5 seems the best use of - - as well as preservation of - - current resources and historical structures.

As neighbors of the Park we welcome plans to provide "recreational amenities" along the the closed loop road, which we understand would be fitness trail-type facilities. Because of that area's proximity to our neighborhood we would not favor changes that would enhance access to that area, which is already very accessible, nor do we favor placement of restroom facilities anywhere in the closed loop area.

With respect to Area C: While it might have some utility in drawing visitors into the Park, the establishment of a visitor

services function in picnic Area C would detract from the recreational utility of this popular and relatively private picnic area. Because of that, and because it seems to make more sense, we favor the alternative set out in Alternative Concept 5 that locates visitor services near the entrance to the Park.

We would hope that removal of the pavilion and picnic areas in Area C would not be necessary and would be done only if that becomes essential to historical interpretation of the former prison camp.

Should restroom facilities be relocated from Area E to Area C, they should be accessible from Area E, which we presume would be the only picnic area not requiring reservation in the summer.

We are pleased that the current Concepts retain the present character of the Park. In 2011 the Park Service noted a need to address peak use period capacity. Those of us who visit the Park regularly have observed that full use of the Park's facilities seems common during the summer months, but that there seems to be no evidence of overcrowding. Likewise, there have been few instances of excessive noise. Therefore, the current facilities seem adequate and measures to reduce Park traffic seem unnecessary.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Park Service concepts.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the author.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 60

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
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Notes:

Correspondence Text

I would like to advocate for Concept 5 - - which retains the C parking lot. My daughters participate in the Girl Scout day camp there every year and it will be a nightmare to get the girls in and out of camp with no parking lot there. Also, that parking lot allows me (a person with a knee problem) to be able to park there and go for a hike in the woods, not too far from my house. If I had to walk from the other lots, I would not have the ability to be in the woods at all - - too far to walk from the other parking lots and then walk in the woods. Please keep that lot there.

thanks

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 61

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Notes:

Correspondence Text

Other than a handful of park rangers and an ever-dwindling number of veterans who worked in intelligence at PO Box 1142, few people have a clue about the historical importance of Fort Hunt Park.

A state-of-the-art interpretative center, located in Area C with a design that can be expanded into the future, will give people a sense of what occurred and preserve the amazing story of Fort Hunt's role in the top-secret intelligence of World War II.

After years of discussion, planning, and collecting oral histories and artifacts, it's time to transform the interpretative center idea into an institution. After 70 years, PO Box 1142 deserves more attention, not less.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 62

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/02/2015 Date Received: 03/02/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

My most indelible memories of American history have come from putting my feet on the ground where the events occurred. Standing on the site where it all happened, being able to read the documents and see the pictures and bios of the people who made history becomes permanently engraved in one's mind.

There are few places in the U.S. where the national achievement of victory against tyranny in WWII are located. Fort Hunt Park is one. It is so important to preserve and draw public attention to the ground on which these events took place. The intelligence gathered here helped win the war. It would be tragic if key excerpts from the oral history interviews and documents uncovering the story of PO Box 1142 were not permanently on display for the public to learn what was achieved there.

The National Park Service has already invested in this important research, and its permanent home should be at an interpretive center at Fort Hunt. It would be so unfortunate if this piece of National Park history should be lost.

I have respect and admiration for a Congressman who takes the time to save and commemorate those things done that maintain our democratic way of life.

The National Park Service needs to stand up and do the right thing!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 63

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/02/2015 Date Received: 03/02/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Park Service,
Please do not spend any money on your suggested changes to Fort Hunt Park. Please spend the money on maintaining and improving the existing bike trail from old town to Mt. Vernon. Then, if you must spend some money, please consider improvements to the Fort Hunt Park bathrooms. And consider all traffic, the complete circle, being one way and dedicate a bike lane and if you must build a bike trial only. Do not remove any existing ball field or parking lots. That is just craziness. Why would anyone, especially someone who has never used the park ever consider making the park less than what it is. Certainly you could and add exercise stations on the closed half loop and in other locations too. The police station will also be a wise investment to improve including the stables. Again, please do not make your proposed major changes.
Respectfully, [REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 64

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/02/2015 Date Received: 03/02/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

It seems that Concept 5 is the better option. A visitor's center where you enter the park makes more sense. Additionally, it allows more parking and pavilion space since parts of pavilion C and related parking won't need to be eliminated.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 65

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Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/03/2015 Date Received: 03/03/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: E-mail
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Hello -

I am writing to share out thoughts about the Fort Hunt Park plans. We are new to the neighborhood having just arrived in August and attended the meeting to find out more about the plans for the park.

My son's comments are: It would be great to have a living history part as well as a museum to learn a bit more about the history of Fort Hunt. And the living history to have people tell you a little deeper about the history. The museum would be great to put any cool things that you've found at the park. I don't want to see perfectly good trees removed for a view. Mitchell is 8 years old and is in the third grade at Waynewood Elementary School. One of his favorite parks is Fort Frederick State Park in Big Pool Maryland. He said that his favorite park is Flags Pond in Calvert County, Maryland.

