

FORT HUNT PARK SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN EA PUBLIC COMMENT REPORT COMMENT SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

INTRODUCTION TO THE EA PUBLIC REVIEW 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 the Mount Vernon Estate. Fort Hunt Park is a 157-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 U.S. 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 improve the visitor experience and to define specific resource conditions to provide direction for park management. The plan seeks to enhance visitor experiences and connections with park resources, protect park resources, and to create a balance of park use that optimizes recreation and resource protection.

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 resources.

Recent discoveries regarding the site's history during World War II (WWII) have expanded opportunities and increased demand by the public for additional interpretation. 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.

EA Review Period

The EA review period for the SDP began on July 2, 2015, and extended through August 7, 2015. Materials posted on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website included the EA, a press release, and the boards and video presented at the public meeting.

DESCRIPTION OF EA REVIEW MEETING

A public EA review meeting was held on July 7, 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 65 people attended the meeting, with 50 attendees registering in the sign-in sheet.

The 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 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
- Project Location
- NEPA and Section 106 Processes
- Fort Hunt Park Existing Conditions
- Alternative 4: Interior Visitor Services
- Alternative 5: Gateway Visitor Services
- Common to All Action Alternatives
- Comparison of Alternatives
- Recreation and Natural Resources Impacts
- Cultural Resources Effects
- How to Comment

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Introduction

Ninety-two pieces of correspondence from eight states were received during the public comment period. The majority of the comments (approximately 70%) were received from Virginia, with many of the provided addresses located near the park. Another 18% of comments were submitted by Maryland residents, with the remaining comments submitted from the District and five other states. Several groups including Friends of Fort Hunt Park, National Parks Conservation Association, the Potomac Valley/River Bend (PVRB) Civic Association, the Mount Vernon Civic Association, and the Coast Defense Study Group provided comments.

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.

Agency Comments

Agency comments were received from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), Supervisor Gerry Hyland of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and Delegate Scott A. Surovell of the Commonwealth of Virginia House of Delegates.

VDHR concurred with the NPS identification of Alternative 5 as the environmentally preferred alternative and the historic resources effects described in the EA. VDHR noted that as potential archeological impacts are unknown and investigations of park resources that may be potentially significant for their association with the Mission 66 program will be completed, the VDHR recommendation is to develop a Programmatic Agreement to address the identification and evaluation efforts likely to be necessary as well as mitigation measures proposed for potential adverse effects.

FCPA provided comments on park needs and cultural resource impacts. FCPA stated that the reduction or removal of picnic facilities in Fort Hunt Park may increase demand for group picnic facility use in County parks or other locations, noting the impact on the number of people accommodated by pavilions would likely be less in Alternative 5 than Alternative 4. FCPA also stated that the ballfields at Fort Hunt Park are an accessory use for nearby picnic pavilions, and the removal of the Area D ballfield should be avoided. The proposed interpretive pedestrian trail would meet the GWMP visitor experience goal and the demand for related-recreational uses. Regarding cultural resources impacts, FCPA requests copies of documentation related to cultural resource studies be sent to FCPA's Resource Management Division for review and concurrence.

Supervisor Hyland of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors submitted comments requesting the GWMP sponsor a public hearing on the project in order to reach more people and provide an opportunity for people to hear questions, answers, comments, and suggestions. Supervisor Hyland also requested copies of all public comments.

State Delegate Surovell recognized NPS' incorporation of previous public comments into the Fort Hunt Park alternatives. Delegate Surovell noted that the park has a link to local history and should be recognized. In addition, Delegate Surovell requested existing historic structures be made more accessible to the public, requested segregated bike lanes and bike safety measures at the park entrance up to the connection with the Mount Vernon Bike Trail. Delegate Surovell expressed concern regarding the removal of picnic pavilions without replacement facilities, stating the action would place more demand on the existing facilities, and requested a "no net loss" strategy for pavilions. In addition, Delegate Surovell requested NPS implement stormwater management measures to mitigate existing runoff conditions.

General statements that the comments included

1. **Public involvement and public notice:** Commenters provided input on the public involvement and review process for the EA. Some commenters indicated that they did not receive electronic or mail notification of the meeting, that the large groups who reserve the picnic areas were not notified, and that the comment period should last more than 30 days. Comments on the format of the EA public review meeting expressed a preference for a presentation and question and answer period for the whole group so that attendees can hear all of the questions, answers and comments, and requested any future meetings include a public forum. Commenters also expressed appreciation that the alternatives

addressed concerns raised in the previous project scoping processes. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “The July 7 public comment gathering was poorly advertised. Having attended other comment sessions in the past and submitted written comments on Fort Hunt, I had assumed that I would be on some electronic or mail notification list. I and others were notified circuitously- -a former neighbor now living in Georgia let me know about this meeting.

But, the most significant failing in the public comment process was that, while we local neighbors found out about the July 7 meeting, the large groups from across the National Capital Area and beyond who actually reserve the picnic areas were evidently not informed that their access for large gatherings might be reduced, nor were they invited to attend this comment meeting. This must be corrected if the National Park Service is not to open itself to serious accusations of ignoring a major sector of the public.”

- “I want to commend the Park Service for their work since the previous EA. The Service clearly listened to the community and incorporated our comments into the plan for Fort Hunt Park. The plan we see in this EA is a reflection of our input and I thank you for that.”
- “I would also like to say that I am very disappointed by the effort you made to notify the community of your plans for the park AND the format of these last 2 public meetings. People I talked to felt the same way. Why was there no voice to champion the proposed changes? No one stood and argued for the proposed changes. Does anyone really want these changes? If not, let's forget it. There were nice park rangers to talk to but, this time as last, some of those rangers were unfamiliar with the park. If we meet again, let's have a meeting. No more "Open House." Let's discuss our park in a community forum.”

2. **Support/Preference for No Action Alternative:** Commenters expressed support or a preference for the No Action Alternative, noting that the park is a well-maintained natural setting that needs minimal change. Comments also expressed support for the No Action alternative due to the removal of facilities such as parking, pavilions, and restrooms in the Action Alternatives. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “My family and I would prefer that Fort Hunt Park stay as it is. A small historical marker with directions to an Internet site would work fine for visitors. With budgets pressed so tight - I see no reason to alter or change the park.”
- “We enjoy Ft. Hunt Park just the way it is - a natural setting, where our children feel safe. My daughters have grown up in that park - my 10th grader frequently gets on her bike and cycles over there alone, or with friends. I never worry about her. Turning it into a tourist attraction will mean I can no longer let her go off without being concerned or worried. Please leave the park alone.”

3. **Support/Preference for Alternative 4:** Commenters expressed support or a preference for Alternative 4, due to the inclusion of the large visitor services zone and location in Area C, and the opportunity to construct a visitor center large enough to interpret the site's history with exhibits, provide archival storage, a museum store, and other related elements. In addition, commenters questioned the use of the NCO Quarters and at the area in Pavilion A as an interpretive center due to size and use limitations. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “I prefer Alternative 4 because Area A is very heavily used right now and needs all the parking and space it has. A simple sign could direct visitors to a visitors center further into the park. This alternative does not specify what happens to the NCO Quarters. I do not see any particular value to the structure itself, and tearing down an old building could save money. Don't know what historical merits it has, but converting it to a visitors center doesn't sound like historical preservation. If it is desired to preserve the NCO Quarters, then Alternative 5 is best.”
 - “It is my considered opinion that Alternative 4 is the only option for the following reasons:

This truly a long term solution that can benefit the GWMP region.

Area C is the least impactful to the recreational use of the park. (Area A being used so heavily for picnics, meetings, concerts, etc.)

Area C is the beginning of the Interpretive Trail: start at the beginning and bring full circle, this makes chronological sense.

Area C is large enough to build a building that would not only be the Interpretive Center, but also house all of the "mothballed" museum pieces and oral histories as well as, two or three offices, to be used as a Research Center providing greater long term functionality - greater interpretation. The research center could service the GWMP region and reduce stress at Arlington House.

Area C also pulls cars farther into the park eliminating congestion at the entrance.

Plus, the room for updated restrooms in the area, replacing the facilities that are to be removed.”
 - “FFHIP wholeheartedly supports Alternative 4 for Area C because it would allow for the construction of a facility that would permit the interpretive activities needed to address the history of what happened on this Site, especially the PO Box 1142 experience. A facility of sufficient size and other capabilities is essential to telling these stories adequately. There would display space for interactive exhibits, a small theater in which to view relevant videos, a study room in which to review the oral history interviews and perhaps other archival material and a small store to sell related historical books and other memorabilia. Locating the facility in Area C would minimize impacts to the Park's main recreational facilities, yet allow it to be close to the principal prisoner enclosures during World War II, which are logical beginning and ending points for walking tours or an interpretive trail. Moreover, locating the interpretive center in Area C would support the type of balance NPS seeks among uses.”
 - “I support Alternative 4 that would allow for the construction of a true visitor center in Area C. The George Washington Memorial Parkway does not have a true interpretive facility along the southern end of the park. This facility would serve as gateway to the park for the community, the thousands of recreational users of the Mount Vernon Trail, and visitors who come to experience the unique history of Fort Hunt, and beauty of the Potomac River, and the history of George Washington.”
4. **Support/Preference for Alternative 5:** Commenters expressed support or a preference for Alternative 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 recreational aspects of Pavilion A. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “The preferred alternative (5) is my preference also. It strikes the balance required for historical visitors and local usage. I look forward to the implementation.”
- “I prefer Alternative 5 with the interpretive center at the entrance to the park and I would like to see the NCO quarters rehabilitated and incorporated into the center.

I would very much prefer to see the park changed as little as possible while adding the interpretive center. The assessment mentions increasingly heavy use of the park from time to time. However, for much of the time during week days the park is not over-utilized. I do not believe that the occasional high demand, mostly on weekends, is sufficient reason to change the basic open nature of the park.”

- “I agree with the need and plan for greater interpretation of, and accessibility to, Fort Hunt Park's history. And, I appreciate that this has been tempered with a respect for the value of community recreation and natural resources.

I agree that Alt 5 should be the preferred alternative. This is simply because it poses the least increase to traffic on the loop road. I like the idea of incorporating the NCO building somehow onto the visitors experience. However, I expect that might be tough, so I appreciate the Services willingness to incorporate improved visitor amenities into the existing Pavillion.”

5. **Need for a Visitor/Interpretive Center:** Commenters expressed support for the establishment of an interpretive/visitor facility within Fort Hunt, noting the number of visitors to the park and the need to interpret Fort Hunt's long history and large range of activities associated with the site, including: World War II intelligence gathering at PO Box 1142, Civilian Conservation Corps activities, and George Washington's River Farm.

- “The National Parks Conservation Association and Friends of Fort Hunt Park have supported community and volunteer programs at Fort Hunt Park over the past few years. An interpretative center is important to these groups and to the park to improve the park visitor experience and to better archive and document the history of the park and the region. There is currently a need for better interpretation at the park, and I want to voice my support for the creation of an interpretative center. This center would allow for the preservation of historical artifacts, and would allow for a more interesting and educational visitor experience.”
- “According to Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan, Fort Hunt Park had over 300,000 visitors in 2014. How will the Park Service accommodate tens of thousands of visitors now tempted to learn about the history of Fort Hunt in only 600 square feet of the rehabilitated NCO Quarters? And this begs the question of how to effectively elaborate all of Fort Hunt's history in this small space.”

Of course, the NCO House should be rehabilitated. But GWMP should also embrace and encourage a much more ambitious interpretation of the history of Fort Hunt. GWMP should provide bold leadership and vision for Fort Hunt Park rather than threading the needle for the minimum effort to keep its history from falling completely out of view.

- “I wholeheartedly support a modern, fully equipped and interactive interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park to educate visitors as to this important history. A center that can accommodate at least 50 - 100 people over a course of several hours is needed since the annual park visitation is estimated to be well over 300,000 visitors. Many of them attend picnics during the spring, summer and fall.”

6. **Removal of Existing Park Facilities:** Commenters requested minimization of, or expressed opposition to, the removal or reduction of existing park facilities, including restrooms, parking, picnic areas, and ball fields. Comments questioned the utility of and benefit to removing existing facilities that are regularly used, and stated that the unnecessary roadway realignment would remove a large number of trees. Some comments noted that parking should be expanded. Comments also noted that demand for parking sometimes exceeds capacity at the park. The following comments are representative of those submitted:

- “I would also ask that you minimize any modifications to Pavilion A. It is only one of two pavilions in Northern Virginia large enough to handle groups larger than about 50 people (the other being at Bull Run Regional Park in Centreville).”
- “It is not clear what the benefits of removing area E parking and restroom facilities and some parts of Area D parking will be. Why remove those parking spaces only to "consider" replacing them at some point in the future? The parking spaces, restrooms, and Area D ballfield all are used regularly. I think that option 5 is the best, but I would leave Areas E and D alone and not change them. I also hope that by reseeding current paths that does not mean that the paths used by many people for running/walking through the woods will be removed.”
- “Please consider the ballfields- children need these areas, which are very scarce in this area. The justification to remove them to provide "multi-purpose, open recreation space" makes no sense. The area is already "multipurpose, open recreation space" unless a ballgame or practice is occurring at that moment.”
- “Moving sections of the loop road will disturb the area, be costly and be to no benefit unless both funding exists for performing archeological studies of the area and significant archeological remains from Enclosures A and B of PO Box 1142 are found. The funds would be much better spent on interpreting the site's known significant history.

Removal of parking spaces in Areas D and E and repurposing of the ball field in Area D will decrease the recreational benefits of Fort Hunt Park. Although not stated in the draft SDP/EA, it appears that these proposed actions are for archeological purposes as well. My above comments on assuring interpretation of known events before expending funding for uncovering possible archeological remnants of unknown significance apply to these proposed activities as well.”

7. **Natural Resources Impacts and Mitigation:** Commenters expressed concern regarding potential adverse impacts of removing trees due to effects on bats, bald eagles, tree canopy goals, and other natural resources present in the park. Comments also asked about the impact of increased visitation on air quality, stating it should be addressed. Commenters also requested additional mitigation measures for tree replacement and stormwater management (both during and after construction). Commenters requested tree removal mitigation enhancements such as 2 inches to 1 inch replacement or a two for one replacement of trees. Stormwater management comments noted that the park needs a comprehensive stormwater management plan, noting that the site does not have stormwater management techniques in place at present.

- “I have concerns with the 23 trees to be removed from the Battery to preserve the "Robinson View" to honor Spanish American war configuration. I believe that removing those trees would disturb the nesting Bald Eagles that occasionally roost near both batteries, but particularly the one slated for tree cutting. An interpretive kiosk would suffice instead of cutting trees.”

- Factor in vehicular emissions from increased visitation. The plan does not demonstrate how NPS concluded on page 36 that "the proposed actions are not intended to increase the amount [sic] of visitors and corresponding number of vehicle trips to the park, nor would they create a new permanent source of emissions." It is unfortunate that NPS dismissed air quality considerations in an area that does not meet current federal ozone standards. More interpretive services would likely increase visitation and more polluting vehicles, it appears. 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."
 - "Clear justification for the removal of this large number of trees has not been provided. Also the inch to inch replacement used by the NPS does not provide a net gain from an environmental standpoint and we will accept no less than twice what is removed be replaced and replanted on the site. Rather than at the inch to inch replacement that is described it should be 2 inches to 1 inch replacement (this is an international best practice) and all new plantings should occur on site. I would suggest that native trees whose diameter is great than 24 inches are highly valuable trees not only for stormwater absorption and management but also for extremely important for wildlife. These highly valuable trees could be replaced at a 3 to 1 ratio. Only native plantings should be authorized with no substitutions of non-natives allowable under any circumstances. Subspecies or cultivars should not be allowed."
 - "NPS should set the standard. Your plan should include a comprehensive stormwater runoff management plan, both during construction, post-construction and day-to-day operations. Your plan should retain stormwater on site and use low-impact approaches like green roofs, rain gardens, vegetated swales, impervious surfaces and rain barrels. Fort Hunt Park be a partner with Fairfax County and should help improve the quality of degraded area streams and the Potomac River."
8. **Park Capacity/Over Use and Balance of Use Issues:** Commenters requested activities be aligned so as not to overburden the park. Comments also stated that while some events create capacity issues at the park, overcrowding is a management rather than design issue that should be addressed through the permitting process. Other commenters questioned the idea of overcrowding, stating it was not an experience they encountered at the park. Commenters also noted that there should be a balance of recreation and historic interpretation in the park and that as a National Park, local and national concerns should be balanced.
- "My recommendation is NO ACTION. Among the reasons NPS cites for changing Fort Hunt's present configuration is "over use". The alternative courses of action all reduce the number of picnic areas, reduce parking and eliminate one of the two sets of rest rooms. This is counterintuitive at best."
 - "The overuse of this park seems to be an administrative one, since it always appears in conjunction with handing out an excessive number of permits at any one time. The permits usually restrict parking at the main parking lots to only those participating at events. To remove other lots that are proposed to be eliminate will restrict the casual user of the park from using it while events are taking place.
- The proposed solution does not solve the problem of overuse, but it restricts the casual user of the park, which in turn creates a lot of harm while not resolving the management deficiencies."

- “NPCA supports using Alternative 4 that would allow for the construction of a true visitors center permitting Fort Hunt's history to be shared. Siting a visitor center in Area C would minimize impacts to the Park's current recreation facilities. Although there would be minimal impacts to the neighbors who might recreate in Area C, ample recreation exists throughout the park. And the National Park Service must remember that this is a national park for the enjoyment of all citizens, so local concerns must be balanced with national concerns.”
9. **Alternative Costs and Park Spending:** Commenters asked how much each alternative would cost to implement, noting that costs should be considered as part of the public comment process. Commenters also stated consideration for public vs. private funds (private fundraising for an interpretive center vs public funds for NCO rehabilitation) should be considered in the alternative selection process. Other comments requested the funds to be used for Fort Hunt Park improvements be utilized for other purposes, such as maintenance.
- “No budgets were attached to the Alternatives. This precludes the neighborhood people from making real meaningful comments in light of how much each item would cost.”
 - “To summarize, there is no assurance if and when the NCO Quarters would be ready, even at only the 600 square foot level, and its rehabilitation would require use of public funds (which are subject to appropriation). Alternative 5 would incur no similar delay and would use private funds to develop the new visitor services' site, consistent with the NPS' recognition of "...the demand by the public for additional interpretation.”
 - “Please use the funds that you were contemplating to use on redesigning the park towards maintenance especially the care of trees along the GW Memorial Parkway. Unless the ivy is removed (as an example) from trees, they will slowly die, and eventually the parkway and park will be less scenic than before. As removal of plant parasites is low tech, one could hire many hands to make the work light (sort of like a WPA project). Let's clean up the park and parkway, and leave the park as it is today.”
10. **Suggestions for alternative elements:** Commenters provided suggestions for inclusion in the alternatives:
- Expand park capacity by rehabilitating the now blocked off semi-circular road on the back side of the park and repurposing the wooded area as either picnic areas and/or sports facilities. There are also other areas bordering the existing road that could be turned into picnic pavilions while leaving the central area open as it is now.
 - Remove or replace the existing chain link/barbed wire fence, which is an eye sore and it routinely prevents wildlife from freely entering and leaving the park.
 - Improve the stables and paddocks for the horses.
 - Give the park to Fairfax County.
 - Add descriptive plaques, signs, etc. in the artillery area and in other (CCC, WWII, etc.) areas
 - Ask volunteers to remove the invasive Ivy that is ubiquitously destroying the tree coverage

- Provide a walking route along the stretch of the road with two-way traffic, and for safety reasons have one single crossing point on the road for people walking from the parking lot to the center.
- Consider the maintenance facility and Park Police paddock as a location for the visitor/interpretive center.
- Add incentives for people to use vehicles other than cars, such as public buses and bicycles, to access the park.
- Replace some of the grassy areas with native groundcover or other native vegetation to enhance habitat and retain stormwater onsite.
- Develop interpretative programs to explain how native Americans used the area and moved among the areas along the Potomac River, including the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve.
- Enhance interpretative programs that help visitors better understand the natural resources of the river, the parkway, the park and the larger area and the importance of natural connectivity.
- Work with neighboring property owners to encourage uses compatible with the restoration and conservation of natural resources.
- Along or at the entrance to Ft. Hunt Park, provide a hiker/biker trail path linking the Mt. Vernon Trail that parallels the George Washington Parkway to Ft Hunt Park. At present there is only the park entrance roadway which is designed for vehicular traffic. This current layout poses a safety hazard to both pedestrians as well as bicycle traffic accessing/leaving the park;
- Replace the "wharf remnant pilings" with another open pier or wharf. This would provide a river level vista of the Potomac River which was the I-95 of the 18th century and a river level view of Ft Washington. This pier/wharf could also serve as a stopover rest point for a Potomac River Canoe I Kayak Trail network which begins at Harpers Ferry or points further north. This would also be a great vista for wildlife viewing and perhaps could be partially funded with Federal Fish and Wildlife resources. This pier/wharf concept would also be in line with the plan to restore "the historic sight line to Potomac River from Battery Robinson" and is part of the historic character of Ft Hunt Park;
- Build a 40-50 person open air amphitheater designed for open air concerts, park interpretive talks, campfires and plays. This amphitheater would supplement the current pavilion which is not really designed as a theatre. I recommend a design similar to the one located at Moraine Park Museum and Amphitheater, Rocky Mountain National Park
- Pave or gravel and widen the dirt path from Ft Hunt Road to the pavement leading to the U.S. Park Police station. This well-worn path is currently used by hikers/bikers who access Ft. Hunt Park from the northern park boundary.

11. Preferred Alternative Questions: Commenters questioned the selection of the Park Service preferred alternative in the EA, requesting NPS make an adequate and persuasive case for the alternative selected due to the size limitations of the NCO Quarters and use limitations at Pavilion A. Commenters asked what back-up alternative would be pursued if,

after the further study noted as required in the EA, the NCO Quarters cannot be utilized for an interpretive location.

- “Both Alternatives 4 and 5 call for realignment of portions of the loop road, removal of Picnic Area E parking and restrooms, removal of a portion of Picnic Area D parking and the repurposing of the ball field in Area D. The draft EA does not adequately address the specific justification for these changes and their impact on visitor use and experience.”
- “Given the activities of FFHPI to enhance Fort Hunt Park's natural and recreational resources and to preserve the historically important material relating to PO Box 1142, the rejection of the FFHPI position came as an unexpected shock. As noted above, the draft SDP/EA did not provide any clarification for the reasons for the proposed decision to accept Alternative 5. I for one had believed that the FFHPI position would weigh more heavily in the decision-making process of the NPS.”
- “Due to my professional background I am familiar with NEPA. Moreover, I am sensitive to (and note in the SDP's analyses) the difficulty faced by preparers of such documents in balancing a multitude of public interests (sometimes needs, sometimes desires). (Page i of SDP: "The demands for these varied uses create a need to balance the different types of visitor use with resource protection.") Having read the SDP from this perspective, my comments focus on what I believe to be preconceptions, lack of clarity and justification, questionable assumptions/judgments, and conflicting assertions that have framed the development issue as an either - or scenario. I would encourage you to reexamine the selected alternative (#5) to ensure it truly is the one that meets both the public's and the government's interests. (I understand that the preponderance of public comments do not support Alternative 5 but, instead, support establishment of a new interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4.)”
- “The draft EA states that Alternative 5 is the NPS's preferred alternative. While I would support rehabilitating the NCO Quarters to preserve the only residential military structure remaining at Fort Hunt from the period stretching from the late 19th century through World War II, Alternative 5 fails to provide an acceptable approach for interpretation. At 600 square feet, the NCO Quarters' limited space and multi-story interior provide a poor choice for a permanent solution, although it would provide a reasonable brief interim step towards a better permanent solution.

Given its limited size, lack of accessibility, close proximity to activities like regular summertime concerts that would conflict with a more contemplative visitor experience, and other problems, the proposal to use the space behind the stage in Picnic Pavilion A for interpretation should be dropped.”

12. Visitor Experience Impacts: Commenters asked how the visitor experience with an interpretive area at Pavilion A in the preferred alternative would be impacted by the large picnics and loud music directly adjacent to the interpretive function, stating that the noise and crowds would diminish the visitor experience. Commenters also asked about accessibility within the NCO Quarters and between NCO Quarters and Pavilion A.

- “Further, when large picnics are held in the spring, summer and fall in the pavilion, they often include bands or recorded music that can be heard throughout the park. What kind of visitor experience would that constitute during such times? To me, it would be an insult to the memory of the veterans who served at PO Box 1142.”

- “Alternative 5 states that there are 600 square feet available for interpretation in the NCO quarters. This is too little space. The World War II activities could not be adequately interpreted in this limited space. And a visitor would learn very little about the other important history of the place. There would be no space to view history videos, perform historical research on the oral history interviews that the NPS conducted with PO Box 1142 veterans or have a small store. If more than 10 - 15 people wanted to visit the center at one time, it would not be feasible to have a good visitor experience. And how could the NCO quarters accommodate field trips of classes of children from local schools?”
- “Given that noise from, for example, music performed at the Pavilion would compete with interpretative presentations to visitors, what consideration has been given to accommodating visitor services in such a discordant environment that appears inconsistent with NPS' goals of enhancing visitor experiences and connections with park resources and meeting the demand by the public for additional interpretation?”

13. Combine Elements from Alternatives 4 and 5: Commenters expressed a preference to combine elements of Alternatives 4 and 5 (interpretive facility and preservation of NCO Quarters) to address interpretive elements in the short- and long-term and preserve the NCO Quarters. The following comment is representative of those submitted:

- “I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, which is now covered with peeling paint on the exterior and unfinished rooms on the interior. After the new interpretive center is built, the NCO quarters could be outfitted to tell the story of life at Fort Hunt in the early 20th century in more detail. Similar structures at other NPS military National Park units have been outfitted in the same manner.”

ATTACHMENT 1: COMMENT SUMMARY TABLE

Comment Topic	Number of Comments	Percent
Public involvement and public notice:	6	2.2
Support/Preference for No Action Alternative	8	2.9
Support/Preference for Alternative 4	40	14.7
Support/Preference for Alternative 5	14	5.1
Need for a Visitor/Interpretive Center	31	11.4
Removal of Existing Park Facilities	38	13.9
Natural Resources Impacts and Mitigation	13	4.8
Park Capacity/Over Use and Balance of Use Issues	8	2.9
Combine Elements from Alternatives 4 and 5	17	6.2
Alternative Costs and Park Spending	15	5.5
Preferred Alternative Questions	35	12.8
Visitor Experience Impacts	34	12.5
Suggestions for Alternative Elements	14	5.1
Total	273	100

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

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 1

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/02/2015 Date Received: 07/02/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The plan is failing to load when I click on it at your website. Is there another way to get the proposed plan so others and I can review it?

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 2

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: N/A N/A
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address:

USA

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New	Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/02/2015	Date Received: 07/02/2015
Number of Signatures: 1	Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No	Type: Web Form
Notes:	

Correspondence Text

The preferred alternative (5) is my preference also. It strikes the balance required for historical visitors and local usage. I look forward to the implementation.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 3

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: N/A N/A
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address:

USA

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New	Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/03/2015	Date Received: 07/03/2015
Number of Signatures: 1	Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No	Type: Web Form
Notes:	

Correspondence Text

I cant get the Site Development Plan to open

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 4

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

Fort Hunt Park SDP Environmental Assessment Comments

My recommendation is NO ACTION. Among the reasons NPS cites for changing Fort Hunt's present configuration is "over use". The alternative courses of action all reduce the number of picnic areas, reduce parking and eliminate one of the two sets of rest rooms. This is counterintuitive at best.

The July 7 public comment gathering was poorly advertised. Having attended other comment sessions in the past and submitted written comments on Fort Hunt, I had assumed that I would be on some electronic or mail notification list. I and others were notified circuitously- -a former neighbor now living in Georgia let me know about this meeting.

But, the most significant failing in the public comment process was that, while we local neighbors found out about the July 7 meeting, the large groups from across the National Capital Area and beyond who actually reserve the picnic areas were evidently not informed that their access for large gatherings might be reduced, nor were they invited to attend this comment meeting. This must be corrected if the National Park Service is not to open itself to serious accusations of ignoring a major sector of the public.

At this stage in your planning process, none of the NPS personnel at the July 7 comment meeting could say how much the alternative courses of action might cost. While it might not be possible to produce detailed cost estimates at this point, cost counts. With the exception of the NO ACTION alternative, all the other options would be expensive. Since these costs would be beyond the normal Park Service budget, they would add to what is taken out of our, the taxpayer's, wallets and would add to the national debt.

Personally, I enjoy military history. I have read about the evolution of coastal artillery, I am familiar with the post-WW I encampment at Fort Hunt and Fort Hunt's roles in World War II. But, I see no reason to reduce the park's recreational capacity to indoctrinate Americans about that history.

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

If the NPS absolutely has to find a way to spend money on Fort Hunt Park beyond normal maintenance, the old NCO quarters could be restored to house a photo display about Fort Hunt's history.

I would have no objection to the Park Service idea of re-purposing the baseball diamond into a multi-use field more oriented to the sports favored by multi-ethnic groups using the park.

If the NPS needs to find a flashy way to attract military history buffs, find one of the old coastal artillery guns that used to be at Fort Hunt and re-install it in one of the revetments. There used to be one at West Point years ago. Or the Army museum folks might help find one.

Otherwise, the NO ACTION alternative is the way to go.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 5

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/09/2015 Date Received: 07/09/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:


Correspondence Text

I believe Plan 5 is the most logical plan for redevelopment. Having visited fort Hunt Park numerous times, I am frustrated by the lack of information about the history and significance of the structures there. Plan 5 would eliminate this lack of information. At the same time, I would ask that you consider minimizing the more modern aspects of a park such as playgrounds and fitness trails. These types of facilities are more appropriate to Fairfax County and neighborhood parks, not national historic sites. I would also ask that you minimize any modifications to Pavilion A. It is only one of two pavilions in Northern Virginia large enough to handle groups larger than about 50 people (the other being at Bull Run Regional Park in Centreville).

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 6

Author Information

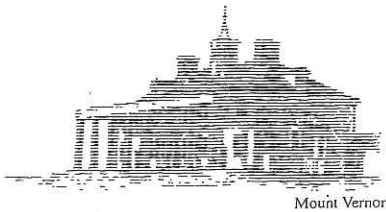
Keep Private: No
Name: Gerald Hyland
Organization: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors ;  Member
Organization Type: C - County Government
Address: 2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria, VA 22306
USA
E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New	Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/09/2015	Date Received: 07/09/2015
Number of Signatures: 1	Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No	Type: E-mail
Notes:	

Correspondence Text

See attached.



Mount Vernon



Gerald W. "Gerry" Hyland

*Board of Supervisors, Mt. Vernon District
2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria, VA 22306*

Telephone (703) 780-7518

Fax: (703) 780-1491

July 8, 2015

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

Dear Superintendent Romero,

On July 7, 2015, as part of the Environmental Assessment public process for the development of the National Park Service's Fort Hunt Park, a community open house was held at the Martha Washington Library in the Mount Vernon District.

As required for the Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) I along with some of my Mount Vernon constituents attended this event and reviewed the three alternatives: No Action Alternative; Option 4 Alternative; and Option 5 Alternative. The Park Service's preferred option is Option 5.

Stated on the website and in the press release, "The purpose of the proposed SDP/EA is to identify an overall direction for park management of Fort Hunt Park while defining specific resource conditions and improvements to visitor experience in order to enhance visitor experience and connections with park resources, protect park resources, and create a balance of park use that optimizes recreation and resource protection."

As we know this project was initiated in late 2010, public scoping was conducted in early 2011, and an EA released for public review in September 2011. Based on the issues highlighted through the public review, GWMP determined that none of the alternatives presented in the 2011 EA would move forward as originally proposed. It was determined that a new EA would be completed to look at additional alternatives, with further analysis and a reinitiated public scoping. New alternatives were developed and released for public review in June 2012 to reflect public comment received during the September 2011 EA review. These new alternative concepts respond to public feedback on concepts presented in 2012, and 2015 as well as additional NPS analysis conducted since that time. Recent discoveries found is exciting and as we know, the public is waiting to learn more.


My comment:

It is therefore my fervent belief that in order to reach more people, I strongly encourage the GWMP Superintendent sponsor a Public Hearing because: it will provide a unique opportunity for more people

to hear questions, answers, comments and suggestions in an all-encompassing atmosphere; and it ensures the fullest participation and opportunity for expression; it ensures the public that ideas and recommendations are taken seriously.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,


Gerry Hyland

P.S. It was a pleasure seeing you
the other evening - keep up the great work!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 7

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: .
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/11/2015 Date Received: 07/11/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

We enjoy Ft. Hunt Park just the way it is - a natural setting, where our children feel safe. My daughters have grown up in that park - my 10th grader frequently gets on her bike and cycles over there alone, or with friends. I never worry about her. Turning it into a tourist attraction will mean I can no longer let her go off without being concerned or worried. Please leave the park alone.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 8

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/11/2015 Date Received: 07/11/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

My family and I would prefer that Fort Hunt Park stay as it is. A small historical marker with directions to an Internet site would work fine for visitors. With budgets pressed so tight - I see no reason to alter or change the park.
I am a frequent visitor to the park - every day my dog and I enjoy the grounds.
Thank you,
[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 9

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: N/A Private Citizen
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/11/2015 Date Received: 07/11/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I prefer Alternative 5 with the interpretive center at the entrance to the park and I would like to see the NCO quarters rehabilitated and incorporated into the center.

I would very much prefer to see the park changed as little as possible while adding the interpretive center. The assessment mentions increasingly heavy use of the park from time to time. However, for much of the time during week days the park is not over-utilized. I do not believe that the occasional high demand, mostly on weekends, is sufficient reason to change the basic open nature of the park.

The capacity of the park could be expanded by rehabilitating the now blocked off semi-circular road on the back side of the park and repurposing the wooded area as either picnic areas and/or sports facilities.

There are also other areas bordering the existing road that could be turned into picnic pavilions while leaving the central area open as it is now.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 10

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/12/2015 Date Received: 07/12/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The Visitor Services Center sounds great. Thanks for putting this option on the table. I look forward to learning more about the site and to the enhanced visitor experience.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 11

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: N/A N/A
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address:



E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/12/2015 Date Received: 07/12/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

It is not clear what the benefits of removing area E parking and restroom facilities and some parts of Area D parking will be. Why remove those parking spaces only to "consider" replacing them at some point in the future? The parking spaces, restrooms, and Area D ballfield all are used regularly. I think that option 5 is the best, but I would leave Areas E and D alone and not change them. I also hope that by reseeding current paths that does not mean that the paths used by many people for running/walking through the woods will be removed.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 12

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/12/2015 Date Received: 07/12/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I prefer Alternative 5. It makes the most sense to place a visitor contact center near the front of the park. Using the NCO building makes sense.

I am opposed to the Roadway Realignment Option - I don't think it makes any sense and it is not needed. It will also result in the destruction of 350 trees with heater than six inches DBH. Leave the parking spaces that exist where they are.

I am opposed to reducing the number of Picnic Reservations. As your report shows, park usage varies widely by month and year but seems to have a downward trend. Thus, there would not seem to be a need to reduce availability.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 13

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc.
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/12/2015 Date Received: 07/12/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I recently read the memoirs of Horace Albright, The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-1933. I am confident that Director Albright would have encouraged GWMP to be bolder and much more ambitious in its vision and plans for Fort Hunt Park.

In the final Environmental Assessment the Park Service should approve both Alternative 4 and Alternative 5, providing substantive visitor services and interpretation of the history of Fort Hunt in Area C, as well as the rehabilitation of the NCO Quarters to illustrate the park's history in an existing historical building. GWMP should partner with the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc., to achieve this ambitious result.

The history of P.O. Box 1142 and the rich history preceding World War II qualifies Fort Hunt as important an historic site as many of the independent units of the National Park System. Even among the several sites devoted to the history of World War II, none is devoted to elaborating the role of military intelligence in the successful execution of the war. It seems incredibly timid to propose that the only interpretative center for Fort Hunt Park should be 600 square feet in the NCO Quarters. Even Nicodemus National Historic Site in western Kansas has an interpretive center that is much larger than 600 square feet, while hosting only 3,374 visitors in 2014.

According to Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan, Fort Hunt Park had over 300,000 visitors in 2014. How will the Park Service accommodate tens of thousands of visitors now tempted to learn about the history of Fort Hunt in only 600 square feet of the rehabilitated NCO Quarters? And this begs the question of how to effectively elaborate all of Fort Hunt's history in this small space.

Of course, the NCO House should be rehabilitated. But GWMP should also embrace and encourage a much more ambitious interpretation of the history of Fort Hunt. GWMP should provide bold leadership and vision for Fort Hunt Park rather than threading the needle for the minimum effort to keep its history from falling completely out of view.

Everyone understands that we live in a time when the Congress is highly unlikely to appropriate the funds needed for a proper interpretive center. However, we also live in a time when individual philanthropic contributions of seven, eight and even nine figures are regularly announced. Friends of Fort Hunt Park has regularly made it clear that they want to help GWMP by raising the money needed to construct and endow the maintenance for an interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park that can properly elaborate the fort's illustrious history. Why ignore this offer?

I was invited to join the board of Fort Hunt Park two years ago. I live in Alexandria and I have an abiding interest in the National Parks. (I have visited 329 units of the National Park System, including the aforementioned Nicodemus NHS.) I also had a career leading the development efforts at three major private universities. I have complete confidence that it is possible to raise funds from private philanthropists to create an effective interpretative center at Fort Hunt Park.

The biggest obstacle to raising a \$10 million gift is a \$10 million idea. Interpretation of the history of Fort Hunt is a \$10 million idea. GWMP should embrace a bolder vision for the development of Fort Hunt Park, and challenge FFHPI to secure the funding necessary to fully and appropriately interpret the history of Fort Hunt. Together GWMP and FFHPI can reaffirm Horace Albright's ambition for the National Park Service.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 14

Author Information

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

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/13/2015 Date Received: 07/13/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

As a resident of the Fort Hunt community, I am disappointed that there is no mention of changing the existing barbed wire fence surrounding the park. The fence is not only an eye sore, but it routinely prevents wildlife from freely entering and leaving the park. There are constantly sections of the fence that are torn and open, largely from deer who are caught in the fence when trying to enter or leave the park grounds. Additionally, given the widespread gaps, the fence fails to serve as a deterrent for anyone seeking entry to the park. As part of a plan to redevelop the park in an environmentally sustainable way, the fence should be removed or at the very least be replaced with a more reasonable barrier that will allow the park to be protected, but that will also keep the wildlife from harm.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 15

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

Alternative 5 seems to be the best way forward to utilize existing resources, such as the NCO structure/house.

Please keep the park user friendly and align activities so as not to overburden the site.

Also, please consider an action to improve the stables and paddocks for the horses.

We love Fort Hunt Park and want to share it with others while preserving the quiet character.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 16

Author Information

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

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

I enjoy Fort Hunt as it is- Option 1.

Some of the change proposals would reduce parking.

I attended some events at the park at which more parking was needed, or more parking convenient to the pavillion is needed. I think Park parking should be increased, including perhaps in the back of the park. It definitely should not be reduced.

The Pavillion concerts in the summer are well-attended and enjoyable. Improvements to this facility would be good. The concert programs should be continued and enhanced to contribute to the community culture. Some proposals mentioned restroom facilities. I feel you should not reduce restroom facilities. They are needed and should be modernized.

There were many Park staff in attendance, which is good. They seemed well-informed and very willing to discuss, which is much appreciated. However, it was disappointing that although several Park personnel attended, none of them spoke about the project to the entire group of 30 or so people who attended. This prevented everyone from hearing the big picture and hearing questions they had in common _____ proposed.

No budgets were attached to the Alternatives. This precludes the neighborhood people from making real meaningful comments in light of how much each item would cost.

Thanks for sharing the Park Service's views with individuals in the community and responding to questions.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 17

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

The meeting was CHAOTIC most of the residents are AGAINST the Alternatives 4 and 5.

Why not give the Park to Fairfax County?

The numbers of visitors listed in the "winter months" in the report are BOGUS!

I am going to contact my Congressman.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 18

Author Information

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

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

Thank you to the Park Service for addressing neighborhood concerns raised in the scoping process several years ago. The present alternatives are much more acceptable. I favor the use of the existing NCP headquarters building instead of building a new visitors center.

Please consider the ballfields- children need these areas, which are very scarce in this area. The justification to remove them to provide "multi-purpose, open recreation space" makes no sense. The area is already "multipurpose, open recreation space" unless a ballgame or practice is occurring at that moment.

Thanks!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 19

Author Information

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

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: Date Received: 07/07/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form
Notes: 703.799.9353 (pls call for email address)

Correspondence Text

- Hello, thank you for the 7/7/2015 event and the oppty. to learn and comment.

- The exhibit photos are too small, too close together and difficult to understand.

- In general, I would suggest that one of the "modern" batteries be cleared of brush, weeds, trees, etc. and restored with its fields of _____ and fire. Very few visitors would know that one mission of Fort Hunt was to protect Ft. Washington from raiding parties; inshore enemy vessels, etc. Fort Moultrie (NPS @ Charleston SC) is an example of outstanding preservation, restoration, and reproduction of coast artillery. More descriptive plaques, signs, etc. are needed in the artillery area and in other (CCC, WWII, etc.) areas.

- Also, on another subject or opportunity feel free to call me @ [REDACTED]. This is totally a great oppty for NPS on its own OR with the new Army Museum at Fort Belvoir to discuss and present another facet of Homeland Defense (surface-to-air missiles- NIKE) and to huge U.S. Air Defense system.

Thanks again and best wishes,

[REDACTED]

([REDACTED] were NPS volunteers in the Home Patrol NPS programs at BOTH Catocin MTN and at Manassas.)

Thanks for all you do.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 20

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: Waynewood Resident
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

I have concerns with the 23 trees to be removed from the Battery to preserve the "Robinson View" to honor Spanish American war configuration. I believe that removing those trees would disturb the nesting Bald Eagles that occasionally roost near both batteries, but particularly the one slated for tree cutting. An interpretive kiosk would suffice instead of cutting trees.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 21

Author Information

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

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

I would like to see both an interpretive center/recreation to co-exist. My concern is the vagueness of the alternatives.

For example, shut down social trails- which ones? There is one that ought to stay. It is only about 50 feet long and connects the neighborhood with the pedestrian-only road. Don't close off the park so neighbors cannot access it please!


PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 22

Author Information

Keep Private: No

Name: Supervisor Gerry Hyland

Organization: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  Official Rep.

Organization Type: C - County Government

Address: 2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria, VA 22306
USA

E-mail: Gerald.Hyland@fairfaxcounty.gov

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:

Date Sent: Date Received: 07/07/2015

Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No

Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form

Notes:

Correspondence Text

Under FOIA I am request all copies of all comments received regarding this event.

Please copy Marcia.hanson@fairfaxcounty.gov.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 23

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

Waste of taxpayer dollars.

Interpretive trail- are you serious?

Relocating roads to cover already buried buildings with grass- are you kidding?

Removing ball field, parking spaces, and restrooms- not serving the public very good with this move.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

If worse comes to worse, Alt 5 is better than Alt 4.

Will submit separate typed comments.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 24

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

Please use the funds that you were contemplating to use on redesigning the park towards maintenance especially the care of trees along the GW Memorial Parkway. Unless the ivy is removed (as an example) from trees, they will slowly die, and eventually the parkway and park will be less scenic than before. As removal of plant parasites is low tech, one could hire many hands to make the work light (sort of like a WPA project). Let's clean up the park and parkway, and leave the park as it is today. I _____ that some events overwhelm the capacity, but that is a management issue, not a design issue!!!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 25

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

I often ride my bicycle in the park (in excess of 10,000 miles in the past 10 years)- too much traffic when area A gets overcrowded.

Prefer Option 5- keep roads open but limit # of people in organization picnics- when people form "A" spill over to "B"- and sometimes "C"- way too much traffic- dangerous for pedestrians and Park Police do NOT regulate traffic.


PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 26

Author Information

Keep Private: No

Name: [REDACTED]

Organization: NCPA  Official Rep.

Organization Type: L - Non-Governmental

Address: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:

Date Sent: Date Received: 07/07/2015

Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No

Contains Request(s): No Type: Park Form

Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am extremely disappointed that none of the alternatives allow for a real visitors center to be built someday. I was told that the maintenance area would be included as an alternative for a visitors center.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 27

Author Information

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

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/15/2015 Date Received: 07/15/2015
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Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

Dear Sir

Let me thank your staff for providing the information on proposed changes to Fort Hunt Park at the open house on July 7 at the Martha Washington Library.

The overuse of this park seems to be an administrative one, since it always appears in conjunction with handing out an excessive number of permits at any one time. The permits usually restrict parking at the main parking lots to only those participating at events. To remove other lots that are proposed to be eliminate will restrict the casual user of the park from using it while events are taking place.

The proposed solution does not solve the problem of overuse, but it restricts the casual user of the park, which in turn creates a lot of harm while not resolving the management deficiencies.

The circular road spanning the Park is one of the highly desirable salient features because it separates cars and bicycles from pedestrians, which makes for one of the most walkable, and thereby, pleasurable parks anywhere. Please keep the circular track with separated lanes for cars and bicycles separate from the pedestrians.

Please consider asking volunteers to remove the invasive Ivy that is ubiquitously destroying the tree coverage. You may be surprised at the interest that comes from this request.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 28

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

During the scoping period for the Site Development Plan/Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) earlier this year, I submitted comments to express my strong support for an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park.

I am very disappointed that the National Park Service (NPS) has selected Alternative 5 as the preferred Alternative in the draft SDP/EA that was released on July 1, 2015.

As noted previously, I have a special relationship with 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. Years later I was one of the more than 70 persons who gave oral history interviews, most of whom were veterans who served at PO Box 1142. I support the mission and goals of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI) and have served on its Advisory Council since 2014.

Alternative 5 would use the NCO quarters as an interpretive center and would use the storage space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A as additional space for interpretation. The NCO quarters is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As a former residence it consists of small rooms that cannot be reconfigured. The SDP/EA states that only 600 square feet are available for interpretation in this structure. That is far too little space to convey adequately the significant history of this site, let alone provide space for historical research on the oral history interviews and archival collection and for a small store. I am dumbfounded that the NPS has asserted that the space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A can be used for interpretation. It is not office space; rather it is storage space for chairs and sound system equipment used during picnics and the Sunday evening concerts in the summer and for tools and other materials used for cleanups in the park. Further, when large picnics are held in the spring, summer and fall in the pavilion, they often include bands or recorded music that can be heard throughout the park. What kind of visitor experience would that constitute during such times? To me, it would be an insult to the memory of the veterans who served at PO Box 1142.

Further, the NPS has not presented justification for selecting Alternative 5 as the preferred alternative. In this process the NPS needs to make a persuasive case.

I wholeheartedly support Alternative 4, the one consistently supported by the FFHPI; namely, the approval of an interpretive center in Area C, for which FFHPI will raise the funds to enable construction.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term and the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI.

Further, I do not support any of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

- the realignment of the loop road in two places

- the removal of the area e parking area

- the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Expending funds from the limited amount available to the George Washington Memorial Parkway for areas that may or may not have significant archeological remains is clearly much less important than getting the important history told through the development of a full-scale interpretive center. Further, moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area.

It is time for the NPS to take responsibility and do the right thing. Fort Hunt Park has a more significant history than many of the National Park units. Over the years it has been just a place to have large picnics and sporting events. What kind of preservation and protection is that! The NPS needs to have the vision and perseverance to change that! It owes it to veterans and other persons who made history at the site.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 29

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Notes:

Correspondence Text

In February 2015 I submitted comments to express my strong support for an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park. These comments were made as part of the National Park Service (NPS) scoping period for the Site Development Plan/Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

I am very surprised and disappointed that the NPS did not select Alternative 4 as its preferred alternative in the draft SDP/EA that was issued on July 1, 2015.

As stated in my earlier comments, I am the widow of H. George Mandel, Ph.D., who served as an interrogator for the Army Military Intelligence Service (MIS-Y) at P.O. Box 1142, the top-secret World War II military intelligence installation located at Fort Hunt. George was one of the more than 70 persons who gave oral history interviews to the NPS regarding P.O. Box 1142 and assisted the NPS in identifying veterans and unearthing the story.

Alternative 5 proposes to use the NCO quarters and the storage space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A as a combination interpretive center. The NCO structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a former residence that consists of small rooms that cannot be reconfigured. The SDP/EA states that only 600 square feet are available for interpretation in this structure. That is far too little space to convey adequately the unique and important history of this site, let alone provide space for historical research on the oral history interviews and archival collection and for a small store.

I cannot understand why the NPS has asserted that the space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A can be used for interpretation. It is not office space; rather it is storage space for chairs and sound system equipment used during picnics and the Sunday evening concerts in the summer and for tools and other materials used for cleanups in the park. Further, when large picnics are held in the spring, summer and fall in the pavilion, they often include bands or recorded music that can be heard throughout the park. What kind of visitor experience would that constitute during such times?

Importantly, the NPS has not presented justification for selecting Alternative 5 as the preferred alternative. In this process the

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

NPS needs to make a persuasive case for its decisions.

I wholeheartedly support Alternative 4, the one consistently supported by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI); namely, the approval of an interpretive center in Area C, for which FFHPI will raise the funds to enable construction.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term and the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. The NPS needs to consider this option carefully!

Further, I am opposed to all of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

the realignment of the loop road in two places

the removal of the area e parking area

the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Expending funds from the limited amount available to the George Washington Memorial Parkway for areas that may or may not have archeological remains is clearly much less important than getting the important history told through the development of a full-scale interpretive center. Further, moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area.

It is time for the NPS to take responsibility and do the right thing. Fort Hunt Park has a more significant history than numerous other National Park units. Over the past 60 years it has been just a place to have large picnics and engage in other recreational activities. Its history has not been protected, which is a key part of the 1916 Organic Act creating the NPS. With the centennial of the passage of that legislation fast approaching, the George Washington Memorial Parkway needs to have the vision and perseverance to change that! It owes it to veterans and other persons who made history at this site.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 30

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Notes:

Correspondence Text

See attached.