My thoughts are based on limited use of the park and not really having a direct or observational understanding of how the park is used. Aesthetically I would love to see the chain link fence removed or improved. It gives this lovely spot a military feel, rather than a park feel. One of the things I like the most about the park is that it is wide open and not broken up by pavillions and fields dotting the expanse. I think an updated playground would be terrific. Especially with regards to the surface of the playground. I'm torn a bit regarding the removal of the trees to recreate the view of the Potomac River. I like the idea, but echo my sons comments about removing trees. We've seen lots of birds whom those trees are important at the park. I would definitely like to see the historical component of the park improved/expanded. There seems like there is a great story to tell here. While I love the wide expanse, the trek to the battlements is tough under imperfect conditions. The grass is typically quite wet/muddy/soggy to traverse. A path to the battlement would be a terrific improvement with a path that does not criss-cross the open expanse. It seems there has been tremendous compaction around many of the large trees and that something needs to be done to help the trees. I imagine that these are the preferred spots of picnickers seeking shade. I love that there are picnic tables all over and not just under the pavillions. I'm a big fan of just being able to seek out a private/semi-private picnic spot and be corraled with rows of picnic tables and other people.

I appreciate you taking the time to inform the community with the open house that you held at the Martha Washington

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

Library. I hope that you will continue to reach out to the local community for input and ideas as you move forward with this process.

Best regards - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Alexandria, VA
22308

PS - I have been most grateful that your road has been clear of snow and ice. It has been a refuge for walking during this odd winter. Thank you!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 66

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Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am against all these changes to Ft Hunt Park. Lets leave a good thing alone and preserve the neighborhood park as it is today. I am against millions in taxpayer money as well for these changes, especially with the state of the economy as it is today.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Revised Alternative Concepts. I want to compliment the Service, in general, for its continued emphasis on interpreting the entire span of the history of the area, including significant activities prior to World War II, and specifically for addressing the serious concerns expressed regarding the road running close to numerous homes on the periphery of the park.

However, I continue to highly question the huge proposed expenditure for removing (and losing use) of recreational items simply to avoid distractions when viewing photos of how the park was at previous times. It might be different if actual buildings and other items were reconstructed, but even then the environment for "feeling" one period would not be the same as for a prior one. Tens of thousands of dollars and personnel hours have already been expended just in a planning process with the aim of removing more than what will be added.

One specific recommendation I would like to strongly make is to provide a walking route along the stretch of the road with two-way traffic. I also suggest that consideration be given to placing the visitors center in the middle of the first two parking lots so as to provide nearby parking while not requiring visitors to drive far into the park before seeing the center.

Your serious consideration of my comments would be greatly appreciated.

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Correspondence Text

As a long-time resident of Fairfax County and strong supporter of our national parks, I am providing my comments on the Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan Environmental Assessment (February 2015).

I applaud the National Park Service for its efforts to recognize the varied, rich and little-known history of the park and to enhance interpretive services there. I urge NPS to give priority to preserving both the historic and natural resources of the park.

I recently joined the Advisory Council of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI). I am also president of the Friends of Dyke Marsh (FODM). The FODM has worked with the FFHPI on a number of community events to benefit both park units and FODM especially support efforts to restore and preserve natural areas along the parkway. In some cases, preserving both natural and historic resources goes hand in hand and are complementary.

I commend NPS for recognizing that Fort Hunt Park is more than a recreational park and urge NPS to strengthen interpretive programs describing the many "chapters" of the park's history, from pre-European settlement to the Cold War. NPS experts, the Friends of Fort Hunt Park and others have documented the significant historic events that took place in what is now the park. Because of the site's history, I urge NPS to build an interpretive center, a facility with state-of-the-art exhibits to educate visitors and provide space for historians, researchers, journalists and the public to access archives and the oral history interviews of World War II veterans who served at what was then called P.O. Box 1142, the top-secret military intelligence installation located on the site. Historically-important material can be appropriately preserved and displayed in an on-site, well-designed interpretive center and made more accessible to the public than it would be in a hard-to-access, off-site storage center.

The Mount Vernon area of Fairfax County has many significant historic resources like Mount Vernon, Woodlawn, Gunston Hall, Historic Huntley and more. An interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park would be a significant addition and offer glimpses into parts of the nation's and area's history not currently represented by the other sites. Because it would be near Mount Vernon and Woodlawn especially, visiting all the nearby sites would be convenient for and attractive to many visitors. Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 in the February 2015 NPS plan include "visitor services zones." Alternative Concept 4 indicates that visitor services could range from a wayside, interactive information kiosk and/or an unspecified visitor services facility within Area C. A visitor center would be more effective in providing a comprehensive history, strong interpretative program

and a truly informative visitor experience than kiosks or waysides.

I urge NPS to choose a location for the center that is already disturbed, as few natural areas remain in the park or the area. Ideally, a visitor center should be easily accessible and impervious surfaces minimal, as polluted stormwater runoff is currently a major contributor to the degradation of the nearby Potomac River. If active recreational use is to continue in the park, a visitor center should not be located adjacent to recreational areas.

Moving the sections of the loop road that currently pass over areas that were within the footprints of the two buildings in which prisoners of war were briefly detained and interrogated during World War II would also enhance the historic preservation and interpretation of the site.

Therefore, I urge NPS to make building an interpretive center for Fort Hunt Park a top priority.

I also strongly urge NPS to - -

- include in the final plan incentives for people to use vehicles other than cars, such as public buses and bicycles, to access the park. The Fairfax Connector 101 bus goes by the park many times a day and the park is very close to the Mount Vernon Trail. Many visitors to Mount Vernon Estate use the 101 bus today;
- ask Fairfax County to establish a bus stop at the park's entrance; and
- work with the county and local tourist agencies (e.g., Fairfax County's) and other historic sites to create a hop-on, hop-off bus for visitors touring sites in the Mount Vernon area.

Less traffic would enhance the interpretation of the history of the park. And given the area's non-compliance with the federal ozone standard and the emissions generated by vehicles, discouraging more driving could help clean up the air.

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FORT HUNT COMMENTS

1. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
2. I understand that the ball field and picnic areas to be eliminated in Concepts 4 and 5 are archaeological sites with buried foundations of WWII buildings. I further understand that the foundations are to remain buried even after the renovation project. It makes no sense to me to spend millions of taxpayer dollars just to put a different cover over the buried buildings, e.g. grass instead of a road, parking lot, or dirt infield. What is the purpose of all these changes if the building foundations remain buried? Further, it makes equally less sense to eliminate often-used recreational facilities due to the presence of buried building foundations which will remain buried. I fail to grasp the enlightened concept here. I vote no on this idea.
3. It is illogical to build a Visitors Center in Area C as illustrated in Alternate Concept 4. There is little of historical or archaeological significance in this area of the park, except buried building foundations where, I suppose, people can close their eyes and imagine a building arising from the earth. It is a long walk for some people from here to the major sites including the NCO building and batteries. It makes much more sense to build the Visitor Center as illustrated in Alternate Concept 5. It puts the NCO building to use, is near the main entrance, and is a short walking distance to the batteries. Also, there is room near the NCO building for a small parking lot. However, the question arises, "Do we need a Visitor Center at Fort Hunt Park?" The park has done very well for decades without one. I vote no on any proposed Visitor Center, especially as depicted in Concept 4.
4. The Interpretation Trail is another inane idea. What are we interpreting? I presume the trail will be made of sand, concrete, crushed stones, or some other material. It will be an underutilized eye sore imposing itself upon some beautiful wide open fields, and will slowly degrade for lack of maintenance. Half the trail leads to and from a proposed Visitor Center in Area C as discussed above. This is total nonsense. If a trail is needed, keep it confined to the half of the park near the entrance. But again, why is a new trail needed at all? People can easily walk on the grass from site to site. Fort Hunt is not the size of

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

Yosemite or Yellow Stone. I vote no on any proposed Interpretation Trail.

5. Another laughable idea is turning the closed road into a fitness trail with outdoor exercise equipment. The fitness trail will quickly establish itself as the most underutilized facility in the park. The equipment will deteriorate rapidly due to lack of use and poor maintenance. Why does the park need a fitness trail? There are ample locations throughout the park for walking, jogging, running, and hiking. I vote no on the proposed fitness trail.

6. The proposed concepts discussed in Steps 2 - 5 above are an abuse of taxpayer funds. The concepts are ill-conceived and add little or no value to the park. Taxpayer funds should be used to maintain the existing facilities, not implementing some illogical scheme that will enhance neither the beauty nor functionality of the park.

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Please disregard my previous submittal. I corrected my email address and some typos. Thank you.

FORT HUNT COMMENTS

1. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
2. I understand that the ball field and picnic areas to be eliminated in Concepts 4 and 5 are archaeological sites with buried foundations of WWII buildings. I further understand that the foundations are to remain buried even after the renovation project. It makes no sense to me to spend millions of taxpayer dollars just to put a different cover over the buried buildings, e.g. grass instead of a road, parking lot, or dirt infield. What is the purpose of all these changes if the building foundations remain buried? Further, it makes equally less sense to eliminate often-used recreational facilities due to the presence of buried building foundations that will remain buried. I fail to grasp the enlightened concept here. I vote no on this idea.
3. It is illogical to build a Visitors Center in Area C as illustrated in Alternate Concept 4. There is little of historical or archaeological significance in this area of the park, except buried building foundations where, I suppose, people can close their eyes and imagine a building arising from the earth. It is a long walk for some people from here to the major sites including the NCO building and batteries. It makes much more sense to build the Visitor Center as illustrated in Alternate Concept 5. It puts the NCO building to use, is near the main entrance, and is a short walking distance to the batteries. Also, there is room near the NCO building for a small parking lot. However, the question arises "Do we even need a Visitor Center at Fort Hunt Park?" The park has done very well for decades without one. I vote no on any proposed Visitor Center, especially as depicted in Concept 4.
4. The Interpretation Trail is another inane idea. What are we interpreting? I presume the trail will be made of sand, concrete, crushed stones, or some other material. It will be an underutilized eye sore imposing itself upon some beautiful wide open fields, and will slowly degrade for lack of maintenance. Half the trail leads to and from a proposed Visitor Center in Area C

as discussed above. This is total nonsense. If a trail is needed, keep it confined to the half of the park near the entrance. But again, why is a new trail needed at all? People can easily walk on the grass from site to site. Fort Hunt is not the size of Yosemite or Yellow Stone. I vote no on any proposed Interpretation Trail.

5. Another laughable idea is turning the closed road into a fitness trail with outdoor exercise equipment. The fitness trail will quickly establish itself as the most underutilized facility in the park. The equipment will deteriorate rapidly due to lack of use and poor maintenance. Why does the park need a fitness trail? There are ample locations throughout the park for walking, jogging, running, and hiking. I vote no on the proposed fitness trail.