George Washington Memorial Parkway

Fort Hunt Park SDP Environmental Assessment

Fairfax, Virginia – EA Public Review Meeting

Rec'd
7/15/15
2:37
pm
CR

Name/Title:

Address:

Affiliation:

Phone/email:

COMMENTS:

Concur with alternative 5. Specifically request that activities contemplated under this alternative consider the site's WWA history as a classified interrogation center. This aspect of our history warrants preservation; particularly in an era when our enemy are transported to Guantanamo. There is another way - The interpretive center would do well to note and connect upon this unique aspect of our history.

Regarding the batteries - it would be an improvement if access could be provided to the interior of some of the batteries - perhaps Robinson - and at some point in future obtain an actual artillery piece to reconstitute as an example.

Finally - is there a way to incorporate the wheel and water aspects of the facility.

Submit comments on-line by following the appropriate

Mail Comments to:

Fort Hunt Park SDP/EA

Attn: Claire Rozdilski

National Park Service

700 George Washington Memorial Parkway

c/o Turkey Run Park

McLean, VA 22101

Mailed comments must be postmarked by August 7, 2015 to receive consideration.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 31

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

I submitted comments during the scoping period earlier this year for the Site Development Plan/Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA). In those comments I stated that 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." I noted that 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. Hence, I supported Alternative A with an interpretive center of sufficient size and state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to tell the vivid and memorable history of this important site.

I was stunned and disappointed that the National Park Service (NPS) did not select Alternative 4 as its preferred alternative in the draft SDP/EA that was issued on July 1, 2015. Further, the document does not present the case for this decision. Surely, the NPS owes it to the American public to make an adequate case. As a federal employee, I know that adequate reasons need to be presented in federal decision-making processes.

I am submitting comments once again to make absolutely clear my position that I support the approval of an interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.

Alternative 5 proposes to use the NCO quarters and the storage space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A as a combination interpretive center. How could that ever work?

The NCO structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a former residence that consists of small rooms that cannot be reconfigured. The SDP/EA states that only 600 square feet are available for interpretation in this structure. That is far too little space to convey adequately the unique and important history of this site, let alone provide space for historical research on the oral history interviews and archival collection and for a small store.

I cannot understand why the NPS has asserted that the limited space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A can be used for interpretation. It is not office space; rather it is storage space for chairs and sound system equipment used during picnics and

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the Sunday evening concerts in the summer and for tools and other materials used for cleanups in the park. And there are no handrails on the steps to the stage. Further, when large picnics are held in the spring, summer and fall in the pavilion, they often include bands or recorded music that can be heard throughout the park. What kind of visitor experience would that constitute during such times?

As mentioned above, I wholeheartedly support an interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4. It is the alternative consistently supported by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc, which has committed to raise the funds to enable construction.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term and the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. The NPS needs to consider this option carefully!

Further, I am opposed to all of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:
the realignment of the loop road in two places
the removal of the area e parking area
the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Expending funds from the limited amount available to the George Washington Memorial Parkway for areas that may or may not have archeological remains of questionable value is clearly much less important than getting the important history told through the development of a full-scale interpretive center. Further, moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area, use scarce funds and accomplish little if anything. And there are above ground archeological remains (four concrete blocks from Enclosure B) in the forested area adjacent to Area D for which the NPS has not taken any steps to secure, preserve or protect. Take care of those remains first!

It is time for the NPS to take responsibility and do the right thing. Fort Hunt Park has a more significant history than numerous other National Park units. Over the past 60 years it has been just a place to have large picnics and engage in other recreational activities. Its history has not been protected and the remaining military structures barely maintained, which is a key part of the 1916 Organic Act creating the NPS. With the centennial of the passage of that legislation fast approaching, the NPS needs to have the vision and perseverance to change that! The NPS owes it to veterans and other persons who made history at this site.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 32

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Notes:

Correspondence Text

I am a retired physician and former Naval officer. I recently learned about the very important history of Fort Hunt Park, especially in World War II. Naval interrogators from P.O. Box 1142, the top-secret military intelligence installation housed at the site of the present park, uncovered key information from German U-boat commanders and other crew that played a crucial role in winning the Battle of the Atlantic. Army interrogators, a number of whom were Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, also developed key intelligence that helped shorten the war, both in Europe and Japan, and positioned the US to deal more effectively with the Soviets in the early phases of the Cold War.

In addition to its key role in World War II Fort Hunt Park also represents a microcosm of American history. It was a part of George Washington's River Farm plantation, a fort constructed to protect Washington, D.C. from naval attack in the late 1890s, a camping site for World War I veterans during the three Depression-era Bonus Marches, the site where an early African American ROTC unit trained and a Civilian Conservation Corps camp from 1933-1942.

The July 1, 2015, draft National Park Service (NPS) Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Site Development Plan (SDP) for Fort Hunt Park states that Alternative 5 is the preferred alternative. This alternative would use the NCO quarters as an interpretive center and would use the storage space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A as additional space for interpretation. The SDP/EA states that only 600 square feet are available for interpretation in the NCO quarters, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. That is far too little space to convey adequately the significant history of this site. And as a former residence it consists of small rooms that cannot be reconfigured. It is almost an insult to assert that the space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A can be used for interpretation. It is not office space; rather it is storage space for chairs and sound system equipment used during the Sunday evening concerts in the summer and for tools and other materials used for cleanups in the park. Further, when large picnics are held in the spring, summer and fall in the pavilion, they often include bands or recorded music that can be heard throughout the park. What kind of visitor experience would that constitute during such times?

I wholeheartedly support Alternative 4, the one consistently supported by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI);

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namely, the approval of an interpretive center in Area C, for which FFHPI will raise the funds to enable construction.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term and the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI.

Further, I do not support any of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

the realignment of the loop road in two places

the removal of the area e parking area

the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Expending significant funds for areas that may or may not have significant archeological remains is clearly much less important than getting the important history told through the development of an interpretive center. Further, moving sections of the loop road will disturb the area.

It is time for the NPS to take responsibility and do the right thing. Fort Hunt Park has a more significant history than many of the National Parks, and now it is hardly more than an orphan park. Have the vision and perseverance to change that!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 33

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Notes:

Correspondence Text

In February of this year I submitted comments on the Alternative Concepts for the Site Development Plan/Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA). I noted that the National Park Service had previously invested in conducting oral history interviews of World War II veterans who served at PO Box 1142 and stated "its permanent home should be at an interpretive center at Fort Hunt."

I was stunned to learn that the National Park Service (NPS) selected Alternative 5 as its preferred alternative in the draft SDP/EA that was issued on July 1, 2015.

I am submitting comments again to make absolutely clear that I support the approval of an interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.

Alternative 5 proposes to use both the NCO quarters and the limited storage space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A as a combination interpretive center. The two structures are about a city block away from each other. How could that ever work?

The NCO structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and consists of small rooms that cannot be reconfigured. The SDP/EA states that only 600 square feet are available for interpretation in this structure. That is far too little space to convey adequately the unique and important history of this site, let alone provide space for historical research on the oral history interviews and archival collection. And where could a small store with educational materials be situated?

It is incomprehensible that the NPS has asserted that the limited space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A can be used for interpretation. It provides storage space for chairs, sound system equipment, tools and other materials used for a variety of purposes. And there are no handrails on the steps to the stage. Further, when large picnics are held in the spring, summer and fall in the pavilion, they often include bands or recorded music that can be heard throughout the park. What kind of visitor experience would that constitute at those times?

As mentioned above, I wholeheartedly support an interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4. It is the alternative consistently supported by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc, which has committed to raise the funds to enable construction.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term and the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. The NPS needs to consider this option carefully!

Further, I am opposed to all of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:
the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D
the removal of the Area E parking area
the realignment of the loop road in two places

Expending funds from the limited amount available to the George Washington Memorial Parkway for areas that may or may not have archeological remains of questionable value is clearly much less important than getting the important history told through the development of a full-scale interpretive center. Further, moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area, use scarce funds and accomplish little if anything.

It is time for the NPS to take responsibility and do the right thing. Fort Hunt Park has a more significant history than numerous other National Park units. Over the past 60 years it has been just a place to have large picnics and engage in other recreational activities. Its history has not been protected, and the remaining military structures barely maintained. With the centennial of the passage of the legislation creating the National Park Service little more than a year away, the NPS needs to have the vision and resolve to change that! The NPS owes it to veterans and other persons who made history at this site.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 34

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

I submitted comments during the scoping period earlier this year for the Site Development Plan/Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA). In those comments I stated that I "strongly support creating a new interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history."

I further stated that the "facilities and locations proposed in Alternative Concept 5 are not appropriate to fulfill a visitor services function."

I was astonished and disheartened to learn that the National Park Service (NPS) selected Alternative 5 as its preferred alternative in the draft SDP/EA issued on July 1, 2015. Importantly, the document does not present the case for this decision. Surely, the NPS owes it to the American public to make an adequate case. And I believe that legally it needs to justify its proposed decision.

I am submitting comments at this time to make absolutely clear that I support the approval of an interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.

Alternative 5 proposes to use the NCO quarters and the storage space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A as a combination interpretive center. What a poor idea!

The NCO structure consists of small rooms that cannot be reconfigured because it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The SDP/EA states that only 600 square feet are available for interpretation in this structure. That is far too little space to convey adequately the unique and important history of this site, let alone provide space for historical research on the oral history interviews and on the archival collection and for a small store.

I cannot understand why the NPS has asserted that the limited space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A can be used for interpretation. It is not office space; rather it is storage space for chairs and sound system equipment used during picnics and

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the Sunday evening concerts in the summer and for tools and other materials used for cleanups in the park. And there are no handrails on the steps to the stage. Further, when large picnics are held in the spring, summer and fall in the pavilion, they often include loud music that can be heard throughout the park. What kind of visitor experience would that constitute during such times?

As mentioned above, I totally support an interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4. It is the alternative consistently supported by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc, which has committed to raise the funds to enable construction.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term and the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. The NPS needs to consider this option very seriously!

Further, I am opposed to all of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:
the realignment of the loop road in two places
the removal of the area e parking area
the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Expending funds from the limited amount available to the George Washington Memorial Parkway for areas that may or may not have archeological remains of questionable value is clearly much less important than getting the important history told through the development of a full-scale interpretive center. Further, moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area, use scarce funds and accomplish little if anything. And there are above ground archeological remains (four concrete blocks from Enclosure B) in the forested area adjacent to Area D for which the NPS has not taken any steps to secure, preserve or protect. Take care of those remains first!

Fort Hunt Park has a more significant history than numerous other National Park units. Over the past 60 years it has been just a place to have large picnics and engage in other recreational activities. Its history has not been protected and the few military structures still remaining are barely maintained. Protection and preservation are key parts of the 1916 Organic Act creating the NPS. With the centennial of the passage of that legislation just a year away, the NPS needs to have the vision and perseverance to change that! The NPS owes it to veterans and other persons who made history at this site.

Do the right thing!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 35

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Correspondence Text

I submitted comments during the scoping period earlier this year for the Site Development Plan/Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) strongly supporting the creation of a new interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to showcase the site's important role in American history.

I was astonished to learn that the National Park Service (NPS) selected Alternative 5, rather than Alternative 4, as its preferred alternative in the draft SDP/EA issued on July 1, 2015. Both the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI), the formal partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), and the National Parks Conservation Association both supported a new interpretive center in Area C. And FFHPI has publicly committed to raising the funds to construct such a center.

Importantly, the draft SDP/EA does not provide supporting documentation for its decision.

I believe that a sustainable rationale cannot be provided for using the space behind the stage in Picnic Pavilion A. Throughout the warm months of the year, this pavilion is booked for large picnics that often include loud live or recorded music that can be heard throughout the park. I can't imagine a visitor having a positive experience in converted space behind the stage during such picnics. My family and I certainly would not even enter the space! It currently is used for storage of chairs and sound system equipment used in the pavilion, and gloves, vests, tools and other equipment used for cleanup and other activities in the park. It would not make sense to store most of these materials elsewhere.

Further, the NCO quarters, which is the other space proposed for use in Alternative 5, has only 600 square feet available for interpretation. That is far too little space to convey adequately the unique and important history of this site, let alone provide space for historical research on the oral history interviews and other important materials that have been donated to the GWMP by PO. Box 1142 veterans and federal military history organizations. Nor would there be room for a small store that could sell books and other educational materials to interested visitors. And how could the structure accommodate more than 10 visitors at one time?

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The distance between the NCO quarters and Picnic Pavilion A is 0.1 mile, the equivalent of a city block, and persons walking from one structure to the other would have to cross the park access road. This would not work for persons with disabilities and families with young children!

So using the NCO quarters alone would not be a long-term solution to providing adequate interpretation of the very significant history of this site.

Thus, I strongly reiterate my earlier support for the approval of a new interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, which is now covered with peeling paint on the exterior and unfinished rooms on the interior. After the new interpretive center is built, the NCO quarters could be outfitted to tell the story of life at Fort Hunt in the early 20th century.

Finally, I am opposed to all of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

the realignment of the loop road in two places

the removal of the Area E parking area

the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area, use scarce funds and accomplish little if anything. And there are above ground archeological remains (concrete blocks from Enclosure B) near Area D for which the NPS has not taken any steps to secure, preserve or protect.

It is finally time for the GWMP to give Fort Hunt Park the historical interpretation it truly deserves!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 36

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Notes:

Correspondence Text

These comments are to express strongly my support of a new interpretive center in Area C.

Although we live in a suburb of Philadelphia, my daughters and I attended a Sunday evening concert at Fort Hunt Park in 2013. It is a large and beautiful park, and our visit made me want to learn more about its history.

In the last few months I learned about its very important history in World War II. Naval interrogators from P.O. Box 1142, the top-secret military intelligence installation housed at the site, uncovered key information from German U-boat commanders and other crew on such matters as U-boat operations and the acoustic torpedo. This played a crucial role in winning the Battle of the Atlantic. Army interrogators, a number of whom were Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, also developed key intelligence that helped shorten the war, both in Europe and Japan, and allowed the US to deal more effectively with the Soviets in the early phases of the Cold War.

In addition to its key role in World War II Fort Hunt Park also represents a microcosm of American history. It was a part of George Washington's River Farm plantation, a fort constructed to protect Washington, D.C. from naval attack in the late 1890s, a camping site for World War I veterans during the three Depression-era Bonus Marches, the site where an early African American ROTC unit trained and a Civilian Conservation Corps camp from 1933-1942.

The July 1, 2015, draft National Park Service (NPS) Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Site Development Plan (SDP) for Fort Hunt Park states that Alternative 5, rather than Alternative 4, is the preferred alternative. This decision to support Alternative 5 surprised and disappointed me. Both the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI), the formal partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), and the National Parks Conservation Association both supported a new interpretive center in Area C. And FFHPI has publicly committed to raising the funds to construct such a center. My husband and I are supporters of and donors to FFHPI.

What realistic rationale can be provided for using the space behind the stage in Picnic Pavilion A? Throughout the warm

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months of the year, this pavilion is booked for large picnics that often include loud live or recorded music that can be heard throughout most of the park. I can't envision a visitor having a positive experience in converted space behind the stage during such picnics. It currently is used for storage of chairs and sound system equipment used in the pavilion, and gloves, vests, tools and other equipment used for cleanup and other activities in the park. It would not make logistical sense to store most of these materials elsewhere.

Further, the NCO quarters, the other structure proposed for use in Alternative 5, has only 600 square feet available for interpretation. That is far too little space to convey adequately the unique and important history of this site, let alone provide space for historical research on the oral history interviews and other important materials that have been donated to the GWMP by PO. Box 1142 veterans and federal military history organizations. Nor would there be room for a small store that could sell books and other educational materials to interested visitors. And how could the structure accommodate more than 10-15 visitors at one time, which could be a likely scenario during picnic season? The draft SDP/EA estimates that well over 300,000 people visit Fort Hunt Park annually.

The distance between the NCO quarters and Picnic Pavilion A is about the length of a city block, and the two structures are on opposite sides of the park access road. This would not work for persons with disabilities and families with young children!

So using the NCO quarters alone would not be a long-term solution to providing adequate interpretation of the very significant history of this site.

Thus, as noted above I strongly support approval of a new interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, which is now covered with peeling paint on the exterior and unfinished rooms on the interior. After the new interpretive center is built, the NCO quarters could be outfitted to tell the story of life at Fort Hunt in the early 20th century in more detail. Similar structures at other NPS military National Park units have been outfitted in the same manner.

Finally, I am opposed to all of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

- the realignment of the loop road in two places
- the removal of the Area E parking area
- the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area, use scarce funds and accomplish little if anything. And there are above ground archeological remains (concrete blocks from Enclosure B) near Area D for which the NPS has not taken any steps to secure, preserve or protect.

It is finally time for the GWMP to give Fort Hunt Park the historical interpretation it truly deserves! The centennial year of the passage of the legislation creating the NPS would be the ideal time to make this forward-looking decision.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 37

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

I am a fan of the National Park System.

I just heard about the unique and important history of Fort Hunt Park, especially in World War II. Naval and Army interrogators from P.O. Box 1142, the top-secret military intelligence installation at the site, developed key intelligence that ended the war faster and positioned the US to deal more effectively with the Soviets in the early phases of the Cold War.

In addition to its key role in World War II Fort Hunt Park also represents a microcosm of American history. It was a part of George Washington's River Farm plantation, a fort constructed to protect Washington, D.C. from naval attack in the late 1890s, a camping site for World War I veterans during the three Depression-era Bonus Marches, the site where an early African American ROTC unit trained and a Civilian Conservation Corps camp from 1933-1942.

The July 1, 2015, draft National Park Service (NPS) Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Site Development Plan (SDP) for Fort Hunt Park states that Alternative 5, not Alternative 4, is the preferred alternative. Both the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI), the formal partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) for Fort Hunt Park, and the National Parks Conservation Association supported and continue to support a new interpretive center in Area C. And FFHPI has publicly committed to raising the funds to construct such a center.

Importantly, the draft SDP/EA does not provide supporting documentation for its decision. As an employee of the Environmental Protection Agency, I know that federal agencies must provide robust rationales for their decisions.

I believe that a sustainable rationale cannot be provided for using the space behind the stage in Picnic Pavilion A. Throughout the warm months each year, this pavilion is booked for large picnics that often include loud music heard throughout the park. How can visitor have a positive experience under such circumstances? The space in question currently is used for storage of chairs and sound system equipment used in the pavilion, and gloves, vests, tools and other equipment used for cleanup and other activities in the park. It would not make sense to store most of these materials elsewhere.

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Further, the NCO quarters, which is the other space proposed for use in Alternative 5, has only 600 square feet available for interpretation. That is not enough space to convey adequately the meaningful history of this site, let alone provide space for historical research and for a small store that could sell books and other educational materials to interested visitors. Using the NCO quarters alone would not be a long-term solution to providing adequate interpretation of the very significant history of this site.

The distance between the NCO quarters and Picnic Pavilion A is about the length of a city block, and persons walking from one structure to the other would have to cross the park access road. This would not work for persons with disabilities and families with young children!

Thus, I strongly support approval of a new interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, which now has peeling paint throughout much of the exterior and needs serious attention. After the new interpretive center is built, the NCO quarters could be outfitted to tell the story of life at Fort Hunt in the early 20th century.

Finally, I am opposed to all of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

- the realignment of the loop road in two places
- the removal of the Area E parking area
- the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area, use scarce funds and accomplish little if anything. And there are above ground archeological remains (concrete blocks from Enclosure B) near Area D for which the NPS has not taken any steps to secure, preserve or protect.

It is finally time for the GWMP to give Fort Hunt Park the historical interpretation it has deserved for a long time!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 38

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Correspondence Text

I recently learned about the very important history of Fort Hunt Park, especially in World War II. Naval interrogators from P.O. Box 1142, the top-secret military intelligence installation housed at the site of the present park, uncovered vital information on such matters as U-boat warfare and the acoustic torpedo from German U-boat commanders and other crew. This information played a crucial role in winning the Battle of the Atlantic. Army interrogators, a number of whom were Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, also developed key intelligence that helped shorten the war, both in Europe and Japan, and positioned the US to deal more effectively with the Soviets in the early phases of the Cold War.

In addition to its key role in World War II Fort Hunt Park also represents a microcosm of American history. It was a part of George Washington's River Farm plantation, a fort constructed to protect Washington, D.C. from naval attack in the late 1890s and early 1900s, a camping site for World War I veterans during the three Depression-era Bonus Marches, the site where an early African American ROTC unit trained and a Civilian Conservation Corps camp from 1933-1942.

I wholeheartedly support a modern, fully equipped and interactive interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park to educate visitors as to this important history. A center that can accommodate at least 50 - 100 people over a course of several hours is needed since the annual park visitation is estimated to be well over 300,000 visitors. Many of them attend picnics during the spring, summer and fall.

Hence I am submitting comments to support the approval of an interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.

The July 1, 2015, draft National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park states that Alternative 5 is the preferred alternative. Alternative 5 proposes to use the NCO quarters and the storage space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A as a combination interpretive center. How could that ever work?

The NCO-quarters is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and consists of small rooms that cannot be

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reconfigured. The SDP/EA states that only 600 square feet are available for interpretation in this structure. That is insufficient space to convey adequately the unique and important history of this site, let alone provide space for historical research on the oral history interviews and archival collection and for a small store. And how many people can fit into such a small space at the same time?

Further, I do not understand the NPS rationale for proposing to use the limited space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A for interpretation. It is not office space; rather it is storage space for chairs and sound system equipment used during picnics and the Sunday evening concerts in the summer and for tools and other materials used for cleanups in the park. And there are no handrails on the steps to the stage. Further, when large picnics are held in the spring, summer and fall in the pavilion, they often include loud music that can be heard throughout the park. What kind of visitor experience would that constitute during such times?

The NCO-quarters and Picnic Pavilion A are separated by a distance of about a city block. Would visitors need to go from one structure to the other to learn the entire history of the park? What about handicapped visitors? It would be a challenge for them to try to visit both structures.

Importantly, the draft SDP/EA has not provided justification for the selection of Alternative 5 as the preferred alternative. This is a significant omission.

As mentioned above, I wholeheartedly support an interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4. It is the alternative consistently supported by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI), the formal partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway for Fort Hunt Park. FFHPI has committed publicly to raise the funds to enable construction of such a center ever since its creation in 2012.

And the National Parks Conservation Association also supports locating an interpretive center in Area C, as a part of Alternative 4.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term and the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. The NPS needs to consider this option carefully!

Further, I am opposed to all of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

- the realignment of the loop road in two places
- the removal of the area e parking area
- the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Committing funds for areas that may or may not have archeological remains is clearly much less important than getting the important history told through the development of a full-scale interpretive center. Further, moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area, use scarce funds and accomplish little if anything.

And there are above ground archeological remains (four concrete blocks from Enclosure B) near Area D, which the NPS has not taken any steps to secure, preserve or protect. That needs to be addressed promptly.

It is time for the NPS to take responsibility and do the right thing. The World War II veterans and their families deserve no less.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 39

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: N/A N/A
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address:



E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/21/2015 Date Received: 07/21/2015
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Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

The chain link fence between Fort Hunt Park and Fort Hunt Road is in bad condition, is unsightly, and is uninviting. This is especially unfortunate for those of us who live directly across the street from the park along Fort Hunt Road. It seems that the proposed park redevelopment would be a good time to address this. The perimeter fence should be replaced with something more aesthetically pleasing or removed altogether depending on the park requirements.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 40

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/22/2015 Date Received: 07/22/2015
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Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

As a resident of Alexandria, I support the GWMP's efforts to preserve the recreational facilities of Fort Hunt Park. However, as an enthusiastic visitor to and supporter of our country's National Parks (I have been to over 300 parks), I believe that the GWMP has paid far too little attention to interpreting the rich history of Fort Hunt. The Park Service should enthusiastically embrace both Alternative 4 and Alternative 5 for the further development of Fort Hunt Park: rehabilitating the NCO Quarters, as well as developing an interpretive center in Area C.

By now the national importance of the history of Fort Hunt, especially the work conducted in P.O. Box 1142 during World War II, should not be in doubt. Even the most critical analysis of that history would conclude that it is equal to the historical importance of many independent units of the National Park Service. Based on National Park Service data, there are a dozen National Historic Sites in the system that receive fewer than 10,000 visitors per year - some within a short drive of Alexandria - with interpretive centers larger than the meager 600 square feet allocated in Alternative 5. Surely more than 10,000 of the 300,000-plus annual visitors to Fort Hunt Park would benefit from an appropriate elaboration of the fort's history.

Of course, no one is expecting the U.S. Congress to appropriate the funds necessary to fully elaborate the history of Fort Hunt Park. But why not embrace a public-private partnership to accomplish the goals? There are plenty of examples of private philanthropy supporting the full elaboration of National Park sites. The Flight 93 National Memorial and the new Pullman National Monument are two examples. Locally, David Rubenstein has demonstrated that securing multi-million dollar gifts for the National Park System is achievable. The National Park Foundation, which is in the early stages of a major fundraising campaign, will undoubtedly demonstrate that this level of generosity is possible from many other donors.