6. The proposed concepts discussed in Steps 2 - 5 above are an abuse of taxpayer funds. The concepts are ill-conceived and add little or no value to the park. Taxpayer funds should be used to maintain the existing facilities, not implementing some illogical scheme that will enhance neither the beauty nor functionality of the park.

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These comments are submitted to express my strong support for an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park.

I have a special relationship to Fort Hunt Park. During World War II I served at the top-secret military intelligence installation known only as PO Box 1142, which was located at Fort Hunt. I arrived there in 1943 after receiving training at the Camp Ritchie Military Intelligence Training Center in Cascade, MD. I worked for the Army Military Intelligence Service (MIS-Y), mainly monitoring conversations of prisoners of war in their cells before and after their interrogations. But I also conducted some interrogations.

I was born in Germany, but I immigrated alone to the US in 1937 under strict orders from my father. He was imprisoned at Dachau after Kristallnacht, but he and my mother managed to flee Nazi Germany and reach the US in 1939 just before the start of World War II. My fluency in German was important in my being trained in military intelligence and then being assigned to PO Box 1142.

After the National Park Service (NPS) discovered that Fort Hunt Park was a top-secret World War II military intelligence facility, it performed research at the National Archives on the function and activities of the site and identified the people who served there. It then conducted oral history interviews of more than 70 persons, most of whom were PO Box 1142 veterans. I was one of the veterans interviewed. I also attended the reunion that the NPS hosted at Fort Hunt Park in October 2007 for more than 30 veterans. At that time NPS staff had draft plans for creating a visitor and interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park so that the stories regarding PO Box 1142 and the other important history of the site could be shared with the public.

Recently I returned to Fort Hunt Park for the second annual Fort Hunt Park Community Day on October 5, 2014, which was sponsored by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI). Also attending the event were two other PO Box 1142 veterans, George Weidinger and Lloyd Stern.

Fort Hunt Park is a popular recreational park. But it is more than a recreational park. It is a microcosm of American history

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from before the Revolutionary War into the early stages of the Cold War. It belongs to the nation, not just to the nearby residents who frequent it and use its recreational facilities.

The only physical evidence of its important past are the remains of the four artillery batteries and battery commander's station constructed between 1898 and 1904. And only a few waysides next to these structures provide very limited interpretation of this history.

For nearly ten years I have supported the creation of an interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park. I submitted comments on the initial Site Development Plan Environmental Assessment in October 2011, strongly supporting the construction of a Visitor Center. I recommend strongly that the NPS approve the establishment of a center as part of the Winter 2015 site development and environmental assessment process. The purpose of the center would be to showcase the site's important role in American history. This center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and have secure space for historians, journalists and interested members of the public to have access to oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 veterans such as myself. Visitors to the park, even those who go mainly for recreational purposes, should learn about all the stories that have played out at Fort Hunt Park.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS in early February propose visitor services zones but are vague about their nature. Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS in early February 2015 propose visitor services zones but are vague about their nature. Clearly, a wayside or kiosk is inadequate for interpreting the unique and extensive history of Fort Hunt. And the existing NCO Quarters and storage room behind the stage of Pavilion A are not viable options. An interpretive center is what is needed in a quiet location away from the hubbub of activities associated with Picnic Pavilions A and B.

It is commendable that the NPS is interested in performing the other projects proposed in Alternative Concepts 4 and 5, but such projects are of lower priority than creating the interpretive center to tell the site's stories. With its limited resources the NPS should spend its funds in the most effective and enlightening way.

In summary, it is very important to approve an interpretive center for Fort Hunt Park.

I am 93 years old; I sincerely hope that the NPS approves such a center while I am still alive.

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My comments are identical with those of the Potomac Valley-River Bend Neighborhood Association, except that I am opposed to NPS's proposed changes to Area E.

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Dear Superintendent Romero:

While I recognize that NPS has sought comments at this stage of the process on the alternatives to be considered, my main concern is what type of visitor interpretation function should and will be established at Fort Hunt Park. Today, the site's important and unique history is not being adequately interpreted, which could be improved with the construction of an interpretive center on site at the park. The footprint for the facilities needed for historic and cultural interpretation will impact the environmental impact assessment and historical impact assessment to be performed on the alternatives before one is selected.

NPS identified the major historical periods of Fort Hunt Park: this area was home to Native Americans; this land was part of George Washington's River Farm, home to some of his slaves; this site housed coastal artillery and an army fort in the late 1890s and early twentieth century, which were part of Washington, D.C.'s coastal defenses around the time of the Spanish American War (the four batteries and battery commander's station that still survive are in deteriorated condition and need attention); This was the site of an African American ROTC training camp in the 1930s; this is where the World War I Bonus Marchers camped in 1932 when they came to protest Congress's failure issue promised bonuses; during the great depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Washington area unit NP-6 was based here, which resulted in the Corps building significant portions of the George Washington Memorial Parkway; and from 1942 until 1946, the U.S. Army and Navy used this site as a super secret military intelligence operation known only as "P.O. Box 1142."

The P.O. Box 1142 story is an especially significant part of American history, even though it is not widely known. With adequate interpretive resources at Fort Hunt Park, this story will be preserved for future generations. P.O. Box 1142 was the interrogation center that housed captured German generals, submarine captains and other Germans having potentially highly strategic and valuable information. Specially trained interrogators who spoke fluent German spent long hours gaining the trust of the captives or using other non-coercive methods of interrogation that over time resulted in significant strategic intelligence that helped our country win World War II. The use of non-coercive interrogation methods to successfully gain

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intelligence is especially important to highlight in an era when the American military is increasingly using suspect torture techniques to gain information from military prisoners, even when torture techniques have been proven to not be an effective method for gaining reliable or accurate information from detainees.

During World War II, P.O. Box 1142 consisted of many structures. After World War II, because of the secrecy of the operations there, the military bulldozed all but a few of those structures. The servicemen who had served there were sworn to secrecy. It was not until the 1990s that this story started to surface publicly.

NPS staff conducted oral histories of many of the then surviving servicemen and even several former prisoners of war, most of which are in video form. Currently, efforts to transcribe those histories are underway, so historians can assemble a coherent story of what happened there based on the interviews. NPS also has significant archives of materials from the World War II and previous periods, all of which are soon to be cataloged. With these oral histories and other historic resources, and with the physical location of the camp preserved at Fort Hunt Park, NPS has the opportunity to construct a robust, place-based interpretive center, which will give park visitors a lasting and meaningful experience at the park as they learn more about this little-known and important period in history. Place based learning is far more effective in creating lasting memories and understanding of historic events.

Here are my comments on the alternatives provided:

Alternative Concept 4 allows for the possibility that a facility could be constructed that would permit the interpretative activities needed to address the history of what happened on this site. The alternative suggests that visitor services could range from a kiosk to a full-blown visitor services facility. The Alternative should be revised to include a visitor facility, not just signage or a kiosk. This change will assure that the EA and Section 106 assessments are conducted taking such a facility, not merely a kiosk, into account. Knowing the resources available to Fort Hunt in terms of artifacts and oral histories, a kiosk would not be adequate for interpreting the full historic context of this significant site.

While wayside signs and/or a kiosk could lead visitors to the interpretative facility, a facility of sufficient size and other capabilities is essential for telling these stories adequately. In addition to display space for interactive exhibits and an area to view relevant videos, such a facility will need to have storage and working areas to store the oral histories and other archival materials, and to provide historians a place to work with those materials. Accordingly, NPS should perform its environmental impact assessment and historic resources assessment based on an interpretative facility of a size large enough to accomplish these objectives. Such a facility could be located in Area C. That area would minimize impacts to the Park's recreation facilities yet be close to the site of the principal prisoner enclosures during World War II. In addition, other features of Alternative Concept 4 would enhance other recreation areas, creating the type of balance NPS seeks among uses.

I do not support Alternative Concept 5 because the NCO Quarters is a National Historic Landmark. This would make it difficult to reconfigure that small space to make it suitable for the type of interpretative facility needed at Fort Hunt Park. The interior spaces at the NCO Quarters does not lend itself to display space, or for storage and work areas for archival materials and its use. Also, ADA compliance would be difficult or impossible at the NCO Quarters. As to the "office space" in Pavilion A, that space is much too small to meet the needs described above and is only accessible by stairs at either end of the stage, and would therefore be unavailable to visitors when the stage was in use.

Both Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 call for moving two segments of the loop road to make way for future archaeological research. While I agree that archaeological research on this site is appropriate at some later date, I question spending limited resources in the near term on moving a road to accommodate such future efforts. Rather, NPS's resources should be used to further the progress towards the visitor services facility discussed above.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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Correspondence Text

Potomac Valley/River Bend Civic Association
Comments on
Fort Hunt Park Development Plan
Alternative Concepts shown at
Public Open House on 5 February 2015

First, thanks to the Park Service personnel who keep Fort Hunt Park in such great shape. They are a credit to the Park Service and their work is particularly appreciated by those of us who live in proximity to the Park.

The new Park Service concepts for development of Fort Hunt Park are excellent and, from the perspective of a community bordering the Park, better in several respects than the concepts previously considered in 2011. The new concepts address the concerns that many in our community expressed about the previous proposals. Thank you for listening!

Both of the new concepts satisfy the concerns expressed about the 2011 concepts:

- - keeping the lower loop road closed to motor vehicle traffic;
- - maintaining the main loop road with one-way traffic circulation and separate lanes for vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists;
- - maintaining grounds for athletics; and
- - maintaining the pavilions and picnic areas.

We strongly urge the Park Service to ensure that these features of the Park endure.

We applaud the Park Service intent to improve the visitor experience, particularly with respect to historical interpretation. In that regard, Alternative Concept 5 seems the best use of - - as well as preservation of - - current resources and historical structures.

As neighbors of the Park we welcome plans to provide "recreational amenities" along the the closed loop road, which we understand would be fitness trail-type facilities. We would not favor changes that would enhance access to that area, which is already very accessible, nor do we favor placement of restroom facilities anywhere in the closed loop area.

With respect to Area C: While it might have some utility in drawing visitors into the Park, the establishment of a visitor services function in picnic Area C would detract from the recreational utility of this popular and relatively private picnic area. Because of that, and because it seems to make more sense, we favor the alternative set out in Alternative Concept 5 that locates visitor services near the entrance to the Park.

We would hope that removal of the pavilion and picnic areas in Area C would not be necessary and would be done only if that becomes essential to historical interpretation of the former prison camp.

Should restroom facilities be relocated from Area E to Area C, they should be accessible from Area E, which we presume would be the only picnic area not requiring reservation in the summer.