It is my understanding that the Friends of Fort Hunt Park has offered to raise the funds to construct and endow an interpretive center. Why not accept that offer and enthusiastically embrace Alternative 4 along with Alternative 5, contingent on Friends of Fort Hunt Park securing the funds needed for the interpretive center in Area C? This approach would show that the GWMP is serious about interpreting the history of Fort Hunt Park, while realistic about their ability to persuade Congress to

appropriate the funds.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 41

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

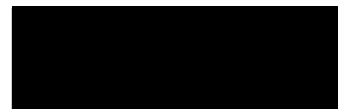
Status: New	Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/15/2015	Date Received: 07/20/2015
Number of Signatures: 1	Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No	Type: Letter
Notes:	

Correspondence Text

See attached

Rec'd 7/22/15
3⁵⁶pm
CA

July 15, 2015



George Washington Memorial Parkway

Turkey Run Park

McLean, VA 22101

Attn: Ms. Claire Rozdilski

I am [REDACTED] and live at [REDACTED]. My house faces the houses that back up to Fort Hunt Park on [REDACTED]. I have lived in the house on [REDACTED] since October 1990. I am now retired and run though Fort Hunt Park at least 25 mornings a month. It is a great park and a great place to run all seasons of the year. I have reviewed the National Park Service's Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan; Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect dated July 1, 2015. I now strongly endorse Alternative 1: No Action alternative. Nothing I have read in the plan or heard at the public meetings makes me see a benefit to any of the Alternative Concepts. I do not see why the NPS designated portions of Fort Hunt Park and "Historic Land Use Restoration Areas" when nothing has been found in these areas that are of more historic significance than any other portions of Fort Hunt Park. In my neighborhood, the neighborhood watch was started when the back loop of the park was open and the houses that backed up to that loop were vandalized, so I strongly support keeping that back loop as is and only opening it when necessary. (i.e. camper mothers picking up their children after camp).

I would encourage the NPS to improve the maintenance of Fort Hunt Park. I will give you the following 2 examples where the maintenance could be improved:

1. There is a standard Park Service gate blocking off the entrance to the closed off back road. When the loops was opened, rather than unscrews one bolt and nut and remove the chain, the support post was removed from the ground for the gate to be opened. Now that the loop is closed the support post was put back in a partially filled hole and put back very crocked.
2. Cut down the dead trees in the park so they are not a safety hazard to pedestrians

My bottom line is to keep the park as is and improve the maintenance of the park



PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 42

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Notes:

Correspondence Text

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

The work proposed on this site and any mitigation proposed should be a net gain from an environmental standpoint. There is no evidence shown that presents a net gain. We should not accept this proposal unless a net gain from an environmental standpoint exists and can be clearly shown by the NPS. This proposal in its current form with respect to the preferred alternative needs improvements that responds to the questions raised herein.

On the document titled: Fort_Hunt_SDP_EA_July2015, please note that the NPS prefers Alternative #5.

On page 55 under the section titled Vegetation notes the loss of 373 trees with a description of the NPA replacement process included.

Clear justification for the removal of this large number of trees has not been provided. Also the inch to inch replacement used by the NPS does not provide a net gain from an environmental standpoint and we will accept no less than twice what is removed be replaced and replanted on the site. Rather than at the inch to inch replacement that is described it should be 2 inches to 1 inch replacement (this is an international best practice) and all new plantings should occur on site. I would suggest that native trees whose diameter is great than 24 inches are highly valuable trees not only for stormwater absorption and management but also for extremely important for wildlife. These highly valuable trees could be replaced at a 3 to 1 ratio. Only native plantings should be authorized with no substitutions of non-natives allowable under any circumstances. Subspecies or cultivars should not be allowed.

While there is discussion of mitigating stormwater runoff during construction, any work done on this site should take advantage of the construction/restoration opportunity to improve stormwater management throughout the site both during and after construction is completed. Fort Hunt Park is a river front property. Everything possible to collect and filter stormwater/rainwater throughout this site should be fully implemented. Everything possible should be done on this site to

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

improve the absorption of stormwater on this site. What is described is not a net gain from an environmental standpoint.

This site should be model for best practice in managing stormwater on site both during and after construction activities are completed. We should accept no less than this. This site has a mix of historic and current period uses so mixing in current best practices can be done and should be easy to implement. This should include installing rain gardens throughout the site to absorb the rainwater as much as possible, this will protect the water quality of the river in that water will be filtered before it gets to the river, it will seep out through the soils and will be filtered by the soils. A buffer area of native grasses and other appropriate plantings should be planted and maintained along the banks of the river to stabilize the bank of the river and prevent erosion during higher than normal tidal or storm events (which seem to be occurring more frequently and at greater extremes). Just putting big boulders there is not enough. Rain gardens should also be installed all around the perimeter of the parking lots and along the edges of all trails and roads and planted with native plants appropriate for each rain garden site. Other best practices should be installed to include the addition of cisterns or rain barrels on all buildings with the water used to maintain native plantings on the site.

What stormwater mitigation will be implemented around the multi-use recreation area? Again, there should be rain gardens all around this area to absorb the runoff from the grassy area. In order to maintain a grassy landscape in this specific section (this is the ONLY area that should be actively managed as a grassy site) there may be a need to use fertilizers. Where possible innovative use of grasses that can handle high traffic and not require such heavy maintenance should be a primary goal. Otherwise the nutrient runoff from this grassy area will contaminate the rest of the site. Without rain gardens all around this part of the site, this nutrient runoff will just run right into the river.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 43

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Notes:

Correspondence Text

This is to inform you that I support the approval of a new interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

I have been interested in Fort Hunt Park for several years. I attended an event there in 2012 at which I learned about its important military history, as well as its other meaningful history. That stimulated my interest in why such important history was not being interpreted at this large National Park unit that is being used almost entirely for recreational purposes.

In the last few months I have heard more about the unique history of PO Box 1142 in World War II. Naval and Army interrogators from P.O. Box 1142 developed key intelligence that ended the war faster and positioned the US to deal more effectively with the Soviets in the early phases of the Cold War. A significant number of the Army interrogators were Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe; quite a few of them lost members of their families in Hitler's death camps. Yet they did not use torture on the high level German prisoner brought to PO Box 1142; they coaxed the needed intelligence from them through psychological means.

I was very disappointed to learn that the National Park Service (NPS) selected Alternative 5, rather than Alternative 4, as its preferred alternative in the draft SDP/EA issued on July 1, 2015. Both the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI), the formal partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) for Fort Hunt Park, and the National Parks Conservation Association supported a new interpretive center in Area C. And FFHPI has publicly committed on numerous occasions to raise the funds to construct such a center.

Using the storage space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A as part of an interpretive function A is a non-starter. Throughout the warm months of the year, Pavilion A is regularly booked for large picnics that include loud music heard in many places in the park. At such times the visitor experience to such a space would be negative and counterproductive to the goal of successful interpretation.

Also materials are in this space there for summer concerts that need to be stored at Pavilion A, not elsewhere. And access to this storage space is through stairs at either end of the stage and its rear, none of which have railings. Further, Pavilion A is about a city block away from the NCO quarters, the other structure recommended to serve as an interpretive center in Alternative 5, and across the park access road. Getting between the two structures would be difficult and in some cases impossible for persons with disabilities.

Regarding the NCO quarters, the draft SDP/EA states that it has only 600 square feet available for interpretation. That is not enough space to convey adequately the meaningful history of this site, let alone provide space for historical research and for a small store that could sell books and other educational materials to interested visitors. Using the NCO quarters would not be a long-term solution to providing adequate interpretation of the very significant history of this site.

So I reiterate that I strongly support approval of a new interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.

I also believe that portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the repurposing of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the-art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI.

This would preserve the NCO quarters, which now has peeling paint throughout much of the exterior and needs repairs. This is an unfortunate state for a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places. After the new interpretive center is built, the NCO quarters could be outfitted to tell the story of life at Fort Hunt in the early 20th century.

Finally, I am opposed to all of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:
the realignment of the loop road in two places
the removal of the Area E parking area
the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area, use scarce funds and divert funding from developing an appropriate interpretive center for sharing the site's important history.

The GWMP needs to do the right thing to give Fort Hunt Park the historical interpretation it deserves!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 44

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

I am writing to express my support for the approval of a new interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

I am a big fan of National Parks. My son and his family have taken their family vacations in National Parks for many years. I support the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI) and the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA).

I was very disappointed to learn that the National Park Service (NPS) selected Alternative 5, rather than Alternative 4, as its preferred alternative in the draft SDP/EA issued on July 1, 2015. Both FFHPI, which is the formal partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and NPCA supported a new interpretive center in Area C during the scoping period earlier this year. And FFHPI has publicly committed to raising the funds to construct such a center.

I don't understand how the wishes of two organizations that have been so supportive of Fort Hunt Park through community events and other activities in the park could have been disregarded in such a manner.

Regarding Alternative 5, I do believe that a sustainable rationale cannot be provided for using the space behind the stage in Picnic Pavilion A and that the available space in the NCO quarters is too small to provide interpretation of the site's history on a long-term basis. The following are the reasons for my position.

Space behind Stage in Picnic Pavilion A

1. Picnics are booked in Picnic Pavilion A almost every weekend from April through mid-October each year, many with loud music. On such days the visitor experience in any makeshift interpretive space would be minimal or even negative.
2. Picnic Pavilion A is about a city block away from the NCO quarters and across the park access road. Going from one structure to the other learn about the site's history would not work for persons with disabilities.
3. This limited space is used for storage of items used in the pavilion itself (sound equipment, chairs) and items used in park

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cleanups (gloves, vests, etc). The current usage is the appropriate usage for the space.

4. A certain number of parking spaces from the parking lot for Picnic Pavilion A currently used for the big picnics would have to be removed for use of the so called interpretive center, making parking more difficult for picnic attendees at the large picnics.
5. Access to the stage and storage space is through stairs without railings.

NCO quarters

1. The NCO quarters has only 600 square feet available for interpretation, too little space to interpret adequately the unique and important history of this site.
2. There would be no space to view videos, perform historical research on the oral history interviews or have a small store to sell books and other educational materials.
3. On the many days on which picnics occur each year, how could the structure accommodate large numbers of people who might also want to learn about the park's history?
4. The NPS estimates that more 300,000 people visit the park each year, including significant numbers in the colder months. Even then the space could be too limited to accommodate more than 10-15 people at one time.

Thus, I strongly restate my support for the approval of a new interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA and recommend the removal of the space behind the stage of Picnic Pavilion A from further consideration.

Further, portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from further deterioration.

Finally, I am opposed to the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

1. The realignment of the loop road in two places
2. The removal of the Area E parking area
3. The removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Please do the right thing for Fort Hunt Park. The NPS needs to protect, preserve and interpret the sites within the National Park System.

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Correspondence: 45

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

Once again I thank you for the opportunity to comment on recommendations for Fort Hunt Park. As in the past, 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. 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 a 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. (In that case, what difference does it make if one is standing next to a pavilion when simply viewing a photo?) This is a national park not a local one, but there is no need to pit the historical and recreational aspects against each other. Meanwhile, tens of thousand of dollars and personnel hours have been expended just in the planning process with the aim of removing more than will be added.

I fear that my concerns and recommendations on these matters will not be accepted an more enthusiastically this time around than they were previously. However, during the last public event on this specific Plan Environment Assessment, the NPS representative was very supportive of one of my previous suggestions: That was to provide a walking route along the stretch of the road with two-way traffic. He also was positive to a new suggestion relating to the recommendation of using the existing house as the visitors center. That suggestion is, in addition to the walking route, for safety reasons have one single crossing point on the road for people walking from the parking lot to the center. This could be done with a walking path as well.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my comments.

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Correspondence: 46

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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COMMENTS

Earlier this year I submitted comments to express my strong support for an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park as part of the scoping period for the (SDP/EA). I am surprised and rather disappointed that the National Park Service (NPS) has selected Alternative 5 as the preferred Alternative in the draft SDP/EA issued on July 1, 2015. I also do not understand the NPS rationale for this decision, as it is not adequately presented in the draft SDP/EA.

As stated in my prior comments, I am a professional historian and former NPS employee. I am very interested in the history of Fort Hunt Park, particularly during World War II. The Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI) recently discovered documented information that naval interrogators from P.O. Box 1142, uncovered vital information from German U-boat commanders and other crew that played a crucial role in winning the Battle of the Atlantic. Army interrogators, a number of whom were Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, also developed key intelligence that helped shorten the war, both in Europe and Japan, and positioned the US to deal more effectively with the Soviets in the early phases of the Cold War.

Thus, I strongly restate my support for the approval of a new interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.

Regarding Alternative 5, I believe that a sustainable rationale cannot be provided for using the space behind the stage in Picnic Pavilion A and that the available space in the NCO quarters is too small to provide interpretation of the site's history on a long-term basis. The following are the reasons for my position.

Regarding the space behind the stage in Picnic Pavilion A, picnics are booked in the pavilion almost every weekend from April through mid-October each year, many with loud music. On such days the visitor experience in any makeshift interpretive space would be negative, if even tolerable. Further, Picnic Pavilion A is located about a city block from the NCO quarters and on the other side of the park access road. Going from one structure to the other would not be practicable for

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persons with disabilities and would be challenging for families with small children. This limited space currently is storage space for items used in the pavilion during Sunday evening concerts and those used in park cleanups. Also access to the stage and storage space is through stairs without railings. Finally, a certain number of parking spaces in Parking Lot A currently used for the big picnics would have to be removed for use by visitors to the so called interpretive center, making parking more difficult for picnic attendees at large picnics.

It just does not make sense to consider this space for interpretive purposes.

With respect to the NCO quarters, it has only 600 square feet available for interpretation, too little space to interpret adequately the important history of this site. There would be no space to view videos, perform historical research or have a small store to sell educational materials. On the many days on which picnics occur each year, the structure would not be able to accommodate the large numbers of people who might want to learn about the park's history. Nor could it handle field trips by schoolchildren from local schools.

Further, portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the outfitting of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the necessary funds by FFHPI, a commitment repeatedly made by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from further deterioration.

Finally, I am opposed to all of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

1. The realignment of the loop road in two places
2. The removal of the Area E parking area
3. The removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Please do the right thing for Fort Hunt Park. The NPS needs to protect, preserve and interpret the sites within the National Park System. With the centennial of the passage of the August 1916 Organic Act creating the NPS only a year away, committing to the full interpretation of Fort Hunt Park should be a priority for the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 47

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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This is to express my strong support for the approval of a new interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

I have a personal relationship to Fort Hunt Park. My father, Colonel Blair Henderson, was the commander of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 2313 from 1938-39 at CCC Camp NP-6 on the site of Fort Hunt. 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.

While growing up I camped at Fort Hunt Park as a Boy Scout. As a Scout Leader, I later ran activities at the park, and my grandson participated in Boy Scout activities in the park.

I was very disappointed to learn that the National Park Service (NPS) selected Alternative 5, rather than Alternative 4, as its preferred alternative in the draft SDP/EA issued on July 1, 2015. The Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI), the formal partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, supported the creation of a new interpretive center in Area C during the scoping process earlier this year. And FFHPI has publicly committed to raising the funds to construct such a center.

Regarding Alternative 5, there is no justifiable rationale for using the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation. There are a number of reasons why this is so. The include the following:

- loud picnics with live or recorded music are held in the pavilion 70-80 days each year
- the space in question is already used to store equipment for those picnics and for site cleanups
- Pavilion A is a city block away from the NCO quarters, the other proposed interpretive space, and across the park access road making access difficult for persons with mobility limitations
- parking spaces currently used for the picnics would have to be re-allocated for this space
- access to the space is through stairs without handrails.

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This proposal simply makes no sense!

Further, the available space in the NCO quarters is too small to provide interpretation of the site's history on a long-term basis. The draft SDP/EA states that the structure has only 600 square feet available for interpretation. With such limited space the story of CCC Camp NP-6 could not be adequately interpreted nor that of PO Box 1142. And there would be no space to view videos, perform historical research or have a small store to sell educational materials. Further, it could only accommodate a limited number of people at one time. So it would be difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate school field trips. In the draft SDP/EA the NPS estimates that more than 300,000 people visit the park each year. How could the NCO quarters be adequate to support even 40,000 visitors each year?

For the above reasons, I reiterate my strong support for the approval of a new interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.

Further, portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term with the construction of a modern, state-of-the-art, interpretive center of sufficient size in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from further deterioration. It could then be used to interpret life at Fort Hunt in the early 20th century.

Finally, I am opposed to the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5: realignment of the loop road in two places, removal of the Area E parking area and removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Fort Hunt Park deserves to be more than just a recreational area. With 157 acres in the park, there is enough space for recreation and significant historic interpretation.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 48

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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I prefer Alternative 4 because Area A is very heavily used right now and needs all the parking and space it has. A simple sign could direct visitors to a visitors center further into the park. This alternative does not specify what happens to the NCO Quarters. I do not see any particular value to the structure itself, and tearing down an old building could save money. Don't know what historical merits it has, but converting it to a visitors center doesn't sound like historical preservation. If it is desired to preserve the NCO Quarters, then Alternative 5 is best.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 49

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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During 2014 I pushed a stroller to FH Park multiple times a week. I never saw the park full of people so the comment by the so called study saying in essence that the park was overloaded is pure fantasy. Why not say you have money and need to spend it on something in the Park.

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Correspondence: 50

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

The plans presented focus too heavily on the recreation aspects of Fort Hunt. I understand that the public use of the area has been primarily recreation and I do not favor reducing that use. However, Fort Hunt is a significant historic site that is poorly interpreted at the site. While reuse of the NCO quarters will marginally improve the information at the site, it does not allow for the primary interpretive materials to be retained or studied on site but requires that the public travel elsewhere and go to some big effort to gain access to these materials. The NCO HQ is also an historic building. Rehabilitating it to meet visitor access needs as well as interpretive needs will be difficult, perhaps impossible. Because you cannot provide an elevator here, there can be no public access to the second floor. You must insulate the building, heat and cool it, as well as provide some interpretive materials. This will be done at the expense of historic fabric, and perhaps, fly in the face of energy efficiency.

I am well aware of the budget restrictions facing the NPS, however, there are partners who wish to assist in building and maintaining a more appropriate visitor contact facility within the park. If the park steps away from Alternative 4 at this point there may be no opportunity in the future to build such a facility. A new contact station could be modest in size yet provide for a space for school groups and double as a research/study area.

Do not abandon the interpretation of core significance of the park for immediate economic concerns.

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Correspondence: 51

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Alternative 5 is OK but should provide a higher ratio of tree replacement, for example two new trees for one removed. All replacement trees should be native trees. Everything possible should be done to mitigate and filter stormwater runoff. Improvements should improve the absorption of stormwater on the entire site. Employ best practices in managing stormwater on site both during and after construction activities are completed. Include installing rain gardens throughout the site to absorb the rainwater. A buffer area of native grasses and other appropriate plantings should be added to stabilize the bank of the river and prevent erosion during higher than normal tidal or storm events. Rain gardens should also be installed all around the perimeter of the parking lots and along the edges of all trails and roads. Other best practices should be installed to make this project a net gain from the environmental standpoint.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 52

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: P O Box 1142 - Feature Documentary
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

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[REDACTED]

July 27, 2015

[REDACTED]

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my considered opinion that Alternative 4 is the only option for the following reasons:

This truly a long term solution that can benefit the GWMP region.

Area C is the least impactful to the recreational use of the park. (Area A being used so heavily for picnics, meetings, concerts, etc.)

Area C is the beginning of the Interpretive Trail: start at the beginning and bring full circle, this makes chronological sense.

Area C is large enough to build a building that would not only be the Interpretive Center, but also house all of the "mothballed" museum pieces and oral histories as well as, two or three offices, to be used as a Research Center providing greater long term functionality -

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greater interpretation. The research center could service the GWMP region and reduce stress at Arlington House.

Area C also pulls cars farther into the park eliminating congestion at the entrance. Plus, the room for updated restrooms in the area, replacing the facilities that are to be removed.

Addressing the other recommendations:

Alternative 5:

The NPS report states that this is a long term alternative, however, given the information in their own report, Alternative 4 seems to have the best long term potential while Alternative 5 seems like a stop gap measure.

The only positive is the rehab of NCO Quarters.

Too close to the entrance, CONGESTION! Does not encourage equal use of the park.

The office space in Pavilion A is not really usable: too small, difficult to access, etc.

NCO Quarters would only be able to hold one small display case from each era. The oral histories, which belong to NPS at no small cost, could not be utilized.

NOT the beginning of the Interpretive Trail. Visitors would have to back track, walk or drive to the beginning, or start in the middle. Not user friendly.

And, MORE parking at the entrance diminishes the esthetic of the Park.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

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

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Correspondence: 53

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Correspondence Text

I was born and grew up in Montana, not far from three iconic National Parks - Glacier, Yellowstone and Grand Teton. I treasure these spectacular places, but I also appreciate the many cultural National Park units that tell us so much about the history of our country.

Fort Hunt Park has a very important history ranging from the time it was a part of George Washington's River Farm through World War II, when it was a top-secret military intelligence center. This history is not being interpreted adequately. The National Park Service (NPS) is to be complimented for its past work to uncover and preserve the stories of PO Box 1142. These stories need to be interpreted, and the interviews be made available to serious researchers.

My husband and I are supporters of the goals of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI), the most important of which are to ensure that the NPS approves an ample state-of-the-art, interactive interpretive center and then to raise the funds to build, outfit and endow the center. We have also contributed to FFHPI events in the park.

I wholeheartedly support creating an interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

The draft SDP/EA states that the NPS prefers Alternative 5, which proposes using the NCO quarters and the space behind the stage of Pavilion A for interpretation of historic events. But there is only 600 square feet in the NCO quarters available for interpretation. Hence there would be no space to view videos, perform historical research or have a small store to sell educational materials. And the structure would not be able to accommodate school field trips or many of the people who attend the many large picnics in the park and also want to learn about the park's history.

I do not understand the basis for the proposal to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation. Permitted picnics are held in the pavilion 70-80 days annually, many with music that can be heard around the park. On such days visiting this space would be a negative experience. It is located about a city block from the NCO quarters, the other building

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recommended for interpretive purposes, and across the park access road. Going from one structure to the other would discourage learning about the totality of the park's rich history and would be really difficult for persons with disabilities. And the space is already storage space for many items used in and around Pavilion A. Also access to the stage and storage space is through stairs without railings. Use of the storage space behind the stage of Pavilion A should be deleted from the final SDP/EA.

Thus Alternative 4 with a new interpretive center in Area C is the only viable option.

Further, portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the outfitting of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the necessary funds by FFHPI, a commitment repeatedly made by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from further deterioration.

Finally, I am opposed to the following three proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5: the realignment of the loop road in two places; the removal of the Area E parking area; and the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D.

It is time for the NPS to place the same importance on interpreting the site's history as it places on having regular picnics in the park. The site belongs to all Americans, and there is enough space for both recreation and adequate interpretation.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 54

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

July 31, 2015

Superintendent Alexey Romero
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

These comments are also being submitted by regular mail

Dear Superintendent Romero:

On behalf of Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI), I submit the following comments on the July 1, 2015, draft National Park Service (NPS) Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Site Development Plan (SDP) for Fort Hunt Park (the Park). As you know, FFHPI is a consulting party and the official friends group for the Park. The draft EA provides a discussion of Alternative 4 and Alternative 5, along with the No-Action Alternative, and an evaluation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

FFHPI appreciates the efforts of the NPS to complete this long-running project during 2015 and to respond to public comments to previous alternatives. However, the draft EA does not achieve a balanced approach to a new SDP for the Park.

The historical importance of the park justifies, and FFHPI urges NPS to undertake, the establishment in Area C of a state-of-the-art facility of sufficient size and sophistication to educate visitors effectively about the events that have taken place there.

During World War II Fort Hunt (then known as PO Box 1142) served as a Top Secret military facility for interrogating significant enemy prisoners, evaluating intelligence, and managing secret communications with American prisoners in

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Europe and providing them with materials to help them escape. PO Box 1142 made unique and extraordinary contributions to the nation. Naval interrogators from P.O. Box 1142 uncovered key information from German U-boat commanders and other crew, including critical information on U-boat tactics, on the German acoustic torpedo and on the schnorchel breathing device. That information played a crucial role in winning the Battle of the Atlantic in May 1945. Army interrogators also developed key intelligence that helped shorten the war, both in Europe and Japan, and positioned the US to deal more effectively with the Soviets in the early phases of the Cold War through their role in "Operation Paperclip." The interrogators used psychology, not torture, to obtain information. A number of the interrogators were Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe; some of their families were sent to the Nazi death camps. Like the Tuskegee Airmen and the Japanese -American 442nd Regimental Combat Team, these Jewish soldiers served the US admirably and represent the triumph of the human spirit.

The American servicemen who served at PO Box 1142 deserve special recognition not only because of the key information that they obtained but also for the skill and humanity with which they engaged an enemy committed to racial hatred and the destruction of democracy.

Moreover, interpreting the PO Box 1142 story would enhance our national commemoration of World War II. A number of NPS units already tell the stories of both the U.S. victories and tragedies of World War II. They include Rosie the Riveter, World War II Valor in the Pacific, Manzanar, Tuskegee Airmen and the Manhattan Project sites.

Earlier aspects of the history of the Park property are also important and deserve recognition in an interpretive center, as noted in FFHPI's previous comments.

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 serious researchers can review and study the oral history interviews that the NPS conducted of over 70 persons, mainly PO Box 1142 veterans, but also several German POWs detained at PO Box 1142 and several American POWs. There should be a small store in the facility and adequate parking at or very near the facility. And it must be ADA compliant. While not part of NPS's current assessments, FFHPI reminds NPS that FFHPI has offered repeatedly to raise the money needed to finance construction of this type of facility and provide for an endowment.

The draft EA states that Alternative 5 is the NPS preferred alternative. While FFHPI supports the rehabilitation of the NCO Quarters to preserve the only residential military structure remaining from the end of the 19th century through the World War II period, Alternative 5 fails to provide an acceptable approach for the necessary interpretive activities. The NCO Quarters has very limited space (600 square feet) available to make it suitable for the type of interpretive facility FFHPI deserves. Moreover, the multi-story interior spaces there do not lend themselves to proper displays. The NCO Quarters would be able to hold little more than one small display from each era of the Park's history. It would be impossible to present the rich and often dramatic narratives of the events that occurred at PO Box 1142 and the people who served and passed through during World War II. ADA compliance would be difficult to achieve. Further, the NCO quarters could only accommodate a very limited number of people at one time. This would be a significant issue, particularly on days when groups of schoolchildren visit or when large picnics are held at Pavilion A and groups of picnickers would like to expand their knowledge of the site's history to their park experience. The draft SDP/EA estimates that over 300,000 people currently visit the park each year. It is quite reasonable to assume that a significant number of them would visit the NCO quarters.

As to the "office space" behind the stage in Pavilion A, that space is much too small for interpretive purposes and is needed for storage of equipment for public events such as the summer Sunday evening concerts and other recreational and park cleanup activities. The average number of days per year during 2012-2014 for which permits were issued for picnics in Pavilion A was 66 days. In 2014 over 80 picnic permits were issued! Many of the picnics in Pavilion A include loud music that can be heard throughout much of the park. On such days an acceptable visitor experience would be impossible behind the stage. Moreover, Pavilion A is about a city block from the NCO quarters and across the park access road. Going from one structure to the other to learn about the site's history would not work for persons with disabilities and would be challenging for families with small children. Finally, the draft SDP/EA calls for a certain number of parking spaces in Parking Lot A

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currently used for the big picnics to be set aside for the so called interpretive center behind the stage, making parking more difficult for picnic attendees at those picnics.

There is no credible rationale for proposing the space behind the stage of Pavilion A for interpretive purposes! It needs to be deleted from the final SDP/EA.

FFHIP wholeheartedly supports Alternative 4 for Area C because it would allow for the construction of a facility that would permit the interpretive activities needed to address the history of what happened on this Site, especially the PO Box 1142 experience. A facility of sufficient size and other capabilities is essential to telling these stories adequately. There would display space for interactive exhibits, a small theater in which to view relevant videos, a study room in which to review the oral history interviews and perhaps other archival material and a small store to sell related historical books and other memorabilia. Locating the facility in Area C would minimize impacts to the Park's main recreational facilities, yet allow it to be close to the principal prisoner enclosures during World War II, which are logical beginning and ending points for walking tours or an interpretive trail. Moreover, locating the interpretive center in Area C would support the type of balance NPS seeks among uses.

Both Alternatives 4 and 5 call for realignment of portions of the loop road, removal of Picnic Area E parking and restrooms, removal of a portion of Picnic Area D parking and the repurposing of the ball field in Area D. The draft EA does not adequately address the specific justification for these changes and their impact on visitor use and experience.

FFHPI believes that elimination of Picnic Area E parking and removal of the ball field and a portion of parking in Area D are not necessary for a proper historical interpretation and strongly recommends that they be removed from the final SDP. And FFHPI is also opposed to moving two portions of the loop road.

The draft EA states that Alternative 4 would have "moderate adverse cumulative impacts on visitor use and experience." Without the above three actions Alternative 4 should have only "minor adverse cumulative impacts" on public recreational opportunities. Therefore, FFHPI supports Alternative 4.

The Park maintenance facility was dismissed as a possible location for interpretive activities in the draft SDP/EA. However, you recently mentioned to me that much of the maintenance function has been or may be moved to another George Washington Memorial Parkway location outside the Park, thus making the facility or location available as an alternative for the interpretive function. Although replacement or reconfiguration of the existing maintenance structures may be costly, the repurposing of the facility space would appear to offer the proper interpretive benefits with minimal adverse impact on other environmental interests. FFHPI is interested in future consideration of the maintenance facility alternative if the location becomes available.

Alternative 5 and Alternative 4 are not mutually exclusive. Rehabilitation of the NCO Quarters for limited interpretive use is a logical first step towards a proper interpretive enhancement that cannot be achieved without construction of a facility to present the history effectively. This would preserve the NCO quarters, a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from further deterioration. And it could be used later to interpret life on the fort in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In summary, FFHPI recommends that portions of Alternatives 4 and 5 be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term and the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI to construct, provide exhibits for and endow the facility. FFHPI concludes that the storage space behind the stage of Pavilion A is unacceptable for interpretive use. Further, FFHPI does not support any of the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5: the realignment of the loop road in two places, the removal of the Area E parking area, the removal of the ball field in Area D and the removal of some of the parking spaces in Area D.

FFHPI cannot stress strongly enough the importance to the NPS national mission of preserving for the American people and presenting to future generations at the Park a proper account of what happened at PO Box 1142, as well as key information Correspondences - Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan EA - PEPC ID: 33621

on the park's other meaningful history.

Fort Hunt Park contains 157 acres; clearly this is ample space to preserve the recreational activities and to create the long-needed historical interpretation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the FFHPI on the draft SDP/EA for Fort Hunt Park.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

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

Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 55

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 08/01/2015 Date Received: 08/01/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I submitted comments during the scoping period in February 2015 for the Site Development Plan/Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) recommending strongly that the National Park Service (NPS) approve the creation of an interpretive center in Area C of Fort Hunt Park to tell the stories of the site's important role in American history.

I was surprised and disappointed to learn that the NPS selected Alternative 5, rather than Alternative 4, as its preferred alternative in the draft SDP/EA issued on July 1, 2015. Both the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI), the formal partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), and the National Parks Conservation Association supported approving an interpretive center in Area C. And FFHPI has publicly committed for several years to raising the funds to construct such a center.

Moreover, as a colleague and friend of the late Dr. George Mandel, who served at PO Box 1142 and aided the NPS so significantly in obtaining oral history interviews from other PO Box 1142 veterans, I am disheartened that the NPS is proposing to do so little in terms of historic interpretation.

From a process standpoint I was also surprised that the draft SDP/EA has not provided supporting documentation for its proposed decision to use the NCO quarters and the space behind the stage of Pavilion A as a combination interpretive center rather than approving a new full-scale interpretive center in Area C.

Regarding the NCO quarters, the draft SDP/EA states that 600 square feet are available for interpretation. This is too small a space to provide even superficial information on the important history of the park. It would not be possible to present the memorable and often dramatic narratives of the events that occurred at PO Box 1142 and the people who served and were interrogated there during World War II. Further, there would be no space to view videos, perform historical research on the oral history interviews and artifacts donated by PO Box 1142 veterans or have a small store to sell educational materials. And the structure would not be able to accommodate classes of schoolchildren on field trips or many of the people who attend the frequent large picnics in the park and also want to learn about the park's history. Compliance with the Americans with

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

Disabilities Act would also be difficult.

The proposal to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation does not make sense. There were 83 permitted picnics in the pavilion from the beginning of April through mid-October in 2014. Most of the picnics were on weekends, also the most likely times for visitation by those interested in the history of the park. Many of the picnics included live or taped music that could be heard throughout the park. I doubt that any visitors would venture near the space behind the stage at such times, and the picnickers would also not appreciate their presence. The pavilion is also located 0.1 mile from the NCO quarters and on the opposite side of the park access road. Going from one building to the other would be especially difficult for persons with disabilities and families with small children. And the space is already storage space for many items used in and around Pavilion A.

Use of the storage space behind the stage of Pavilion A should be deleted from the final SDP/EA.

Alternative 4 with a new interpretive center in Area C is the only viable option.

Further, the NPS could approve parts of both Alternatives 4 and 5 in the final SDP/EA; namely, the use of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C as the long term solution, conditional upon the raising of the necessary funds by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from further deterioration.

Finally, I am opposed to the following three proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

- the realignment of the loop road in two places
- the removal of the Area E parking area
- the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Moving two sections of the loop road will disturb the area, use scarce funds and accomplish little if anything. The other actions will interfere with recreational activities in the park, which is very important to local residents.

The rich and unique history of Fort Hunt Park deserves to be interpreted fully, from George Washington's time through World War II. The recreational opportunities of the park should also be preserved, but with 157 acres, the park has enough space for recreation and in-depth interpretation.

The NPS needs to do the right thing!

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 56

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 08/02/2015 Date Received: 08/02/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I strongly support creating an interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

Not far from where I live in California are Rosie the Riveter National Historic Site and Port Chicago National Memorial, two NPS sites that commemorate important events/activities during World War II. Highly significant activities also took place at Fort Hunt Park in World War II that helped win the war. Interpreting those activities in an appropriate manner is important in its own right, but will also add to the overall NPS interpretation of World War II on the home front.

Alternative 5 states of the draft SDP/EA states that there are 600 square feet available for interpretation in the NCO quarters. This is too little space. The World War II activities could not be adequately interpreted let alone the other important events that took place at the site from George Washington's time onward. There would be no space to view videos, perform historical research or have a small store to sell educational materials. And the structure would not be able to accommodate a significant number of people who attend the many large picnics in the park each year who also want to learn about the park's history. The same applies to field trips of classes from local schools.

The proposal in Alternative 5 to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation is ill advised for the following reasons:

- Large number of permitted picnics held there per year (83 in 2014), many with loud music, would interfere greatly with the visitor experience
- Distance between Pavilion A and NCO quarters of about a city block with the need to cross the park access road to get from one to the other would hamper visitors from getting the full interpretation experience and be particularly difficult with persons with disabilities
- The space is already storage space for items such as chairs, sound system equipment, volunteer vests and cleanup equipment used in and around Pavilion A.
- Access to the stage and storage space is through stairs without railings

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

- Some parking spaces now used for picnics would have to be set aside for interpretive purposes

The NPS should remove the space behind the stage of Pavilion A as an option for historic interpretation from the final SDP/EA. It does not make sense.

That leaves Alternative 4 with a new interpretive center in Area C as the only viable option.

Further, portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the conversion of the NCO quarters to an interim, limited interpretive center with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the necessary funds by FFHPI, a commitment repeatedly made by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from further deterioration. Currently, there is extensive peeling paint on the exterior.

Finally, I strongly recommend no further consideration be given to the following three proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5: realignment of the loop road in two places; removal of the Area E parking area; and removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D.

It is time for the NPS to provide for proper historic interpretation of Fort Hunt Park.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 57

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

This is to express my strong support for the approval of a new interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

I think that the National Parks are the best environmental idea that the United States ever had and that the NPS has an important mission to preserve, protect and interpret the more than 400 National Park units.

I have a personal relationship to Fort Hunt Park. I am a retired pathologist and served with H. George Mandel, MD, on a number of committees at the George Washington University Medical School, where I knew him well. He served as an Army interrogator at P.O. Box 1142 in World War II and interrogated Wernher von Braun at Fort Strong on Long Island in the Boston Harbor in 1945. He also assisted the NPS greatly on its project to identify PO Box 1142 veterans and to conduct oral history interviews with them. Dr. Mandel was part of both the important story of Fort Hunt in World War II and the subsequent activities to preserve that story.

I was very disappointed to learn that the National Park Service (NPS) selected Alternative 5, rather than Alternative 4, as its preferred alternative in the draft SDP/EA issued on July 1, 2015. Both the National Parks Conservation Association and the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI), the formal partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, supported the creation of a new interpretive center in Area C during the scoping process that the NPS held earlier this year. And FFHPI has publicly committed to raising the funds to construct such a center. I am at a loss to understand why the wishes of these key organizations were ignored in the draft SDP/EA.

Regarding Alternative 5, there is no justifiable rationale for using the space behind the stage in Picnic Pavilion A for interpretation. This is because loud, noisy picnics are held in the pavilion 70-80 days each year; the space in question is already used to store equipment used for those picnics and site cleanups; Picnic Pavilion A is a city block away from the NCO quarters, the other proposed interpretive space, and across the park access road making access difficult for persons with mobility limitations; parking spaces currently used for the picnics would have to be re-allocated for this space; and access to

the space is through stairs without handrails.

This proposal is simply a non-starter!

Further, the available space in the NCO quarters is too small to provide interpretation of the site's history on a long-term basis. The draft SDP/EA states that the structure has only 600 square feet available for interpretation. There would be no space to view videos, perform historical research or have a small store to sell educational materials. And it could only accommodate a limited number of people at one time. So it would be difficult if not impossible to accommodate school field trips. Further, the NPS estimates that more than 300,000 people visit the park each year. How could the NCO quarters be adequate for 50,000 visitors each year?

For the above reasons, I reiterate my strong support for the approval of a new interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4 in the final SDP/EA.


Further, portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the adaptation of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term with the construction of a modern, state-of-the-art, interpretive center of sufficient size in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the funds by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from further deterioration. It could then be used to interpret life at Fort Hunt in the early 20th century.

Finally, I am opposed to the following proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5: realignment of the loop road in two places, removal of the Area E parking area and removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

Fort Hunt Park is an important unit of the National Park system and deserves to be more than just a recreational area. With 157 acres in the park, there is enough space for recreation and significant historic interpretation.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932
Correspondence: 58

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 07/31/2015 Date Received: 08/03/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: E-mail
Notes:

Correspondence Text

July 31, 2015

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

Re: Fort Hunt Park Development Plan Environmental Assessment
Fairfax County, Virginia
DHR File No. 2011-0141
Received July 6, 2015

Dear Mr. Romero:

Thank you for your letter of July 1, 2015 offering us the opportunity to comment on the Fort Hunt Park Development Plan Environmental Assessment. We also appreciate receiving the Cultural Resources Technical Memorandum prepared in June 2015 by John W. Lawrence et al. of AECOM.

Based upon the documentation provided, we concur with the National Park Service's identification of Alternative 5 as the environmentally preferred alternative. We also agree that, while the proposed actions under alternative 5 would not have an adverse effect on previously identified archaeological sites, the ground disturbance associated with the construction of trails and a new parking area and the removal of picnic pavilions, parking areas, roadway and ball fields, vegetation clearing, as

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

well as the rehabilitation of the NCO quarters, does have the potential to affect previously unidentified archaeological sites. It is our understanding that most areas of ground disturbance associated with Alternative 5 have not been subject to an archaeological survey. We also understand that it will be necessary to evaluate park resources that may be potentially significant for their association with the Mission 66 program, including the picnic pavilions at Area A; the Area C and E restrooms and associated ornamental plantings; the loop road, parking areas and other elements of the circulation system; and the ballfields.

Further, we agree with the recommendations presented in the Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on Historic Properties. We encourage development of a Programmatic Agreement to address the identification and evaluation efforts likely to be necessary as well as mitigation measures proposed for potential adverse effects. Stipulations should include the opportunity for consulting parties in addition to the State Historic Preservation Office to review and comment on the design process at defined points as the plans progress. Provision should also be included for involvement of the public by incorporating public presentations to update interested parties on the plan's progress.

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

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Division of Resource Services and Review

c. Matthew Virta, Cultural Resource Manager

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 59

Author Information

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

E-mail:

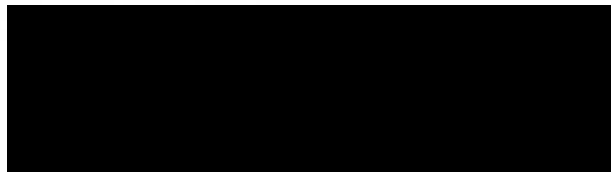
Correspondence Information

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Number of Signatures: 1	Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No	Type: Letter
Notes:	

Correspondence Text

See attached.

REC'd
8/31/52
CW



Ms. Claire Rozdilski, Acting Environmental Protection Specialist
Re: Draft Site Development Plan/Environmental Assessment for Ft Hunt

Dear Ms. Rozdilski,

As a Friend of Fort Hunt Park I am very disappointed to learn that Area C was not selected as the site for a visitors' center to present the important role of the park in World War II. The alternative, using the , space behind the picnic pavilion for an interpretive center with interactive exhibits, oral history interviews and other educational materials doesn't seem suitable. It doesn't have enough space and is constantly used for so many other recreational activities.

Ft. Hunt Park is a beautiful park with space for all sorts of recreational activities, and it is a real treasure for the community, but it is also a historical site. Having it's history highlighted can make the park so much more interesting to both adults and young people. I do hope that

you will reconsider your selection and let the visitors center be located in Area C.

Very truly yours,




PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 60

Author Information

Keep Private: No

Name: Sandy Stallman

Organization: Fairfax County Park Authority  Official Rep.

Organization Type: C - County Government

Address: 12055 Government Center Parkway
Suite 907
Fairfax, VA 22035
USA

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

Status: New	Park Correspondence Log:
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Correspondence Text

See attached



Fairfax County Park Authority

12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927 • Fairfax, VA 22035-5500

703-324-8700 • Fax: 703-324-3974 • www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

28 July 2015

Fort Hunt Park SDP/EA
Attn: Claire Rozdilski
National Park Service
700 George Washington Memorial Parkway
c/o Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Re: Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA)

Dear Ms. Rozdilski,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA). The Park Authority staff has identified the following potential impacts to County park needs and natural and cultural resources from the two alternative concepts.

Park Needs:

Under both alternative concepts, a visitor service zone is proposed to provide orientation and interpretation services. Under Alternative 4, the proposed visitor service zone would be located in Area C which would reduce the number of people accommodated by reservations for Picnic Pavilion C with the potential for removal. The reduction or removal of picnic facilities in Fort Hunt Park may increase demand for group picnic facility use in County parks or other locations. Under Alternative 5, the proposed visitor service zone would be located in the Non-Commissioned Officer's (NCO) Quarters and would be supported by Picnic Pavilion A which would reduce the number of people accommodated by reservations at that picnic pavilion. It is likely that the impact on the number of people accommodated by pavilions in Alternative 5 is less than the impact in Alternative 4, however.

Under both alternative concepts, the ballfield in Area D will be removed. The ballfields at Fort Hunt Park are not maintained to National Park Service or Park Authority recreation field standards for scheduled league play and are more aligned as an accessory use with their respective nearby picnic pavilion. The loss of the Area D ballfield, which reduces the benefits to groups renting the Picnic Pavilion D, should be avoided.



If accommodations and/or alternative formats are needed, please call (703) 324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the registration deadline or event. TTY (703) 803-3354.

Under both alternative concepts, a chronological interpretive pedestrian trail providing a walking history of the park is proposed. This trail would meet the George Washington Memorial Parkway's visitor experience goal and the demand for related-recreational uses.

Cultural Resources Impact:

The Park Authority acknowledges that the National Park Service plans to evaluate each project identified within the site development plan for potential impacts to archeological resources and will coordinate with the VDHR, SHPO, and the Fairfax County Parks Department in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

At the completion of any cultural resource studies, the Park Authority requests that the applicant provide two copies (one hard copy, one digital copy) of the archaeology report as well as field notes, photographs, and artifacts to the Park Authority's Resource Management Division (Attention: Liz Crowell) within 30 days of completion of the study. Materials can be sent to 2855 Annandale Road Falls Church, VA 20110 for review and concurrence. For artifact catalogues, please include the database in Access TM format, as well as digital photography, architectural assessments, including line drawings. If any archaeological, architectural or other sites are found during cultural resources assessments, the applicant should update files at VDHR, using the VCRIS system.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review and comment on this plan. As resources allow, and the plan is implemented, we would encourage National Park Service to continue to seek input from the Fairfax County Park Authority.

Sincerely,



Sandy Stallman, AICP
Manager, Park Planning Branch
Planning and Development Division

cc: Dave Bowden, Director, Planning and Development Division
Cindy Walsh, Director, Resource Management Division

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 61

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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

Correspondence Text

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park that was issued on July 1, 2015.

I recommend strongly that the NPS approve the creation of an interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final SDP.

I have lived most of my life in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area and visited many of the National Park units in this area. My family and I have also visited a number of the iconic National Parks throughout the US. The NPS is directed by law to preserve and protect all of its units. It is also charged with interpreting the natural and cultural history of those important places.

I recently learned about the unique and significant history of Fort Hunt Park, especially in World War II. Naval and Army interrogators from P.O. Box 1142, the top-secret military intelligence installation at the site of the present park, developed key information from German U-boat commanders and German generals that played a crucial role in winning the Battle of the Atlantic and ending the war sooner. The intelligence gained by Army interrogators also enabled our country be more effective in the early phases of the Cold War.

In addition to its key role in World War II Fort Hunt Park was a part of George Washington's River Farm, a fort constructed to protect Washington, D.C. from naval attack in the late 1890s, a camping site for World War I veterans during the three Depression-era Bonus Marches, the training and camping site of an early African American ROTC unit and a Civilian Conservation Corps camp from 1933-1942.

Very little of this important history is currently conveyed to visitors to the park. What a shame!

It is a positive step that the NPS has issued a draft SDP/EA that includes interpretation of the history of Fort Hunt Park as a goal. But I am confused and concerned by the selection of Alternative 5 as the preferred solution.

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

Alternative 5 states that there are 600 square feet available for interpretation in the NCO quarters. This is too little space. The World War II activities could not be adequately interpreted in this limited space. And a visitor would learn very little about the other important history of the place. There would be no space to view history videos, perform historical research on the oral history interviews that the NPS conducted with PO Box 1142 veterans or have a small store. If more than 10 - 15 people wanted to visit the center at one time, it would not be feasible to have a good visitor experience. And how could the NCO quarters accommodate field trips of classes of children from local schools?

The proposal in Alternative 5 to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation is ill advised for the following reasons:

- The large number of permitted picnics held there per year, many with loud music, would interfere greatly with the visitor experience (There were 83 picnics in 2014 between April 1 and mid October.)
- Picnickers in Pavilion A would not appreciate other visitors climbing to the stage area when performances are underway
- Pavilion A and NCO quarters are about a city block apart and across the park access road from one another. This would make visitation of both structures more burdensome for persons with disabilities
- The space is already storage space for items such as chairs, sound system equipment, and other equipment used in and around Pavilion A.
- Access to the stage and storage space is not ADA-compliant
- Some parking spaces now used for picnics would have to be set aside for interpretive purposes, which would not be popular with the many picnickers

There is no sound rationale for retaining the space behind the stage of Pavilion A as an option for historic interpretation in the final SDP/EA. It should be removed from further consideration.

A new interpretive center in Area C as proposed in Alternative 4 is the only viable option.

Further, portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the conversion of the NCO quarters to an interim, limited interpretive center with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the necessary funds by FFHPI, a commitment repeatedly made by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters from further deterioration. Currently, there is extensive peeling paint on the exterior of this building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places,

Finally, I strongly recommend that the following four proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

- realignment of the loop road in two places
- removal of the Area E parking area
- removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D
- removal of up to 23 trees to provide a line of sight from Battery Robinson.


In particular, I object to the fourth action. The guns of Fort Hunt were never fired for military action. By World War I Fort Hunt was obsolete for coastal defense purposes. Removing up to 23 trees that provide habitat for wildlife and are part of the natural resources of the park so that someone can see the Potomac River from Battery Robinson is ill conceived and ecologically unsound.

It is time for the NPS to do the right thing and assure that the important history of Fort Hunt Park is fully interpreted.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 62

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: Scott A. Surovell
Organization: Commonwealth of VA House of Delegates ;  Member
Organization Type: S - State Government
Address: PO Box 289
Mount Vernon, VA 22121
USA
E-mail: DelSSurovell@house.virginia.gov

Correspondence Information

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Number of Signatures: 1	Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No	Type: Letter
Notes:	

Correspondence Text

See attached



SCOTT A. SUROVELL
STATE DELEGATE

POST OFFICE BOX 289
MOUNT VERNON, VIRGINIA 22121

FORTY-FOURTH DISTRICT

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
COUNTIES, CITIES & TOWNS
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
MILITIA, PUBLIC SAFETY & POLICE

Rec'd 8/3/15
3:51 pm
CW

July 29, 2015

by first class mail

Fort Hunt Park SDP/EA
Attn: Claire Rozdilski
National Park Service
700 George Washington Memorial Parkway
c/o Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Re: Comments Regarding Fort Hunt Park

Dear Ms. Rozdilski:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer public comments regarding the Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan Environmental Assessment.

First, I would like to note that the new proposal is a massive improvement over the National Park Service (NPS) initial proposal. I appreciate the NPS' willingness to go back to the drawing board and look at this project a second time. It truly appears that the community was heard from in this process.

Fort Hunt Park is not only a national asset, but it is also a treasured community assets here in Mt. Vernon. It is a community meeting place, a picnic site for families, organizations and businesses, a park where people meet and play, and a recreational facility. I taught my kids how to ride bikes on the loop. It is also a historical site. All of these needs must be balanced.

In terms of historical interpretation, I have repeatedly told park staff that Fort Hunt Park also served a site for local schools. Many children were educated in temporary buildings on park property while our area was experiencing a housing boom and there were inadequate facilities. I have seen zero mention of that in any materials. While I recognize that Fort Hunt Park is a national asset, it also has local connections which should be honored in its history.

I would hope that the existing historical structures could be made more accessible to the public. When I was kid, we climbed on many buildings back in the woods, but they were not really accessible to the public. The guard tower has always been closed. It is my hope that they can opened and fully enjoyed, interpreted and appreciated.