We are pleased that the current Concepts retain the present character of the Park. In 2011 the Park Service noted a need to address peak use period capacity. Those of us who visit the Park regularly have observed that full use of the Park's facilities seems common during the summer months, but that there seems to be no evidence of overcrowding. Likewise, there have been few instances of excessive noise. Therefore, the current facilities seem adequate and measures to reduce Park traffic seem unnecessary.

 Potomac Valley/River Bend Civic Association

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I am a public radio producer based in New York, and have been working on a story about "PO Box 1142" for the past year, which was located at Fort Hunt during World War II. During the process of my research, I've conducted interviews with over a half dozen PO Box 1142 veterans, spent a few weeks studying previously classified memos about 1142 at the National Archives, and accessed over a dozen oral histories and other artifacts gathered by the National Park Service.

PO Box 1142 was the birthplace of strategic interrogation in America, where interrogators humanely extracted information so valuable that some credit them with helping end World War II. It is a program that very few people know about, in large part because the information is very difficult to access and is not widely distributed; it's taken me over a year of research to fully piece together what happened there. But I have spent the past year working on this story (an unusually long time for a single story) because of the importance of what happened at Fort Hunt / PO Box 1142 - not only for historical records, but also for present-day discussions about national security and interrogation.

It is a huge disservice to the value of the work done there and the importance of current discussions on these issues that the details of PO Box 1142 are currently so difficult to access and piece together. So, while I can't comment about the specific details of how the interpretive center will be designed, because that is outside my realm of expertise and understanding - I can say, without reservation, that I do believe it is very important for the public, researchers, journalists and policy makers to understand and more widely discuss PO Box 1142. Which this center will help make possible. I hope you will support it.

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Correspondence Text

I am submitting these comments in response the NPS Winter 2015 Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment process to express my strong support for an interpretive center in a quiet area of Fort Hunt Park. I am the daughter-in-law of Lloyd Stern, who served at the top-secret World War II military intelligence installation located at Fort Hunt known only as PO Box 1142. He served under Captain John Kluge in the Military Intelligence Research Service (MIRS), where he translated captured German documents and other material relevant to preparing the Order of Battle for ongoing military operations in Europe. After WWII Lloyd did not return to 1142. In recent years, Lloyd occasionally mentioned some of the duties he performed while in the military, but not specifically 1142. By chance, my husband and I watched the segment on PO Box 1142 on the CBS Morning News on Sunday, September 21, 2014, and learned about the site's history. The description of the secretive nature and military activities that took place there sounded similar to Lloyd's descriptions and that is how we learned of our connection to 1142. Lloyd came to visit us shortly thereafter for the Jewish High Holy Days. I found out through Brandon Bies of the National Park Service (NPS) that the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. was holding Fort Hunt Park Community Day on October 5, 2014. Lloyd and our family, including his other son, who drove in from New Jersey, attended the event. Lloyd met two other PO Box 1142 veterans there and gave an oral history interview at the end of the event. It was a high point for him and the family, and we are excited that there are plans to share the World War II and other important history with future visitors to Fort Hunt Park.

The NPS has performed a significant amount of research on PO Box 1142, including conducting oral history interviews of more than 70 veterans and other relevant persons. We hope that Lloyd's interview will be added to the other interviews. I understand that the NPS is currently working to have high quality transcripts made of all the interviews and to catalogue the artifacts and other related material. It deserves much praise for undertaking these activities, which are important to further research on PO Box 1142.

Fort Hunt Park is a popular recreational park, but it is so much more than that. It represents a microcosm of American history from before the Revolutionary War into the early stages of the Cold War.

I recommend strongly that the NPS approve the establishment of an interpretive center as part of the ongoing Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment. The purpose of the center would be to showcase the site's important role in American history with an emphasis on PO Box 1142. This center should contain state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to educate visitors and include a secure space for historians, journalists and others to examine and study the oral history interviews and the collected artifacts. The material gained through the NPS research should be preserved and exhibited in the on-site interpretive center rather than relegated to a storage center.

Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 issued by the NPS in early February 2015 propose visitor services zones but are not definitive about their nature. A wayside or kiosk is inadequate for interpreting the unique and rich history of Fort Hunt Park. And the existing NCO Quarters and storage room behind the stage of Pavilion A are not viable options. An interpretive center is what is needed.

It is commendable that the NPS is interested in performing the other projects proposed in Alternative Concepts 4 and 5, but such projects are of lower priority than creating the interpretive center and telling the stories of the site's history. With its limited resources the NPS should spend its funds in the most effective and meaningful manner.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 77

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: PVRB
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
Alexandria, VA 22308
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E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I hope that the opening of the lower road to recreation will not mean more area for parties and very loud music closer to the houses along Charles Augustine. We have noticed a large increase of non-historical use of the park and a reduction in the beauty and quiet of the park from years past.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 78

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Like the changes and trust that it will improve the park. Do NOT think buses should be in the park or encouraged in the park. The charm and peacefulness of Ft Hunt is striking due to the lack of commercialism and noise - Mt. Vernon Home is so commercialized that they have actually lost what used to be historic. Keep the park historic and so the eagles stay.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 79

Author Information

Keep Private: No
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Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I prefer Alternative 4 - less conflict with parking for Pavilion A.

Would there still be some picnic area inside the Area E Loop? Scouts have used that.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 80

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
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Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

It is not clear to me why you would want to disturb a lovely park that is well used and loved. Granted that it has an entire long history but that could be included in the new museum at Fort Belvoir.