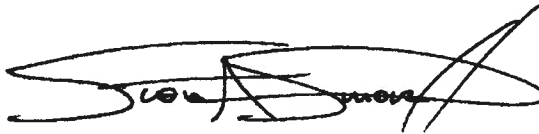
It is also my impression that the NPS hopes to increase visitors to the park by enhancing the historical displays. Given the park's proximity to the Mt. Vernon Bike Trail, I would hope that improvements would include segregated bike lanes at the entrance and up to the one-way segment of the loop along with consideration of bike safety as the existing point where the Mt. Vernon Bike Trail crosses the exit from the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

I am also pleased that NPS proposes to maintain one-way circulation, a pedestrian bike lane, and several of the picnic pavilions. I am concerned about Alternative Four, due to the proposed removal of picnic pavilions without any replacement pavilions being constructed. That will place even more demand on the existing facilities. Today, pavilions must be reserved six months ahead of schedule due to the demand. I would hope that NPS might consider a "no net loss" of pavilions strategy by constructing new pavilions in other less historically sensitive areas.

Lastly, it is my hope that the NPS use this opportunity to improvement storm water runoff from the existing park. When the current improvements were constructed, no provision for storm water runoff mitigation was made. The park has numerous impervious surfaces which should be mitigated. These could include buffer areas to stabilize the bank along Potomac River shoreline and rain gardens along existing parking lots, and rain barrels or cisterns on all buildings including existing picnic pavilions.

With these considerations, Fort Hunt Park can remain an asset for all to fully enjoy over the next century. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment and for listening.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott A. Surovell", with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the name.

Delegate Scott A. Surovell
44th District

cc: U.S. Senator Timothy Kaine
U.S. Senator Mark Warner
Congressman Donald Beyer, Jr.
Supevisor Gerald Hyland

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Correspondence: 63

Author Information

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

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Correspondence Text

I support creating an interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

My family has had a longstanding relationship with Fort Hunt Park. My husband's father, Colonel Blair Henderson, was the commander of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp NP-6 from 1938-1939. In June 1939 he led the King and Queen of England and Eleanor Roosevelt on a tour of the camp. President Roosevelt stayed in the car. Until his dying day, my father-in-law thought that the reason that the President did not go on the tour was that he was angry about something. This demonstrated how little the public knew about Roosevelt's disabilities. My husband allowed the NPS to copy photos of the visit, as well as of a visit by Anthony Eden, to enhance the interpretation of the history of Fort Hunt Park.

Also my husband has been active in the Boy Scouts for many years and has attended many scouting events at the park, as have our grandsons. We also go to the summer Sunday evening concert series.

In recent years my husband has been on the Advisory Council of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI), and we support its mission through sponsorship of events and volunteer work.

I do not support the proposal in Alternative 5 to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation. Picnics are held in that pavilion two to three times per week from April through much of October, and many include loud music. On such days a visitor's experience in such space would be greatly diminished, if not impossible. Pavilion A is located 0.1 mile from the NCO quarters, and one needs to cross the park access road to get there. Going from one structure to the other would be really difficult for persons with disabilities. This limited space is already storage space for items used in and around Pavilion A.

I strongly recommend deleting the use of the space behind the stage from the final SDP/EA.

The draft SDP/EA states that the NCO quarters has only 600 square feet available for interpretation. This is insufficient space to interpret the site's extensive history, including that of CCC Camp NP-6. Nor would there be space to view videos or conduct historical research. Moreover, the building would not be able to accommodate field trips of classes from local schools.

Alternative 4 with a new interpretive center in Area C should be the choice in the final SDP/EA.

I also support having an interpretive trail so that visitors can learn where various buildings that no longer exist were located and the history associated with those buildings. The start of the trail would be located next to the interpretive center in Area C.

In the final SDP/EA, the NPS could approve portions of both Alternative A and B. The NCO quarters could be made into an interim, limited interpretive center, and a substantive interpretive center approved for Area C as the long-term solution. We know that one of the key goals of FFHPI is the raising of the funds for such a center.

Finally, I am opposed to the following three proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

1. The realignment of the loop road in two places
2. The removal of the Area E parking area
3. The removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

I hope that the NPS will consider my comments carefully.

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Correspondence: 64

Author Information

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

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Correspondence Text

Recently I submitted comments on the July 1, 2015, draft National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park behalf of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI). Those comments represent the consensus of the FFHPI Board of Directors. The main recommendation is that "a state-of-the-art facility of sufficient size and sophistication to educate visitors effectively" about the events that have taken place at Fort Hunt Park should be located in Area C.

At this time I am submitting my own comments as a citizen of the United States and a very committed supporter of the National Park System. These comments support those of FFHPI but also provide more historical perspective as well as my own opinions.

FEBRUARY 2015 COMMENTS

In February 2015 I submitted personal comments on Concept Alternatives 4 and 5 issued during the new scoping process for the SDP/EA. In those comments I expressed "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 also stated that the "facilities and locations proposed in Alternative Concept 5 are not appropriate to fulfill a visitor services function." And I provided a number of reasons why a combination of the NCO quarters and space behind the stage of Pavilion A would not be appropriate for the interpretation of the multiple important uses of the site from George Washington's time through the end of World War II.

DISAPPOINTMENT AT JULY 1, 2015, DRAFT NPS SDP/EA; FFHPI ACTIVITIES

I was both surprised and deeply disappointed that the NPS chose Alternative 5 as its preferred option for interpretation in the July 1 draft SDP/EA. I still cannot understand the reasons for this proposed decision based on the information provided in the

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draft document. As a federal government retiree, I know that the federal agencies are required to provide adequate justification for their decision-making processes.

Further, the NPS rejection of the FFHPI comments in favor of an interpretive center in Area C is very concerning to me. As the formal partner of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), FFHPI has tried to work closely with GWMP staff since its inception in November 2012. FFHPI paid in August 2013 for an arrowhead to be placed on Pavilion A. At that time there was nothing to identify the park as a National Park unit other than small lettering on the signage by the artillery batteries and battery commander's station. FFHPI also bought some new sound system equipment to enhance the Sunday evening summer concert series in 2013. It has staged two Fort Hunt Park Community Days that have included significant cleanup activities in the park and directed T.C. Williams International Academy students in a very productive cleanup on April 24, 2015.

In the summer of 2014 FFHPI representatives were allowed access to some of the oral history interviews conducted by GWMP staff of Po Box 1142 veterans six to nine years ago. This only occurred after a GWMP staff member sent an independent radio show producer interested in doing story on PO Box 1142 copies of some of the interviews, as well as transcripts of at least four interviews. Since 2013 FFHPI has urged GWMP staff to obtain the missing releases for some of the interviews and to see that peer-reviewed transcripts of all the interviews are prepared and then made available to serious researchers. FFHPI is pleased that GWMP has signed a contract to perform this work, and FFHPI will be contributing funds to the contract, as well as performing peer reviews of some of the transcripts. Superintendent Romero is to be congratulated for supporting this activity.

Given the activities of FFHPI to enhance Fort Hunt Park's natural and recreational resources and to preserve the historically important material relating to PO Box 1142, the rejection of the FFHPI position came as an unexpected shock. As noted above, the draft SDP/EA did not provide any clarification for the reasons for the proposed decision to accept Alternative 5. I for one had believed that the FFHPI position would weigh more heavily in the decision-making process of the NPS.

Further, the National Parks Conservation Association also supported an interpretive center in Area C in its February 2015 comments. This organization has been advocating for National Parks for 96 years and believes, like FFHPI, that Fort Hunt Park belongs to the nation and deserves to have appropriate interpretation.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE JULY 1, 2015 DRAFT SDP/EA

Moreover, from a historical perspective the initial draft Fort Hunt Park site development plan issued by the NPS in 2011 included a new visitor facility with a footprint of no larger than 6,400 square feet in three of the four action alternatives. Unfortunately, each of those alternatives also called for the removal of three of the four picnic pavilions. One even specified the removal of Pavilion A, built as a part of Mission 66. As expected the local community was up in arms at the prospect of losing the picnic pavilions, an integral part of the park for over 50 years. I attended the crowded September 2011 open meeting in Pavilion A and witnessed the near universal opposition to removing the pavilions. I agreed that such proposed actions were unwarranted.

Although that plan was withdrawn, Alternative Concepts 2, 3 and 4 that the NPS issued in June 2012 all included a visitor contact station, differing only that the contact stations would be located in three different areas of the park.

So now four years later, and at significant cost (the \$250,000 obtained by Congressman Moran plus the costs of the current process), the NPS is proposing to use somehow a combination of the NCO quarters and the space behind the stage of Pavilion A as an interpretive center. This is an unfortunate retreat from the NPS position of two and four years ago.

MY COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE 5

The NPS has determined that only 600 square feet are available for interpretation in the NCO quarters. In such limited space the World War II activities could not be adequately interpreted let alone the other important events that took place at the site

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from George Washington's time onward. There would be no space for a small room in which to view videos, no separate quiet area for researchers to view and compare the oral history interviews and no space for a small store to sell books and other educational material. There would not be enough room to accommodate more than 10-15 people at one time. So people attending big picnics who might also want to learn about the park's meaningful history might have to wait in line or forego having the experience. Field trips of classes from local schools would also be very difficult, if at all possible.

The proposal to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation is ill advised for numerous reasons, including the following:

- Each year a large number of permitted picnics are held in Pavilion A. There were 83 in 2014 between April 1 and mid-October. The average for the same period for the years 2012-2014 was 70. Many of these picnics have loud live or recorded music. I have photographs of the music arrangements from three picnics on weekends this summer. At such times how could a visitor to the space behind the stage have any kind of positive visitor experience?
- The space is already storage space for items such as chairs, sound system equipment, volunteer vests and cleanup equipment that are used in and around Pavilion A. It is not practicable to store them elsewhere.
- Access to the stage and storage space is through four sets of stairs none of which have railings.
- The distance between Pavilion A and NCO quarters is 0.1 mile, and the structures are on opposite sides of the park access road. Visiting both structures would be difficult with persons with disabilities and families with very small children.
- Some parking spaces now used for picnics would have to be re-programmed for interpretive purposes. Picnickers at large picnics looking for scarce parking spaces would not appreciate having fewer spaces available.

The NPS should remove the space behind the stage of Pavilion A as an option for historic interpretation from the final SDP/EA. It does not make sense!

Finally, the assertion in the draft SDP/EA that Alternative Concept 5 provides meaningful interpretive benefits is at best misleading and at worst insulting to the veterans who served at PO Box 1142, the CCC Camp NP-6 volunteers and leaders and the members of the African-American ROTC company that trained at the site.

FORT HUNT PARK NEEDS A MODERN, INTERACTIVE INTERPRETIVE CENTER

Approval of a new state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C, as proposed in Alternative 4, is the only realistic option in the July 1, 2015, draft SDP/EA.

I offer two examples of the importance of creating a state-of-the-art full-scale interpretation center and rejecting Alternative 5. The first is based upon information I learned from viewing the NPS oral history interviews of John Gunther Dean and Rudy Pins. Both mentioned Gustav Hilger, a high-ranking German official, who spent time at PO Box 1142 after the end of World War II. Hilger lived for many years in Russia, serving part of that time in the German Embassy in Moscow. He served as the translator for Joachim von Ribbentrop during the negotiations with Stalin and Molotov for the non-aggression pact signed by Germany and Russia in 1939. After Germany attacked Russia, Hilger worked for von Ribbentrop in Germany. Hilger never joined the Nazi party, but he co-signed documents that sent Jews to their deaths. After the war Hilger was considered an extremely important expert on the Soviet Union. Had that not been the case, he might have been tried for war crimes at Nuremberg. Hilger served for several years as a consultant to the CIA before returning to West Germany to retire.

Rudy Pins, a German Jew who came to the US as one of the One Thousand Children and whose parents were killed in a Nazi death camp, interrogated Hilger at PO Box 1142. Pins went on to serve as an interrogator at Nuremberg where he interrogated Hermann Goering. Later he worked for the CIA and maintained a relationship with Hilger, taking him on trips to the countryside on weekends.

The fact that Pins was able to work with and relate to Hilger represents the triumph of the human spirit over enormous adversity. Much of the above information would not have been available without access to the oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 servicemen.

The second example pertains to Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp NP-6, which was located at Fort Hunt. Colonel Blair Henderson was the commander of NP-6 from 1938-1939. In June 1939 he led a tour of the camp for the King and Queen of England and Eleanor Roosevelt after their visit to Mount Vernon Estate. President Roosevelt remained in the car. Until his dying day, Henderson thought that the reason that the President did not go on the tour was that he was angry about something. This demonstrated how little the public knew about Roosevelt's disabilities. This information was conveyed to GWMP staff by Colonel (ret) Russell Henderson, the son of Colonel Henderson, who shared photos of the visit with them to enhance the interpretation of the history of Fort Hunt Park.

The above information should be conveyed in an interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park as it contributes to understanding about important events in our country. There exists significantly more new information about PO Box 1142 and the other history that took place at the site that could be interpreted in a modern, interactive interpretive center of sufficient size and sophistication.

One of the main reasons that FFHPI was created was to help ensure that an interpretive center was constructed in Fort Hunt Park. Since its inception a key FFHPI goal has been to raise the funds to construct, outfit and endow such a center.

The NPS should also consider approving portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 in the final SDP/EA; namely:

- the conversion of the NCO quarters to an interim, limited interpretive center
- the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the necessary funds by FFHPI.

This would preserve the NCO quarters from further deterioration, which is important since it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, there is extensive peeling paint on the exterior, as well as the need for numerous repairs.

Finally, I strongly recommend no further consideration be given to the following four proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5

- realignment of the loop road in two places
- removal of the Area E parking area
- removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D
- removal of up to 23 trees to provide a line of sight from Battery Robinson.

Moving sections of the loop road will disturb the area, be costly and be to no benefit unless both funding exists for performing archeological studies of the area and significant archeological remains from Enclosures A and B of PO Box 1142 are found. The funds would be much better spent on interpreting the site's known significant history.

Removal of parking spaces in Areas D and E and repurposing of the ball field in Area D will decrease the recreational benefits of Fort Hunt Park. Although not stated in the draft SDP/EA, it appears that these proposed actions are for archeological purposes as well. My above comments on assuring interpretation of known events before expending funding for uncovering possible archeological remnants of unknown significance apply to these proposed activities as well.

The guns of Fort Hunt were never fired for military purposes, and they were shipped to Europe in World War I. In fact, by World War I Fort Hunt was obsolete for coastal defense purposes. Removing up to 23 trees that provide habitat for wildlife and are part of the natural resources of the park so that someone can see the Potomac River from Battery Robinson is of marginal utility and ecologically unsound. To get an unobstructed view of the Potomac River, they can cross the river and visit Fort Washington. Fort Hunt was built to coordinate coastal defense with Fort Washington.

FINAL CONSIDERATION

The July 1, 2015, draft SDP/EA expressly eliminated consideration of the use of the maintenance facility in Fort Hunt Park for interpretive purposes. However, Superintendent Romero mentioned to me about a month ago that the maintenance facility

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might be considered as an alternate site for an interpretive center as a number of the uses of that facility were being phased out. At the July 7 open meeting, Superintendent Romero was less supportive of that possibility, telling me that some of the maintenance uses needed to be retained for the southern part of the parkway and that there may be stability problems with the structure.

In my comments above I did not raise the possibility of using the maintenance facility or part of the maintenance area as the site of the interpretive center based upon the statement to the contrary in the draft SDP/EA. However, there are a number of benefits that could be gained by use of this site, if it were feasible. They are the following:

- It is already disturbed space.
- The area is close to Batteries Sater and Robinson and to the NCO quarters, which would add to the overall interpretive function and experience.
- There is a separate road to the facility so the effects on traffic in other parts of the park would be negligible.
- There is sufficient space for parking.
- If the maintenance facility structure is stable or could be stabilized, it could be used in creating the interpretive center building. If not, a new structure could be constructed.
- There is room for residual maintenance activities.
- The current picnicking facilities would not be affected.
- Visitors to an interpretive center would not be traveling to areas of the park that are close to nearby residences.

Local residents who understand the historic importance of Fort Hunt Park but do not want the recreational activities significantly diminished could support this option.

Before the NPS issues the final SDP/EA, I request that it consider the use of the current maintenance area as an additional option. I am more than willing to support using this site if it were feasible. Perhaps, a finding of no significant impact could be made.


The NPS needs to act decisively to see that the rich and unique history of Fort Hunt Park is interpreted fully. The stories of World War II and the other eras of its history are important in their own right, but will also add to the overall NPS interpretation of those periods.

The centennial of the Organic Act that created the NPS is little more than a year away. Approving an interpretive center for the park would be an important activity to mark the centennial.

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Correspondence: 65

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: Coast Defense Study Group ;  Member
Organization Type: L - Non-Governmental
Address: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

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Dear Claire,

The Coast Defense Study Group (CDSG.org) is a national group dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of historic coastal defenses. I'm the CDSG representative for the Mid-Atlantic Region. We have commented on the NPS plans for Fort Hunt in the past and have signed up to be a consulted party in development of new infrastructure and uses at Fort Hunt. Shawn Welsh, one of our members, is very involved at Gateway National Recreation Area and Sandy Hook NPS. He has recently reached out to you to be also added to your mailing list (I'm already on your email distribution list). Please add Shawn as very knowledgeable about SDP/EA process as he is a retired Army colonel that dealt with Army installations.

The CDSG primary interest at Fort Hunt is the six remaining coast artillery structures - four emplacements, one tower, and one quarters building. We support efforts to preserve and interpret these structures. The NPS various development plans do not (as far as I can understand) do not effect these structures. We do support the idea of clearing the viewshed for Battery Robinson (and perhaps Battery Sayer) to the Potomac River. I visited Fort Hunt last weekend and it appeared that the park has not change since last visited. We have a CDSG Fund that makes grants to promote the goals of the CDSG. Please keep us mind if you Fort Hunt could use funding.

Regards,

PS I have a PPT presentation on the military history of Fort Hunt that develop for a training session for the rangers on Fort Hunt. I gave this training several years ago at your Turkey Run headquarters. Happy to do it again if you an interest.

[REDACTED]

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Correspondence: 66

Author Information

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

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

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This is to inform the National Park Service (NPS) that I strongly support a decision by the NPS to approve an interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

I have enjoyed visiting National Parks for a number of years. I am a frequent visitor to Dyke Marsh National Preserve and a member of the Board of the Friends of Dyke Marsh. I have also volunteered at several events in Fort Hunt Park sponsored by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc (FFHPI). I support the FFHPI goal of raising the funds for constructing a substantial interactive interpretive center in the park.

The draft SDP/EA released on July 1, 2015, states that the NPS prefers Alternative 5, which proposes using the NCO quarters and the space behind the stage of Pavilion A for interpretation of historic events. I was surprised by this initial decision as both FFHPI and the National Parks Conservation Association submitted comments during the scoping period earlier this year supporting an interpretive center in Area C.

Regarding the NCO quarters, only 600 square feet are available for interpretation. Hence there would be no space to view videos, perform historical research on the oral history interviews and artifacts donated by PO Box 1142 veterans or have a small store to sell educational materials. And the structure would not be able to accommodate classes of schoolchildren on field trips or many of the people who attend the frequent large picnics in the park and also want to learn about the park's history.

What is the basis for the proposal to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation? Permitted picnics are held in the pavilion 70-80 days annually, many with loud music. On such days visiting this space would be a daunting experience. It is located about 0.1 mile from the NCO quarters and across the park access road. Going from one building to the other would lead to a disjointed visitor experience and be especially difficult for persons with disabilities. And the space is already storage space for many items used in and around Pavilion A. Also access to the stage and storage space is through

stairs without railings.

Use of the storage space behind the stage of Pavilion A should be deleted from the final SDP/EA.

I conclude that Alternative 4 with a new interpretive center in Area C is the only viable option.

Further, portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the outfitting of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the necessary funds by FFHPI, a commitment repeatedly made by FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from further deterioration.

Finally, I am opposed to the following three proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5: the realignment of the loop road in two places; the removal of the Area E parking area; and the removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D.

The citizens of this nation deserve to have the important history of Fort Hunt Park interpreted fully, from George Washington's time to the present. The recreational opportunities of the park should be preserved, but with 157 acres, the park has enough space for recreation and in-depth interpretation.

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Correspondence: 67

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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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 (July 2015).

I applaud the National Park Service for its efforts to recognize the varied 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 and to strengthening the interpretative programs for these resources.

The document states: "The NPS places a strong emphasis on avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potentially adverse environmental impacts." This plan does not appear to achieve that.

Given the dearth of and the diminished natural resources in the area, the minimal biodiversity, the poor water quality of area streams and the Potomac River and the poor air quality, changes at Fort Hunt Park should be a net environmental gain.

Trees

In terms of destroying trees to provide historic sightlines from Battery Robinson, I assume that when Native Americans used the property and when Captain John Smith sailed by, there were forests, no fort and no sightline to the river. Your plan could interpret that era and retain and plant trees. NPS will never replicate the historic conditions 100%, specially since the history includes multiple time periods, Native Americans, George Washington's farm, the Spanish-American War, the CCC camp and the World War II camp. Given the loss in ecological services by tree loss, it is difficult to justify this intentional destruction of 23 trees.

Fort Hunt Park has an active bald eagle nest. Few sites are available for bald eagles along the river. Your plan should not destroy the existing site or threaten it. NPS, a conservation agency, should be supporting the bald eagle's recovery.

Fairfax County does not meet its tree canopy goals. NPS should help ensure a "pipeline" of trees. Any trees lost under your plan should be accompanied by a replacement of two trees for every tree destroyed. Tree plantings should be monitored for several years to ensure success.

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Stormwater

NPS should set the standard. Your plan should include a comprehensive stormwater runoff management plan, both during construction, post-construction and day-to-day operations. Your plan should retain stormwater on site and use low-impact approaches like green roofs, rain gardens, vegetated swales, impervious surfaces and rain barrels. Fort Hunt Park be a partner with Fairfax County and should help improve the quality of degraded area streams and the Potomac River.

Given the dearth of healthy natural resources in the area, the dense development and the need for more natural connectivity, I urge NPS to do the following:

- - locate any new facilities in already disturbed areas.
- - avoid adverse impacts to all rare, threatened and endangered species.
- - factor in vehicular emissions from increased visitation. The plan does not demonstrate how NPS concluded on page 36 that "the proposed actions are not intended to increase the amount [sic] of visitors and corresponding number of vehicle trips to the park, nor would they create a new permanent source of emissions." It is unfortunate that NPS dismissed air quality considerations in an area that does not meet current federal ozone standards. More interpretive services would likely increase visitation and more polluting vehicles, it appears. 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. Less traffic would also enhance the interpretation of the history of the park.

I 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) and other historic sites to create a hop-on, hop-off bus for visitors touring sites in the Mount Vernon area.

- - Replace some of the grassy areas with native groundcover or other native vegetation to enhance habitat and retain stormwater onsite.
- - Develop interpretative programs to explain how native Americans used the area and moved among the areas along the Potomac River, including the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve.
- - Enhance interpretative programs that help visitors better understand the natural resources of the river, the parkway, the park and the larger area and the importance of natural connectivity.
- - Work with neighboring property owners to encourage uses compatible with the restoration and conservation of natural resources.
- - Continue to require dogs and pets to be on a leash.
- - Consider requiring users to take out all of their trash.

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Correspondence: 68

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 08/04/2015 Date Received: 08/04/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
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Correspondence Text

I strongly support approval of an interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

I am a retired Lieutenant Colonel and supporter of Fort Hunt Park. I first learned about its important military history nearly two years ago and recently learned significantly more about its key role in World War II. I attended Armed Forces Family Day at the park on May 9, 2015, which coincided with the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Battle of the Atlantic, to which Naval interrogators from PO Box 1142 contributed greatly.

Alternative 5 is not adequate for interpreting Fort Hunt Park's rich and unique history. The NCO quarters has only 600 square feet available for interpretation, which is insufficient space. There would be no space to view historical videos, perform research or have a small store. The structure would not be able to accommodate more than 10-15 people at one time. That would eliminate field trips of classes from local schools, an important audience for the future of National Parks.

The proposal to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation in conjunction with the NCO quarters is not realistic. Permitted picnics are held in the pavilion 70-80 days each year, many with loud music. Visiting this space on those days would lead to a negative experience. Pavilion A is located about a city block from the NCO quarters and across the park access road. Going from one structure to the other would be a challenge for persons with disabilities. This space is already storage space for items used in and around Pavilion A. Also access to the stage and storage space is through stairs without railings. Consideration of the use of this space should be deleted from the final SDP/EA.

Approval of a new state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C, as proposed in Alternative 4, is the only realistic option in the July 1, 2015, draft SDP/EA.

I also believe that parts of Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the development of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term and the construction of a modern, fully equipped

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interpretive center in Area C in the long term.

Finally, I am opposed to the following three proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

1. The realignment of the loop road in two places
2. The removal of the Area E parking area
3. The removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

The NPS needs to act decisively to see that the key history of Fort Hunt Park is interpreted fully. Please do the right thing for Fort Hunt Park.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 69

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: National Parks Conservation Association
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

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Notes:

Correspondence Text

George Washington Memorial Parkway
Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan
Environmental Assessment
Fairfax County, VA

On behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) and our over one million members and supporters, I am submitting comments on the National Park Service's Site Development Plan for Fort Hunt Park, part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. NPCA is a non-partisan non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing our national parks for the enjoyment of all.