Please keep it just the way it is.

I object to a Visitor's Center.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 81

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: Stratford Landing
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Alexandria, VA 22308
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E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Thank you for providing an opportunity to see the plans. Most of us are thankful that the draconian plan of some years ago.

However, I cannot grasp a compelling reason for the disruption of the very workable and much beloved park. I've never heard any outcry for more historic place at Fort Hunt Park, clearly the signage now is more than adequate.

Beyond that weekend usage is far from being limited to the surrounding community.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 82

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: President, Systems Engineering Solutions
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
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Alexandria , VA 22308
USA
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The placement of the visitor services area in Option 5 offers very little close parking; parking area A is about 450 FT away (a 1 1/2 football fields). A placement of the visitor service area between park areas A and B provides close parking. It also offers the possibility of a Visitor Center to be built and is close to the entrance. The location of the visitor service area in Option 4 is too far from the entrance to Fort Hunt to be useful.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 83

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
Alexandria, VA 22308
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E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

"Don't fix it if it ain't broke." Spending \$millions\$ to preserve some questionable archeology sites that are already buried (if they even exist) doesn't make any taxpayer sense at all. Further, I will vigorously oppose Alt Concept 4. I live right on the park and don't need a Visitor Center literally in my back yard. Alt Concept 5 makes more sense because it puts the Visitor Center near the entrance and makes use of the NCO Building. Who will maintain all the proposed improvements? Most likely they turn into decay and misuse after a few years. I vote for Alt Concept 6 - make no changes and maintain what you have.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 84

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: River Bend Estates
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
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USA
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I would prefer option # 5 which puts park personnel on the East side of the park. The Park Police are already on the West side. Walking the loop road, things can get mighty remote along the South and East sides. I would like more security in that area. Option #4 puts the Park rangers and police in the same corner of the park. Option #5 spreads out the security oversight.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 85

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: neighbor
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
Alexandria, VA 22308
USA
E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I'm concerned about disrupting the wild life at the park. They have so few places with all the building now. There are eagles, fox, deer, and of course the Blister Beetle which is only found at Ft Hunt Park.

Ft Hunt Park is not merely a neighborhood park being protected for use in the local neighborhood, but also used on weekends with all kinds of ethnic groups, their music and a place to get away from the city.

Leave the beautiful trees, the pavilion, and places for the sporting events and practice.

Many state societies use the park.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 86

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: Neighbor - Dog Walker
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
Alexandria, VA 22308
USA
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 02/05/2015 Date Received: 02/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

1. I love Concept #5 with the Visitors Services Center near the NCO Building - makes sense at the entrance to learn the park's anthropological and historical background.
 2. Good idea to move the road to protect Area E and to revegetate ball field.
- Many thanks to our NPS friends at Ft Hunt Park for their thoughtful care of our wonderful park and its resources.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 87

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
Alexandria, VA 22307
USA
E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 07/15/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

See attachment.



George Washington Memorial Parkway
Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan Environmental Assessment
 Fairfax County, Virginia - Alternative Concepts Public Review Meeting
 February 5, 2015

Name/Title: _____
 Address: _____

 Alexandria, Va 22304
 Affiliation: Fort Hunt Park User
 Phone/email: _____

COMMENTS:

Please maintain the park's peaceful nature to the extent possible. Fort Hunt Park is an oasis of trees + open space, a rarity in the area. Please do not build up the park. Use the existing structures + improve them while maintaining the overall rustic feel of the park. I would love to see the stables/paddock area get a make-over. The NPS horses + Riders deserve a nicer place to stay while at the park. Please keep a visitors center low-key. Repurpose the NCO house but share its history with park users. We love Fort Hunt Park and hope it remains a lovely place to enjoy nature + history. Please make sure the improvements are in keeping with the quiet nature of the park.

Submit comments on-line by following the appropriate links at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/forthunt>

Mail Comments to:
 Attn: Fort Hunt Park EA
 National Park Service
 George Washington Memorial Parkway
 c/o Turkey Run Park
 McLean, VA 22101

Thank you,

 Feb. 28, 2015

Mailed comments must be postmarked by March 4, 2015 to receive consideration.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 88

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources Official Rep.
Organization Type: S - State Government
Address: [REDACTED]
Richmond, VA 23221
USA
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 03/08/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Letter
Notes:

Correspondence Text

March 8, 2015

Alexcy Romero, Superintendent
National Park Service
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, Virginia 22101

Re: Revised Alternative Concepts
Fort Hunt Park Development Plan
Fairfax County, Virginia
DHR File No. 2011-0141

Dear Mr. Romero:

Thank you for offering us the opportunity to comment on the new alternative concepts for the development plan at Fort Hunt Park. We understand that the new alternative concepts being presented for review reflect public and agency comment received from three rounds of review; public scoping in early 2011, feedback on the Environmental Assessment in late 2011, as well as renewed public scoping in mid-2012. As you know, we have earlier agreed with your approach to development of the plan and have concurred that the National Park Service' planning process here will not restrict the subsequent consideration of alternatives to avoid, minimize or mitigate any future undertaking's adverse effects on historic properties. At this time we would like to encourage further consideration of Alternative Concept 5 - because it proposes a visitor services zone that could include the historic NCO quarters. Our view is that use and interpretation of that building will likely serve as a greater incentive for its preservation than creating a new visitors center in area C (which in any case will require archaeological survey before final plans are developed. We have no further comments at this time.

Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

If you have any questions concerning our comments, or if we may provide any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

c. Matthew Virta, Cultural Resource Manager



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Molly Joseph Ward
Secretary of Natural Resources

Julie V. Langan
Director

Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391
www.dhr.virginia.gov

March 8, 2015

Alexcy Romero, Superintendent
National Park Service
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, Virginia 22101

Re: Revised Alternative Concepts
Fort Hunt Park Development Plan
Fairfax County, Virginia
DHR File No. 2011-0141

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If you have any questions concerning our comments, or if we may provide any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Division of Resource Services and Review

c. Matthew Virta, Cultural Resource Manager

Administrative Services
10 Courthouse Ave.
Petersburg, VA 23803
Tel: (804) 862-6408
Fax: (804) 862-6196

Eastern Region Office
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221
Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391

Western Region Office
962 Kime Lane
Salem, VA 24153
Tel: (540) 387-5443
Fax: (540) 387-5446

Northern Region Office
5357 Main Street
PO Box 519
Stephens City, VA 22655
Tel: (540) 868-7029
Fax: (540) 868-7033

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580

Correspondence: 89

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: n/a
n/a, UN n/a
USA
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 03/09/2015 Date Received: 03/10/2015
Number of Signatures: 2 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: E-mail
Notes: see attachments

Correspondence Text

Our National Park System is a great source of beauty and history. Unfortunately, Fort Hunt National Park lacks its complete history. As the daughter of WWII veteran, Frederick Michel, who served at Fort Hunt, I am saddened that Fort Hunt does not inform and educate the public of the very important work accomplished at this top-secret military intelligence installation, known as P O Box 1142.

For the past many years NPS has spoken of a visitor center, containing both informational and archival museum pieces collected from the veterans and their families. My family has donated original documents, photos, uniforms and other items as well as financial support for such a visitor center. The proposal has now turned into an informational kiosk which does NOT adequately represent the work these intelligent men accomplished. A visitor's center in which all of this rich history can be shared through displays, oral histories, etc is an absolute necessity. NPS has already put a lot of time and money into the collection of the museum items and the 70 plus oral histories. My family believes that none of this time and effort should be undermined. An adequate visitor's center needs to be constructed.

Thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

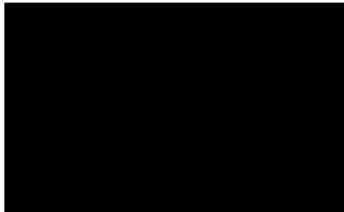
Our National Park System is a great source of beauty and history. Unfortunately, Fort Hunt National Park lacks its complete history. As the daughter of WWII veteran, Frederick Michel, who served at Fort Hunt, I am saddened that Fort Hunt does not inform and educate the public of the very important work accomplished at this top-secret military intelligence installation, known as P O Box 1142.

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Thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Sincerely,



PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 90

Author Information

Keep Private: Yes
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
Alexandria, VA 22308
USA
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 07/15/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Letter
Notes:

Correspondence Text

see attached.

[REDACTED]
Alexandria, VA 22308

Phone [REDACTED]

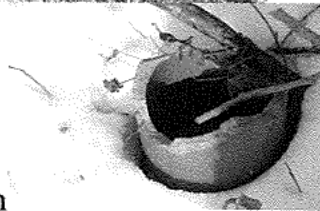
E-mail [REDACTED]

Please withhold my personal identifying information, if possible.

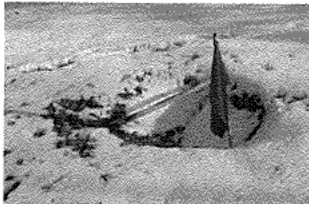
2015 Fort Hunt Park Comments

In 2003 I wrote: "Increased popularity of Fort Hunt Park has changed our pastoral setting into a public thoroughfare. On weekends, the sounds of birds are drowned-out by traffic, announcements from loudspeakers and diverse music from the park." Fort Hunt Road is subject to cars, bikers, and joggers with no means of separation. As per our scenic easement agreement with the Park Service, it is our hope that we can work together to create a natural evergreen buffer zone between Fort Hunt Park and its neighbors." This statement is as true today and is more important in 2015.

While I enthusiastically support the importance of historical interpretation within Fort Hunt Park, I would like to point out the equal importance of addressing the **Park's infrastructure**. A case in point is a sinkhole in my yard that has been created by broken terra cotta pipes originating from the military facilities constructed many years ago. Continuing erosion and an expanding sinkhole have not been adequately addressed by the Park Service.



Continuuing erosion



2015 – An example of broken pipe that lies beneath this sinkhole.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 63580
Correspondence: 91

Author Information

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Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 02/28/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Please maintain the park's peaceful nature to the extent possible. Fort Hunt Park is an oasis of trees open space, a rarity in the area. Please do not build up the park. Use the existing structures improve them while maintaining the overall rustic feel of the park. I would love to see the stables/paddock area get a make-over. The NPS horses riders deserve a nicer place to stay while at the park. Please keep a visitors center low-key. Repurpose the NCO house but share its history with park users. We love Fort Hunt Park and hope it remains a lovely place to enjoy nature history. Please make sure the improvements are in keeping with the quiet nature of the park.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]
Feb. 28, 2015

">