NPCA has participated in public meetings and has submitted comments on numerous site development plans for Fort Hunt Park since 2011. We worked closely with the GWMP staff and our members to form the park's official friend's group, Friend's of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. We have cosponsored military appreciation days and service projects at Fort Hunt Park twice each year. Throughout this period and in our written and verbal comments to the park staff, NPCA and FFHPI have consistently advocated for the creation of an interpretative center to share the history of Fort Hunt with park visitors.

The park is currently enjoyed by the neighboring community for recreational activities like bicycling, picnicking, and dog walking. The pavilion is a popular spot for the park's well-attended summer concert series and is rented out for private parties. NPCA supports these uses. However, Fort Hunt Park is not only a community park, it is a national park with an important history that should be shared with visitors from across the world.

Today visitors cannot learn about the vast history of the park because interpretation is sorely lacking. The signage is minimal and difficult to find. And signage alone cannot begin to share all of the chapters of Fort Hunt's historical significance. When the park's World War II significance became known to the National Park Service and the public, additional research, oral

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histories, photographs, artifacts, and other fascinating information was collected. Today the results of this research reside in file cabinets and archives, away from the interested public.

We once again urge the National Park Service to plan for the creation of an interpretative center that is of sufficient size to hosts interactive exhibits, allow listeners to hear the oral histories, display the many collected artifacts, permit research, and accommodate visitors from across the world.

In regard to the latest Site Development Plan, NPCA supports the rehabilitation of the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) Quarters due to its historical significance. The building should be rehabilitated and its story told with signage. The NCO Quarters could serve as interim interpretative space for some of the park's history. However this building is too small to serve as a visitor interpretative center for Fort Hunt Park. At 600 square feet for the only room proposed to host exhibits, the room would barely hold minimal exhibits let alone have room for visitors. There are also accessibility issues both for gaining entrance to the building and for navigating around the very small rooms in multiple levels inside. This should not serve as Fort Hunt's visitor center.

We reject the idea of using the storage space in Pavilion A for anything other than its current use of equipment storage. The space is too small and difficult to access. When the numerous events are held on the stage or in the picnic area, the noise and crowds would make any activity in the storage space untenable. It would also exacerbate concerns of the neighboring community that the space they use and love at Pavilion A would be taken from them. An earlier draft EA for Fort Hunt Park that impacted Pavilion A was met with outright opposition by the local community. The space should remain a storage area.

NPCA does not believe that the NCO Quarters and the storage space in Pavilion A would serve as an adequate or appropriate space for a visitor center at Fort Hunt Park.

NPCA supports using Alternative 4 that would allow for the construction of a true visitors center permitting Fort Hunt's history to be shared. Siting a visitor center in Area C would minimize impacts to the Park's current recreation facilities. Although there would be minimal impacts to the neighbors who might recreate in Area C, ample recreation exists throughout the park. And the National Park Service must remember that this is a national park for the enjoyment of all citizens, so local concerns must be balanced with national concerns.

We realize that the National Park Service faces chronic budget shortfalls. We acknowledge that funds for the creation and endowment of a true visitor center would be contingent upon private fundraising. The Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. would gladly accept the challenge of raising the funds for the visitor center.

The GWMP Superintendent has, in the past, shared additional sites within Fort Hunt Park that might be someday used for an interpretive center. These include the Park maintenance facility and the Park Police paddock. Should either of these sites become available, NPCA would be interested in considering them for a visitor center site as well.

Fort Hunt Park has a fascinating multi-layered story that should be shared with the public. Only a complete visitor center would do this story justice by allowing all of the chapters of Fort Hunt to be told. On behalf of NPCA and our members, we urge the National Park Service to approve an Environmental Assessment that incorporates Alternative 4 and Alternative 5 to allow for the rehabilitation of an historic building that can provide interim interpretation and to provide a site for substantial visitor services and interpretation.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.

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

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 70

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 08/05/2015 Date Received: 08/05/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

As a long time visitor to Fort Hunt Park, I am writing in support of Alternative 4 and Alternative 5 in the park's Site Development Plan Environmental Assessment.

Fort Hunt Park deserves space for a true visitor center to allow all of the park's history to be told. When you visit the park, you would never know about all the things that happened there. Alternative 5 will allow the NCO building to be rehabilitated so visitors can learn about its history. And Alternative 4 will make a site available that would one day hold a real visitor center. All of the interviews and artifacts collected about Fort Hunt are behind closed doors. No one can hear them or see them or learn about them and that is wrong.

What happened at Fort Hunt is part of American history and we should be able to learn more. Please allow for the building of a visitor center so everyone can truly experience how Fort Hunt contributed to our nation's history.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 71

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Notes:

Correspondence Text

As a long time visitor to Fort Hunt Park, I am writing in support of Alternative 4 and Alternative 5 in the park's Site Development Plan Environmental Assessment.

Fort Hunt Park has an amazing history. Many Americans impacted the park over many eras - farming during the time of George Washington, building the batteries in anticipation of war, World War I marchers, the CCC, visits from the Roosevelts, and the contribution of those who served at P O Box 1142. Their contributions should be honored and their stories told at Fort Hunt Park.

Fort Hunt Park deserves space for a true visitor center to allow all of the park's history to be told. When you visit the park, you would never know about all the things that happened there. Alternative 5 will allow the NCO building to be rehabilitated so visitors can learn about that building's history. And Alternative 4 will make a site available that would one day hold a real visitor center. All of the interviews and artifacts collected about Fort Hunt are behind closed doors. No one can hear them or see them or learn about them and that is wrong.

What happened at Fort Hunt is part of American history and we should be able to learn more. Please allow for the building of a visitor center so everyone can truly experience how Fort Hunt contributed to our nation's history.

[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 72

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

As a millennial and avid park visitor, I love to visit our national parks for recreation and for learning. Fort Hunt Park has some great opportunities for recreation but a visitor will not learn much about its history. I think that is wrong. Fort Hunt has amazing stories of bravery and innovation of our citizens from George Washington to Eleanor Roosevelt to the WWI interrogators. These stories should be told in a state of the art visitor center.

I am writing in support of Alternative 4 so Area C can someday become a site for a visitor center. Please allow for land to be set aside so we can build an amazing visitor center and learn more about this terrific place.

Thank you.
[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 73

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

I love our national parks and spend quite a bit of time hiking and paddling in them. I also love to learn about the park I am visiting - why was it created, what makes it significant to our history?

When I visit Fort Hunt Park, it's tough to even know it is part of the National Park Service. There are a few signs but you really need to seek them out or come across them by accident. Once I learned more about Fort Hunt from a magazine article, I discovered what a fascinating place it is. I also discovered that most people don't even know about it.

This is wrong. Fort Hunt and the people who added to its history should be well known and shared with visitors. And the real way to do that is to allow a site for a true state-of-the-art visitor center. The NCO building should be rehabilitated but it is too small for a visitor center. And the storage space behind the stage is too small and would be too loud when concerts are occurring.

I am writing in support of Alternative 4 that will allow a visitor center to be built to share the stories of Fort Hunt Park. Please move forward on this alternative promptly. I would love to hear the oral histories of the WW II workers at P O Box 1142. I would love to learn more about the CCC workers as my great uncle worked for the CCC in Colorado. I would love to see the care packages that were actually designed to help prisoners of war escape from their captors. But today all of that is packed away in some building instead of being put in an exhibit for all of us to experience. This is wrong but you can change this by allowing a visitor center to be built.

Thank you.
[REDACTED]

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 74

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Notes:

Correspondence Text

In regards to the latest NPS Site Development Plan, I strongly support rehabilitating the NCO Quarters due to its historical significance. This building would serve as an excellent place to interpret the history for Fort Hunt. However, this is too small to serve as an interpretative center for Fort Hunt and the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

I support Alternative 4 that would allow for the construction of a true visitor center in Area C. The George Washington Memorial Parkway does not have a true interpretive facility along the southern end of the park. This facility would serve as gateway to the park for the community, the thousands of recreational users of the Mount Vernon Trail, and visitors who come to experience the unique history of Fort Hunt, and beauty of the Potomac River, and the history of George Washington.

I urge the National Park Service to approve an Environmental Assessment that incorporates Alternative 4 and Alternative 5 to restore a historic building and provide a site for substantial visitor services that are badly needed at this much visited park.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 75

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Correspondence Text

I am a thirty-eight year resident of the Fort Hunt neighborhood with a strong interest in American history. It was my privilege this year to lead walking tours of Fort Hunt Park, approved by NPS/GWMP, to tell the history of events at Fort Hunt since Colonial times. The emphasis was on the extraordinary role of Fort Hunt (PO Box 1142) in World War II, and the tours were very well received. From this perspective I recommend a modified version of Options 4 and 5 that will make the greatest improvement in historical interpretation while minimizing the impact on recreational facilities.

The NCO Quarters should be rehabilitated (Option 5) because it is the only significant structure spanning Fort Hunt's Twentieth Century history and will provide an initial place for limited historical interpretation. More important, however, is use of space near Parking Area C (Option 4) for an interpretive center where the World War II experience and other stories can be told in a meaningful way. This will make it possible to take advantage of the potential for private fundraising to create an interpretive center with an endowment for operation and maintenance.

Other features of Options 4 and 5 should be deleted because of their impact on recreational facilities and their minimal benefit for historical interpretation. The space behind the stage in Pavilion A should not be repurposed for interpretation (Option 5) because of its limited access and its value for storing equipment used for recreation and concert performances. The ball field near Parking Lot 4 should not be replaced by an open field (Options 4 and 5) because of its use to play softball which I have observed personally. Parking Area 5 with its adjacent picnic area and restrooms should not be removed (Options 4 and 5) because of its need for group gatherings and family picnics. The road should not be reconfigured (Options 4 and 5) because the current configuration preserves the use of Parking Area 5. No clear case has been made for these elements common to Options 4 and 5.

Overall, the combination of modified Options 4 and 5 described above would provide for meaningful interpretation while preserving more recreational opportunities than either Option 4 or Option 5 standing alone. I look forward as a volunteer to helping NPS/GWMP bring vivid and important stories of World War II history to life at Fort Hunt Park.

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

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 76

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: Mount Vernon Civic Association
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 08/05/2015 Date Received: 08/05/2015
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Notes:

Correspondence Text

I serve as the president of the Mount Vernon Civic Association. Our association's board of directors met to review the Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect report dated July 1, 2015. Following discussion, and the consideration of comments provided by association members regarding the findings detailed in the report, the board voted unanimous in support of the preferred alternative (Alternative 5). The Mount Vernon Civic Association welcomes the plan and looks forward to its implementation.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 77

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 08/06/2015 Date Received: 08/06/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
Notes:

Correspondence Text

I strongly support creating an interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

I sit on the Board of Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI) and have volunteered at Fort Hunt Park Community Days and at a National Park Conservation Association staff volunteer service project. I enjoy the park for its hiking trails and historical significance.

The proposal in Alternative 5 to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation is inadequate and will not serve the purpose of creating a well-functioning interpretation space for visitors. Permitted picnics are held in Pavilion A 70-80 days per year, mainly in the busy spring, summer, and fall months when the park sees the greatest visitation. Music and noise from picnics would be a distraction and would negatively affect the visitor experience in a space that shares a wall with the pavilion. The structural upgrades (ADA accessibility, sound proofing, alternative entrance etc.) that are needed to make the space behind the stage of Pavilion A even a consideration for visitor space is a waste of money. This space, even with upgrades, does not provide room to properly house exhibits, historic artifacts, large displays, or space for presentations or movies for large groups. Use of the storage space behind the stage of Pavilion A should not be considered in the final SDP/EA.

The proposal for using the NCO Quarters for interpretation is also inadequate. 600 square feet is slightly smaller than my home, and it feels cramped when we have six guests, I couldn't imagine hosting a class of twenty school children. The diverse history of Fort Hunt and the stories of its people cannot be properly interpreted in such a confined space.

Because both of the proposed spaces for interpretation offered in Alternative 5 are inadequate, this leaves Alternative 4 with a new interpretive center in Area C as the only viable option for doing due diligence to the nationally significant history of the park and without detracting from its recreational uses enjoyed by the local community.

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In the interim, I am amenable to the idea of combining portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 in the final SDP/EA; namely, the outfitting of the NCO quarters as temporary, limited interpretive center with the eventual construction of a full-scale, state-of-the-art interpretive center in Area C, conditional upon the raising of the necessary funds by FFHPI, a commitment repeatedly made by FFHPI. This option would preserve the NCO quarters from further deterioration, while providing an improved visitor experience from what is currently offered at Fort Hunt while a state-of-the-art interpretive center facility is constructed for a proper visitor experience.

Finally, I am opposed to the following three proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5: (1) The realignment of the loop road in two places; (2) The removal of the Area E parking area; (3) The removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D; and (4) The removal of 23 trees to establish a sight line to Fort Washington: It does not make sense at this point to remove these trees to highlight the Spanish-American history of the fort. Before a decision to remove the trees is made, the park's history as a whole needs to be analyzed to determine the stories that should be most prominently interpreted at the sight, as well as how these many stories are interpreted together. The little-known history of P.O. Box 1142 provided tremendous information and helped shape the outcome of WWII. The batteries built during the Spanish American war were never used, and were defunct two decades after their construction. The significance of all the historical events need to be weighed together and closely scrutinized before one period of Fort Hunt's history is interpreted over another.

It is time for the NPS do the right thing for Fort Hunt Park, its history, and its visitors.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 78

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 08/06/2015 Date Received: 08/06/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
Contains Request(s): No Type: Web Form
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Correspondence Text

No new action should be taken other than to keep the current infrastructure in good condition, keep the bathrooms cleaner, and raise an American Flag daily on the flag pole that was contributed.
I view any "Visitor Center" as a ploy for Mount Vernon to increase patronage there.
The Parkway in recent years has become overcrowded with HEAVY Busses that will cause far more damage to the roadway. Leave well enough alone and if someone needs a job updating any new plan reduce it to less than the current 181 plus pages.

Further a one month response is very inadequate and particularly when such a project requires response from responsible and interested citizens who may be on vacation during this particular month. What's the big hurry when it has taken the NPS over 3 years to come up with a new plan and all we citizens get for comment is one month?

I saw no public posting of this plan on the usual bathroom doors or even at the entrance to the park.

I heard about this plan a week ago from a neighbor not from any you propose in the response.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 79

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: Potomac Valley/River Bend Civic Association
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
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Notes:

Correspondence Text

Potomac Valley/River Bend Civic Association
Comments on the July 2, 2015 Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA)

The Potomac Valley/River Bend Civic Association (PVRB), representing members who live in two housing developments adjacent to Fort Hunt Park, has reviewed the July 2, 2015 Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan and Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA). 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 the PVRB community expressed about the previous proposals. Thank you for listening!

PVRB thanks 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.

Most members of PVRB are quite happy with Fort Hunt Park as it is now managed and maintained. Notwithstanding, there is support for the development set out in the new SDP/EA. 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.

PVRB strongly urges the Park Service to ensure that these features of the Park endure.

PVRB applauds the Park Service intent to improve the visitor experience, particularly with respect to historical interpretation. Like the Park Service, PVRB favors Alternative Concept 5 because it seems the best use of - - as well as preservation of - -

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

current resources and historical structures.

As neighbors of the Park, PVRB members are sensitive to plans for the closed loop road which is in close proximity to some PVRB properties. The plan to provide "recreational amenities" along the the closed loop road - - which we understand would be fitness trail-type facilities - -does not raise concern but PVRB would not favor changes that would enhance access to that area, which is already very accessible, nor does PVRB favor placement of restroom facilities anywhere in the closed loop area.

Establishment of a visitor services function in picnic Area C might have some utility in drawing visitors deeper into the Park but it would detract from the recreational utility of this popular and relatively private picnic area. It would also create more visitor activity in close proximity to PVRB homes, a negative development in view of PVRB residents. Because of that, and because it seems to make more sense, PVRB favors the alternative set out in Alternative Concept 5 that locates visitor services near the entrance to the Park.

Thank you for soliciting and listening to the concerns of Fort Hunt Park's neighbors.

[REDACTED] Potomac Valley/River Bend Civic Association

Email: [REDACTED]

August 6, 2015

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 80

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

Status: New Park Correspondence Log:
Date Sent: 08/06/2015 Date Received: 08/06/2015
Number of Signatures: 1 Form Letter: No
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Correspondence Text

I strongly support creating an interpretive center in Area C (Alternative 4) in the final National Park Service (NPS) Site Development Plan/ Environmental Assessment (SDP/EA) for Fort Hunt Park.

I have ran in the park a number of times and volunteered at the Armed Forces Family Days and Fort Hunt Park Community Days held in the park by the Friends of Fort Hunt Park, Inc. (FFHPI). I support the primary goal of FFHPI to raise the funds to build such a center.

The proposal in Alternative 5 to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation makes no sense at all. Permitted picnics are held in the pavilion 70-80 days per year, many with loud music. On such days visiting such space would be a negative experience for persons with the fortitude to climb up on the stage. Pavilion A is located about a city block from the NCO quarters and across the park access road. Going from one structure to the other would discourage learning about the park's rich history and would be really difficult for persons with disabilities. This limited space is already storage space for items used in and around Pavilion A. Also access to the stage and storage space is through stairs without railings. Use of the storage space behind the stage of Pavilion A should be deleted from the final SDP/EA.

The draft SDP/EA states that the NCO quarters has only 600 square feet available for interpretation. This is too little space. There would be no space to view videos, perform historical research or have a small store to sell educational materials. And the structure would not be able to accommodate the large numbers of people who attend the many picnics in the park and also want to learn about the park's history.

That leaves Alternative 4 with a new interpretive center in Area C as the only viable option.

Further, portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 could be approved in the final SDP/EA; namely, the outfitting of the NCO quarters as an interim, limited interpretive center with the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the necessary funds by FFHPI, a commitment repeatedly made by

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FFHPI. This would preserve the NCO quarters, a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from further deterioration.

Finally, I am opposed to the following three proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5:

1. The realignment of the loop road in two places
2. The removal of the Area E parking area
3. The removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D

It is time for the NPS do the right thing for Fort Hunt Park.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 81

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: [REDACTED]
Organization: National Parks Conservation Association
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

Correspondence Information

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 am submitting comments on the National Park Service's Site Development Plan for Fort Hunt Park, part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The National Parks Conservation Association and Friends of Fort Hunt Park have supported community and volunteer programs at Fort Hunt Park over the past few years. An interpretative center is important to these groups and to the park to improve the park visitor experience and to better archive and document the history of the park and the region. There is currently a need for better interpretation at the park, and I want to voice my support for the creation of an interpretative center. This center would allow for the preservation of historical artifacts, and would allow for a more interesting and educational visitor experience.

I support the rehabilitation and preservation of the NCO Quarters, but the space is not large enough to serve as the main visitor interpretive center for Fort Hunt Park. The space does not provide enough room to hold visitors or to showcase the range of interpretative exhibits that we need to have at the park. The storage space in Pavilion A should continue to be used for storage, and is not an appropriate choice of location or a visitor center. The NCO Quarters and the storage space in Pavilion A would not provide adequate space for a visitor center at Fort Hunt Park, and I support Alternative 4. This would allow for the construction of a visitors center that would enhance the visitor experience and would promote the historical preservation of the park. The Park maintenance facility and the Park Police paddock also could be acceptable spaces for a visitor center, should those become options.

The Friends of Fort Hunt Park Inc. group has offered to work to raise the funds for the construction of a new visitor center. This is a dedicated and driven Friends group, and the offer to fundraise shows the commitment the group has to the park, the park's history, and the many community and non-local visitors who come to the park every day.

To support the submitted comments from NPCA, I would personally also like to urge the National Park Service to approve an Environmental Assessment that incorporates Alternative 4 and Alternative 5 to allow for the rehabilitation of an historic building that can provide interim interpretation and to provide a site for substantial visitor services and interpretation.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 82

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

Thank you for the opportunity to add my comments on the Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan: Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect.

I am disappointed that the NPS continues to take a position that put the stakeholders in contention with each other. To wit: the implied and explicit position that the vision to adequately address the historical events that took place at Fort Hunt Park must come at the expense of the broader community's vision of Fort Hunt as a recreational resource. I believe with a plot of land as large as Fort Hunt there is absolutely no reason that both visions can't be implemented.

Fort Hunt is located in a "close-in" suburb the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area and as such should and can be all things to all people - no stakeholder should be preferred over another. No stakeholders' vision should go unimplemented.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE 5

The NPS has determined that only 600 square feet are available for interpretation in the NCO quarters. In such limited space the World War II activities could not be adequately interpreted let alone the other important events that took place at the site from George Washington's time onward. There would be no space for a small room in which to view videos, no separate quiet area for researchers to view and compare the oral history interviews and no space for a small store to sell books and other educational material. There would not be enough room to accommodate more than 10-15 people at one time. So people attending big picnics who might also want to learn about the park's meaningful history might have to wait in line or forego having the experience. Field trips of classes from local schools would also be very difficult, if at all possible.

The proposal to use the space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation is untenable for numerous reasons, including the following:

- Each year a large number of permitted picnics are held in Pavilion A. There were 83 in 2014 between April 1 and mid-October. The average for the same period for the years 2012-2014 was 70. Many of these picnics have loud live or recorded

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music. I have photographs of the music arrangements from three picnics on weekends this summer. At such times how could a visitor to the space behind the stage have any kind of positive visitor experience?

- The space is already storage space for items such as chairs, sound system equipment, volunteer vests and cleanup equipment that are used in and around Pavilion A. It is not practicable to store them elsewhere.
- Access to the stage and storage space is through four sets of stairs none of which have railings.
- The distance between Pavilion A and NCO quarters is 0.1 mile, and the structures are on opposite sides of the park access road. Visiting both structures would be difficult with persons with disabilities and families with very small children.
- Some parking spaces now used for picnics would have to be re-programmed for interpretive purposes. Park visitors at picnics looking for scarce parking spaces would not appreciate having fewer spaces available.

The NPS should remove the space behind the stage of Pavilion A as an option for historic interpretation from the final SDP/EA. It does not make sense!

Finally, the assertion in the draft SDP/EA that Alternative Concept 5 provides meaningful interpretive benefits is at best misleading and at worst insulting to the veterans who served at PO Box 1142, the CCC Camp NP-6 volunteers and leaders and the members of the African-American ROTC company who trained at the site.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FINAL SDP/EA

Creation of a new state-of-the art interpretive center that does not remove any of the current picnic areas is the only realistic option if the stakeholders' visions are to be realized.

The NPS should consider approving portions of both Alternatives 4 and 5 in the final SDP/EA; namely:

- restoring the NCO quarters;
- the conversion of the NCO quarters to an interim, limited interpretive center;
- the construction of a full-scale, state-of-the art interpretive center in the long term, conditional upon the raising of the necessary funds by FFHPI.

This would preserve the NCO quarters from further deterioration, which is important since it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, there is extensive peeling paint on the exterior, as well as the need for numerous repairs.

Finally, I strongly recommend no further consideration be given to the following four proposed actions common to Alternatives 4 and 5

- realignment of the loop road in two places
- removal of the Area E parking area
- removal of the ball field and some of the parking spaces in Area D
- removal of up to 23 trees to provide a line of sight from Battery Robinson.

Moving sections of the loop road will disturb the area, be costly and provide no benefit unless both funding exists for performing archeological studies of the area and significant archeological remains from Enclosures A and B of PO Box 1142 are found. The funds would be much better spent on interpreting the site's known significant history.

Removal of parking spaces in Areas D and E and repurposing of the ball field in Area D will decrease the recreational benefits of Fort Hunt Park. Although not stated in the draft SDP/EA, it appears that these proposed actions are for archeological purposes as well. My above comments on assuring interpretation of known events before expending funding for uncovering possible archeological remnants of unknown significance apply to these proposed activities as well.

The guns of Fort Hunt were never fired for military purposes, and they were shipped to Europe in World War I. In fact, by World War I Fort Hunt was obsolete for coastal defense purposes. Removing up to 23 trees that provide habitat for wildlife and are part of the natural resources of the park so that someone can see the Potomac River from Battery Robinson is of

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marginal utility and ecologically unsound. To get an unobstructed view of the Potomac River, they can cross the river and visit Fort Washington. Fort Hunt was built to coordinate coastal defense with Fort Washington.

FINAL CONSIDERATION

The July 1, 2015, draft SDP/EA expressly eliminated consideration of the use of the maintenance facility in Fort Hunt Park for interpretive purposes. However, Superintendent Romero suggested that the maintenance facility might be considered as an alternate site for an interpretive center as a number of the uses of that facility were being phased out. At the July 7 open meeting, Superintendent Romero was less supportive of that possibility, stating that some of the maintenance uses needed to be retained for the southern part of the parkway and that there may be stability problems with the structure.

The comments above do not raise the possibility of using the maintenance facility or part of the maintenance area as the site of the interpretive center based upon the statement to the contrary in the draft SDP/EA. However, there are a number of benefits that could be gained by use of this site, if it were feasible. They are the following:

- It is already disturbed space.
- The area is close to Batteries Sater and Robinson and to the NCO quarters, which would add to the overall interpretive function and experience.
- There is a separate road to the facility so the effects on traffic in other parts of the park would be negligible.
- There is sufficient space for parking.
- If the maintenance facility structure is stable or could be stabilized, it could be used in creating the interpretive center building. If not, a new structure could be constructed.
- There is room for residual maintenance activities.
- The current picnicking facilities would not be affected.
- Visitors to an interpretive center would not be traveling to areas of the park that are close to nearby residences.

Local residents who understand the historic importance of Fort Hunt Park but do not want the recreational activities significantly diminished could support this option.

Before the NPS issues the final SDP/EA, I request that it consider the use of the current maintenance area as an additional option. I am more than willing to support using this site if it were feasible. Perhaps, a finding of no significant impact could be made.

The NPS needs to act decisively to see that the rich and unique history of Fort Hunt Park is interpreted fully. The stories of World War II and the other eras of its history are important in their own right, but will also add to the overall NPS interpretation of those periods.

I offer two examples of the importance of creating a state-of-the-art full-scale interpretation center and rejecting Alternative 5. The first is based upon information I learned from viewing the NPS oral history interviews of John Gunther Dean and Rudy Pins. Both mentioned Gustav Hilger, a high-ranking German official, who spent time at PO Box 1142 after the end of World War II. Hilger lived for many years in Russia, serving part of that time in the German Embassy in Moscow. He served as the translator for Joachim von Ribbentrop during the negotiations with Stalin and Molotov for the non-aggression pact signed by Germany and Russia in 1939. After Germany attacked Russia, Hilger worked for von Ribbentrop in Germany. Hilger never joined the Nazi party, but he co-signed documents that sent Jews to their deaths. After the war Hilger was considered an extremely important expert on the Soviet Union. Had that not been the case, he might have been tried for war crimes at Nuremberg. Hilger served for several years as a consultant to the CIA before returning to West Germany to retire.

Rudy Pins, a German Jew who came to the US as one of the One Thousand Children and whose parents were killed in a Nazi death camp, interrogated Hilger at PO Box 1142. Pins went on to serve as an interrogator at Nuremberg where he interrogated Hermann Goering. Later he worked for the CIA and maintained a relationship with Hilger, taking him on trips to the countryside on weekends.

The fact that Pins was able to work with and relate to Hilger represents the triumph of the human spirit over enormous adversity. Much of the above information would not have been available without access to the oral history interviews of PO Box 1142 servicemen.

The second example pertains to Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp NP-6, which was located at Fort Hunt. Colonel Blair Henderson was the commander of NP-6 from 1938-1939. In June 1939 he led a tour of the camp for the King and Queen of England and Eleanor Roosevelt after their visit to Mount Vernon Estate. President Roosevelt remained in the car. Until his dying day, Henderson thought that the reason that the President did not go on the tour was that he was angry about something. This demonstrated how little the public knew about Roosevelt's disabilities. This information was conveyed to GWMP staff by Colonel (ret) Russell Henderson, the son of Colonel Henderson, who shared photos of the visit with them to enhance the interpretation of the history of Fort Hunt Park.

The above information should be conveyed in an interpretive center at Fort Hunt Park as it contributes to understanding about important events in our country. There exists significantly more new information about PO Box 1142 and the other history that took place at the site that could be interpreted in a modern, interactive interpretive center of sufficient size and sophistication.

The centennial of the organic act that created the NPS is little more than a year away. Approving an interpretive center for the park would be an important activity to mark the centennial.

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Correspondence: 83

Author Information

Keep Private: No
Name: N/A N/A
Organization:
Organization Type: I - Unaffiliated Individual
Address:



E-mail:

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

August 7, 2015
To: National Park Service

As a former federal regulator and manager of national environmental protection/restoration programs, I have prepared this review of the National Park Service's Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan: Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect (SDP; EA) on behalf of my husband and myself. Both of us have visited Fort Hunt Park and have learned of its historical significance and its role as a community recreational venue.

I note from the Project Summary section of the SDP that the focus of the EA is on the potential impacts of three alternatives on the environment (i.e., natural, cultural, human), as mandated by statute, implementing regulations and agency policy. Moreover, I note the SDP's purpose, relative to the public, is to "improve the visitor experience." Finally, this section specifies that, again relative to the public's expressed needs (not government's role in park management or resource management priorities), the plan seeks to:

- Enhance visitor experiences and connections with park resources.
- Meet the demand by the public for additional interpretation.

Due to my professional background I am familiar with NEPA. Moreover, I am sensitive to (and note in the SDP's analyses) the difficulty faced by preparers of such documents in balancing a multitude of public interests (sometimes needs, sometimes desires). (Page i of SDP: "The demands for these varied uses create a need to balance the different types of visitor use with resource protection.") Having read the SDP from this perspective, my comments focus on what I believe to be preconceptions, lack of clarity and justification, questionable assumptions/judgments, and conflicting assertions that have framed the development issue as an either - or scenario. I would encourage you to reexamine the selected alternative (#5) to ensure it truly is the one that meets both the public's and the government's interests. (I understand that the preponderance of public comments do not support Alternative 5 but, instead, support establishment of a new interpretive center in Area C as part of Alternative 4.)

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Based on my multiple career challenges in working to meld conflicting points of view in often sensitive instances, I submit there is room for further "adjustments" to better accommodate (if not fully address) all parties' interests while still fully complying with legal and practical requirements. Having parsed the issues for red herrings and eliminated issues that appear to be inconsequential or at least offset (e.g., issues with parking...less under Alternative 4 vs. more demand under Alternative 5 essentially result in the same outcome and perhaps a need for more parking in Area A...and reduced accommodation of picnickers arise under both Alternative 4 and 5), I suggest the NPS consider the following global questions as it revisits the strategy set forth in its SDP to meet the demand for a adequately equipped visitor services (i.e., interpretative) facility, as well as the ones raised in the following review comments (which you are invited to contact me about, should you wish to discuss them).

- What is the primary goal: providing quality interpretation (public education) or minimizing costs (ROI on the NCO Quarters)?
- What are the key criteria: use of public vs. private funds, assurance of meeting public demand, assurance and timely provision of a quality facility and quality visitor experience?

Review Comments

Fort Hunt Park Site Development Plan:

Environmental Assessment and Assessment of Effect

Issue - Delivering on Promises:

SDP pg. 38 - ...more planning and design work would need to be carried out for completion of may action proposed in this EA, such as final design and location of a visitor contact station.

SDP pg. 42 - While only evaluated at a conceptual level in this plan, the visitor service zones could offer additional facilities to enhance the visitor experience.

SDP pg. 50 -

...evaluates enhancements to visitor services at a conceptual level. An additional planning and compliance process are required before any specific decision be made regarding design and construction.

Further planning and design would be required to determine the most effective and appropriate use of the building's relatively small footprint (approximately 600 square feet of accessible space for visitor services) to fulfill visitor service objectives while also respecting and rehabilitating the historic structure to the extent possible.

Reviewers' Comments -

Given this fact, how did the NPS conclude the Alternative 5 was the preferred one? This statement leads one to believe this alternative was the fait accompli and justification for its selection was then created to support this decision.

What backup alternative would be pursued, and how quickly, if all these planning and design efforts ultimately concluded the building was inadequate or otherwise could not be redesigned to accommodate the intended purpose?

Issue - NCO Quarters:

SDP pg. 48 - The focus of Alternative 5 would be to enhance the visitor experience and interpretive facility, ensure the long-term sustainability of facilities....

SDP pg. 49 -

...expand the current parking area near the entrance to the NCO Quarters.

Alternative 5 lessens the footprint of site development by reusing the NCO Quarters, an existing historic structure within the

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site that is in need of rehabilitation, and adapting it to be used as a visitor contact station.

Recent preliminary rehabilitation work has been completed on the structure, including lead and asbestos abatement.

...would provide approximately 600 square feet of accessible space for visitor services.

...remainder...used for...NPS staff..., totaling approximately an additional 600 square feet.

Due to its associated costs, rehabilitating and adaptively using the NCO Quarters may need to be phased over time.

Rehabilitation work on the NCO Quarters would be contingent on further archeological study as well determination of compatibility of uses.

Reviewers' Comments -

Given that rehabilitation has already been initiated, it would appear that this is a sunk cost that the NPS wishes to somehow "recoup" by justifying the facility's use (absent any other plan for its reuse). Unanswered questions that arise upon reading this narrative include:

1. What is the NPS' definition of "enhance" and does it turn on the adequacy of the facility, the sufficiency of the content available to the visitor and/or some other standard?
2. Who determined (and how was it determined...e.g., review of artist's renderings of space layout?) that 600 square feet would be sufficient (public comments do not support that supposition)?
3. How long before there is 600 square feet of usable space available for full operation?
4. Where is the NPS staff working now?
5. Could the NPS staff remain where they are working now and if not, why not?
6. As 600 square feet is deemed inadequate for visitor services, could the 600 additional square feet of space targeted for NPS staff be allocated to visitor services and if not, why not?
7. Since Alternative 4 envisions non-taxpayer money used to construct the visitor services facility, why should taxpayer money be expended on the NCO Quarters?

To summarize, there is no assurance if and when the NCO Quarters would be ready, even at only the 600 square foot level, and its rehabilitation would require use of public funds (which are subject to appropriation). Alternative 5 would incur no similar delay and would use private funds to develop the new visitor services' site, consistent with the NPS' recognition of "...the demand by the public for additional interpretation."

Issue - Location:

SDP pg. 49 - ...rehabilitate a section of Pavilion A for reuse in order to support visitor services. ...office space and storage currently in Pavilion A would be accommodated at the on-site maintenance facility. ...separate visitors utilizing the Pavilion from those utilizing the services in the rear of the structure.

Reviewers' Comment - This is unclear as to intent and needs clarification.

1. Is the intent to turn the entire interior space over to the visitor service function (i.e., relocate the NPS staff to some other location) and, if so, how much interior interpretative space would that constitute?
2. If this is not the plan, how much space, and where (interior? exterior...and, if so, where?) would be allocated to visitor services?
3. If this is the plan, why not give the additional 600 square feet in the NCO Quarters to the visitor services function and not house the NPS staff there (assuming the intent is to relocate the NSF staff now at Pavilion A to the NCO Quarters)?
4. Considering that part of Pavilion A currently houses equipment used to support summer concerts and cleanup in the park, would these items be moved to the maintenance facility and retrieved on an as-needed basis or would the visitor services activity compete for space with these items (assuming it is conducted in exterior, not interior, space)?
5. Given that noise from, for example, music performed at the Pavilion would compete with interpretative presentations to visitors, what consideration has been given to accommodating visitor services in such a discordant environment that appears

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inconsistent with NPS' goals of enhancing visitor experiences and connections with park resources and meeting the demand by the public for additional interpretation?

SDP pg. 50 - A visitor services zone near the entrance of the park would be highly visible and convenient for visitors.

Reviewers' Comment - All things being equal, this would be true. But as they are not, it is the quality of the experience and not the convenience that should dictate. Signs and a short drive would make it equally convenient for visitors to arrive at a facility providing a comprehensive (read "additional") interpretative experience.

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Correspondence: 84

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

Dear Park Service,

I appreciate the opportunity to express my thoughts and concerns about the proposed changes to Fort Hunt Park. I am happy that the new proposed changes are far less drastic than what was proposed in 2011. Still, I do not believe that most of the proposals have the best interest of the park, as a community resource and treasure, in mind.

I do not believe that any changes should be made to the park. Is it broken? No. What is the impetus to change? What is the agenda of those adamant about reducing the usability of the park. Did those people move into the neighborhood before or after Fort Hunt Park was established? Surely they knew there was a park in the vicinity. It's too much like people who move near airports complaining of noise.

I do not believe that it is necessary to:

1. Remove Picnic Area E parking and restrooms or a portion of Area D parking
2. Remove sections of the loop road and realign to avoid Historic Land Use Restoration Areas
3. Reprogram Area D ball field to accommodate multi-purpose recreation in Historic Land Use Restoration Area

I do like

1. Construction of an interpretative trail
2. Restoration of the historic sight line to Potomac River from Battery Robinson
3. Upgrading the safety and accessibility of Area A playground equipment

I would also like to say that I am very disappointed by the effort you made to notify the community of your plans for the park AND the format of these last 2 public meetings. People I talked to felt the same way. Why was there no voice to champion the proposed changes? No one stood and argued for the proposed changes. Does anyone really want these changes? If not, let's forget it. There were nice park rangers to talk to but, this time as last, some of those rangers were unfamiliar with the

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park. If we meet again, let's have a meeting. No more "Open House." Let's discuss our park in a community forum.

I was unaware of the requirement that law enforcement be present during presentations at the library. That was odd. Were you expecting trouble or was he there to intimidate?

Thank you.



PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 85

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

I want to commend the Park Service for their work since the previous EA. The Service clearly listened to the community and incorporated our comments into the plan for Fort Hunt Park. The plan we see in this EA is a reflection of our input and I thank you for that. Also, I have to comment on the quality of the EA. It is an easy to read document, and hits on all the important topics. This is exactly what NEPA is supposed to do - include the public and facilitate informed decision making by federal agencies. You did a great job. Thanks.

My technical comments. I agree with the need and plan for greater interpretation of, and accessibility to, Fort Hunt Park's history. And, I appreciate that this has been tempered with a respect for the value of community recreation and natural resources.

I agree that Alt 5 should be the preferred alternative. This is simply because it poses the least increase to traffic on the loop road. I like the idea of incorporating the NCO building somehow onto the visitors experience. However, I expect that might be tough, so I appreciate the Services willingness to incorporate improved visitor amenities into the existing Pavillion.

I appreciate leaving the loop road largely intact. But, I think there is an error about the eagle nest (page 56) The road relocation in Area D should have a time of year restriction starting Dec 1 to protect the nesting Eagles in that area. It would be better to dissuade the Eagles from nesting in that area than to allow them to start and then disrupt them.

The EA doesn't elaborate on stormwater management. I don't think Fort Hunt Park presently has any stormwater facilities to treat stormwater flows for quantity or quality. As a result, there is significant damage occurring to the receiving streams downgradient from the developed plateau. Please ensure the future of Fort Hunt Park includes proper stormwater management.

I cannot understand what is meant by "inch for inch tree replacement " on page 56. I expect the bulk of the tree loss would be occurring from the loop road realignment. That would take out areas of good habitat . (Area D supports Partners in Flight

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Priority bird species such as scarlet tanenger.). Tree replacement is likely to be landscape trees which would not replace such habitat. I request that the service consider impact mitigation measures such as removal of in invasive vegetation in the wooded areas between the developed plateau and the river. In recent years the invasives have really take hold of that area.

I would like to know a little more about the bat work that has been done at Fort Hunt Park. In Virginia the active season is April 1 to Sep 15, so I would expect the tree clearing to be restircted then. I am not aware of winter hibernacula in Fairfax County and would be interested in learning if there were any at the PArk.

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Correspondence: 86

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Correspondence Text

August 7, 2015

Mr. Alexcy Romero, Superintendent
National Park Service
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Dear Superintendent Romero:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the July 1, 2015 draft National Park Service (NPS) Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Site Development Plan for Fort Hunt Park (the Park). While I have enjoyed learning more about Fort Hunt's history through my professional work, I am providing these comments as a private citizen.

Of fundamental importance, I encourage the NPS to add an alternative in this EA to provide for establishing a new facility in Area C sufficient to educate visitors about the remarkable events that have taken place at Fort Hunt. None of the current alternatives provide for this need. The NPS staff knows well the events that form the park's remarkable history and significance, so I will not repeat them here. Suffice it to say that most Americans have no idea, and the NPS has the solemn responsibility to interpret this history for this and future generations.

Moreover, given that the Friends of Fort Hunt Park are willing to take on the challenge of raising funds necessary to construct and endow such a facility, the EA could note, if helpful to do so, that moving forward on such a facility would depend upon solid evidence of sufficient funding from its partner (although it is not unusual for similar planning documents to include elements for which funding has not been identified).

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Several years ago, I had the privilege of being part of a symposium dedicated to the history and significance of the "Ritchie Boys," including the service of Ritchie Boys at PO Box 1142. At a time when daily headlines revealed shocking, inhumane actions taken against prisoners at Guantanamo Bay in the name of American interests, we learned about American servicemen during World War II who set "the gold standard" both for how they obtained critical information - - with skill and humanity - and for the value of that information in helping to end the war.

The draft EA states that Alternative 5 is the NPS's preferred alternative. While I would support rehabilitating the NCO Quarters to preserve the only residential military structure remaining at Fort Hunt from the period stretching from the late 19th century through World War II, Alternative 5 fails to provide an acceptable approach for interpretation. At 600 square feet, the NCO Quarters' limited space and multi-story interior provide a poor choice for a permanent solution, although it would provide a reasonable brief interim step towards a better permanent solution.

Given its limited size, lack of accessibility, close proximity to activities like regular summertime concerts that would conflict with a more contemplative visitor experience, and other problems, the proposal to use the space behind the stage in Picnic Pavilion A for interpretation should be dropped.

Alternative 4 for Area C would allow for the construction of an appropriate facility with display space for interactive exhibits, a small theater, a small library or quiet room to review the oral history interviews and other archival material, and a small store with books and memorabilia. Locating the facility in Area C would minimize impacts to the Park's popular recreational facilities, and allow it to be close to the principal prisoner enclosures during World War II, which are logical beginning and ending points for walking tours or an interpretive trail. Moreover, locating the interpretive center in Area C would support the type of balance NPS seeks among the Park's multiple uses.

As is not unusual when I review a draft EA, I find that portions of two or more alternatives would result in the best outcome for the park and its visitors. For the Fort Hunt EA, I recommend that the NPS select the best ideas in Alternatives 4 and 5 - - adapt the NCO quarters to serve as an interim, limited interpretive center in the near term; and construct a full-scale, state-of-the-art interpretive center in Area C in the long term, conditional upon park partners raising the funds to construct, provide exhibits for, and endow the facility.

Fort Hunt Park's 157 acres allows ample room to preserve the recreational activities popular with the park's neighbors, and to create the interpretive experience that the site's history demands. Preserving recreational areas also is consistent with the NPS's "Healthy Parks, Healthy People" initiative. Finally, this site has rich history beyond World War II, and I encourage the NPS to interpret those stories as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment the draft EA for Fort Hunt Park.

Sincerely,

(signed)

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

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932
Correspondence: 87

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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[REDACTED]

August 7, 2015

via web format

Mr. Alexcy Romero, Superintendent
National Park Service
George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Re: Draft EA for Fort Hunt Park

Dear Superintendent Romero:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the July 1, 2015 draft National Park Service (NPS) Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Site Development Plan for Fort Hunt Park (the Park). While I have enjoyed learning more about Fort Hunt's history through my professional work, I am providing these comments as a private citizen.

The National Park Service is one of our nation's great institutions, with a unique tradition and capacity to tell the story of

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America for this and future generations. The story of Fort Hunt and the Ritchie Boys is a story of American soldiers defending our nation and securing information of vital importance to our nation - and the world's security - in full compliance with the law and standards of conduct that demonstrated our highest commitments to humane treatment of combatants. Fort Hunt has great potential to tell the story of American servicemen and the gathering of war time intelligence. It is a story of the past, the present and no doubt the future.

A robust park would have sufficient facilities that would tell the story of Fort Hunt for all visitors. Please add an alternative to the EA to include establishing a new educational facility in Area C. Such an alternative could note the necessary challenge of the Friends of Fort Hunt Park to raise funds sufficient to construct such a facility.

I look forward to an improved EA that provides a fuller range of alternatives to tell this important story while still providing space for recreational opportunities important to the local community.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

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Correspondence: 88

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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I support creating an interpretive center in Area C featured in Alternative 4.

The proposal in Alternative 5 to use the storage space behind the stage in Pavilion A for interpretation is inadequate. Noise from permitted picnics and concerts will deter from a visitor experience in the center.

Use of the storage space behind the stage of Pavilion A should not be considered in the final SDP/EA.

The proposal for using the NCO Quarters for interpretation is also inadequate. 600 square feet is not enough space to host more than a few visitors at a time.

Because both of the proposed spaces for interpretation offered in Alternative 5 are inadequate, this leaves Alternative 4 with a new interpretive center in Area C as the only viable option. The history is too important to be marginalized into a storage area and small space that cannot accommodate even a class of school kids.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 89

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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This comment is intended to encourage the National Park Service (Service) to create an interpretive center as outlined in Alternative Four of the Service's Environmental Assessment for Fort Hunt Park.

I am a frequent visitor to Fort Hunt Park. I enjoy the park for its hiking trails and historical significance.

I oppose Alternative 5 because it will not create an adequate interpretation site for those wanting to learn about the history of the park. The spot is right behind picnics and likely to be disturbed by other visitors. Ability to concentrate on the information obtained by visitor's centers is important for me.

As a result of the inadequacy of Alternative 5, the Service must pursue Alternative 4 and construct an interpretive center in Area C. This site is appropriate for those wanting to learn about the history of the site, as others picnic in recreational areas.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 90

Author Information

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

Correspondence Information

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Please create an interpretive center in Area C outlined in Alternative.

The proposal in Alternative 5 to use the storage space behind the stage in Pavilion A does not make sense, noise from permitted picnics and concerts will distract visitors in the center.

Use of the storage space behind the stage of Pavilion A should not be considered in the final SDP/EA.

The proposal for using the NCO Quarters for interpretation is also not enough space, 600 square feet is will not accommodate more than a few visitors at a time.

Because both of the proposed spaces for interpretation offered in Alternative 5 are inadequate, this leaves Alternative 4 with a new interpretive center in Area C as the only viable option. Please take into consideration the importance of Fort Hunts history when planning an interpretation center that serves the visiting public.

PEPC Project ID: 33621, DocumentID: 66932

Correspondence: 91

Author Information

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

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter to express my utter dismay with proposed actions by the National Park Service to practically ruin Fort Hunt Park. As you are no doubt aware, this idyllic park sits along the banks of the Potomac River and offers a wide variety of leisure and recreational facilities including picnic areas, ball fields, roads for biking, and hiking trails. This well maintained and highly enjoyable national park is now under assault by the National Park Service. In short, the National Park Service seeks to degrade the serene character of the park by re-routing portions of the perimeter road (destroying a ball field and picnic area in the process), building a visitor's center, building an interpretation trail (not joking), and installing a fitness trail with outdoor exercise equipment. This whole concept to change the very nature of Fort Hunt Park is just another blatant example of the Federal bureaucracy's insatiable appetite for spending taxpayer dollars on projects and programs of little or no value.

Please read the comments attached to this letter that I submitted to the National Park Service regarding its proposed scheme. I believe that Comment #1 is most appropriate, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The second comment concerns the re-routing of roads so they don't overlay buried building foundations. I find this very perplexing since the building foundations will remain buried. The third, fourth, and fifth comments relate to the proposed visitor's center, interpretation trail, and fitness trail,

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respectively, all of which I find nonsensical.

I respectfully request that your office intercede in this matter and put a stop to the madness. The national park in its current state is perfectly fine. I do not understand why the National Park Service feels compelled to spend taxpayer dollars to lower the park's beauty and functionality.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Copy to: National Park Service

[attached comments]

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 Jot, 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 Jot. 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.

Submitted by:

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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Correspondence: 92

Author Information

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

E-mail:

Correspondence Information

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August 7, 2015
[REDACTED]

Fort Hunt Park SDP/EA
Attn: Claire Rozdilski
National Park Service
700 George Washington Memorial Parkway
c/o Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA22101

Dear Ms. Rozdilski:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the site development plan for improvements to Ft. Hunt Park. I have the following recommendations for inclusion in the plan:

- a) Mt Vernon Trail Accessibility to Ft Hunt Park. Along or at the entrance to Ft. Hunt Park, provide a hiker/biker trail path linking the Mt. Vernon Trail that parallels the George Washington Parkway to Ft Hunt Park. At present there is only the park entrance roadway which is designed for vehicular traffic. This current layout poses a safety hazard to both pedestrians as well as bicycle traffic accessing/leaving the park;
- b) Ft Hunt Pier. Replace the "wharf remnant pilings" with another open pier or wharf. This would provide a river level vista of the Potomac River which was the I-95 of the 18th century and a river level view of Ft Washington. This pier/wharf could also serve as a stopover rest point for a Potomac River Canoe I Kayak Trail network which begins at Harpers Ferry or points further north. This would also be a great vista for wildlife viewing and perhaps could be partially funded with Federal Fish

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and Wildlife resources. This pier/wharf concept would also be in line with the plan to restore "the historic sight line to Potomac River from Battery Robinson" and is part of the historic character of Ft Hunt Park;

c) Amphitheatre. Build a 40-50 person open air amphitheater designed for open air concerts, park interpretive talks, campfires and plays. This amphitheater would supplement the current pavilion which is not really designed as a theatre. I recommend a design similar to the one located at Moraine Park Museum and Amphitheater, Rocky Mountain National Park (see http://www.nps.gov/cultural_landscapes/snp/975211.html)

d) Ft Hunt Park Northern Access Path. Pave or gravel and widen the dirt path from Ft Hunt Road to the pavement leading to the U.S. Park Police station. This well-worn path is currently used by hikers/bikers who access Ft. Hunt Park from the northern park boundary.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, please contact me if you have any questions or require clarification to these recommendations.

Sincerely,



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