

**U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service, Northeast Region**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
MARTIN VAN BUREN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
COLUMBIA COUNTY, NEW YORK**

INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service (NPS) proposes to adopt a General Management Plan (GMP) for Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (NHS) to establish the overall management direction for the park for the foreseeable future. The GMP provides the first comprehensive planning strategy for the park since the completion of the Master Plan in 1970. With the 2009 expansion of the park boundary from 39 acres to approximately 295 acres, there has been an increased need for management direction. The new GMP addresses this need through strategies for resource protection, visitor services, interpretive programming, landscape treatment, facilities development, and partnerships.

To assist in the decision-making process, the NPS prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that evaluated three alternatives for the GMP and the environmental consequences of implementing each of the alternatives on a variety of park resources and values. The *Martin Van Buren General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment, 2015* (GMP/EA) was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended; the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1500-1508); and the NPS Director's Order #12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making* (DO-12, 2011) and accompanying DO-12 Handbook (NPS 2001).

During preparation of the GMP/EA, the NPS consulted with federal and state agencies, tribes, partners, interested and affected parties, and the general public. The GMP/EA was also circulated for a 60-day public and agency review period, and two public meetings were held during that time. No changes were made to the alternatives or the impact analysis as a result of agency or tribal consultation or public comment.

SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

The NPS has selected Alternative C: In the Footsteps of Martin Van Buren for implementation as the approved GMP for Martin Van Buren NHS. The selected alternative was described on pages 63-68 of the GMP/EA and also includes the actions described on pages 52-56 as common to Alternatives B and C. The selected alternative contains one text change to clarify the relationship with a park partner. That change is identified on the errata sheet provided as Appendix B.

Comprehensive Vision

The park will provide opportunities for visitors to walk in the footsteps of Martin Van Buren – as eighth president, politician, progressive farmer and family man. The property will evoke the historic period at the time of Martin Van Buren’s residence during his later political career to the end of his life in 1862. The story of Van Buren’s life and political career will be told at the Lindenwald mansion and at exhibits at the visitor contact station. In addition, the park will maintain the site’s landscape to reflect Van Buren’s vision for a progressive farm and the socio-economic changes taking place in the antebellum period. The 2009 boundary expansion will allow interpretation of the ongoing agricultural history of the site to the present day.

Resource Protection

The significant natural and cultural resources and values of the Lindenwald estate and farm will be preserved and maintained in good condition as a primary action. Treatments may include programs of rehabilitation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptive reuse.

Historic Management Zone

Lindenwald

The Lindenwald mansion will continue to serve as a house museum with guided tours for visitors. President Van Buren’s life and political career, with an emphasis on agricultural context, will be interpreted at Lindenwald. Projects involving Lindenwald’s furnishings and interior will continue as funding becomes available, such as the restoration of Victorian architectural details, including interior plaster and the porch. The ultimate NPS treatment goal for Lindenwald is full restoration to the period of 1839-1862.

South Gatehouse

The South Gatehouse exterior will be restored to reflect the 1839-1862 period of significance, following the recommendations of the Historic Structures Report.

North Gatehouse Foundation

The North Gatehouse foundation will be preserved in its current condition as a ruin and a contributing element to the cultural landscape. The existing wayside exhibit that explains the significance of this feature will be maintained and updated as needed.

Farm Cottage

The deed to the Farm Cottage was transferred from the Open Space Institute to NPS in 2011. The Farm Cottage and its interpretation are integral to understanding the historic farm. The location and spatial mass of the building contribute to the historic character of the park. The Farm Cottage is a priority for treatment. The exterior will be rehabilitated to the appearance of the 1839-1862 period of significance and interpreted as part of the cultural landscape. The interior will be re-purposed for use as park headquarters.

Archeological Resources

All archeological resources will be protected, preserved and maintained in their current condition following NPS standards and guidelines and implementing the recommendations of the 2004 Archeological Overview and Assessment. This report will also be utilized to direct and prioritize

specific archeological surveys needed to determine the precise boundaries and conditions of historic farm roads and historic building foundations. The recent boundary expansion requires the preparation of a plan for the protection of archeological sites on lands in this area. Consultations with the Tribal Preservation Office of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community of the Mohican Nation and others will continue so that this aspect of the park's history can be incorporated into interpretation of antebellum history. NPS will also assume responsibility for carrying out the terms of the current Open Space Institute conservation easement on 101 acres.

Cultural Landscape

The cultural landscape surrounding Lindenwald will be restored or rehabilitated to the greatest extent feasible based on the Cultural Landscape Treatment Plan.

Historic Transition Zone

Cultural Landscape

The park will interpretively emphasize the Van Buren home, historic outbuildings and the working farm. Although elements of the landscape have significantly changed since Van Buren's occupancy, the cultural landscape on and surrounding the park retains substantial agricultural character that reflects the farming interests of Van Buren and succeeding landowners. Future activities and development will strive to expand the visitor experience by fostering an authentic sense of Hudson Valley agricultural heritage. Treatment of the cultural landscape will be guided by the recommendations of a new Cultural Landscape Treatment Plan based on the 2004 Cultural Landscape Plan for the farmland and the 1997 Cultural Landscape Treatment Plan.

Land use patterns based on the temporary NPS structures have made impacts to the contributing cultural landscape and longer viewsheds. The 20th-century maintenance and museum storage buildings will be removed from the landscape.

Museum Collections

The park's museum collection and archives will be preserved and maintained in a secure, climate-controlled museum storage space. Museum storage will be relocated to a shared facility with the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site. According to the Northeast Region Museum Collection Curatorial Facility Plan (2006), Martin Van Buren NHS will continue to store archeology collections in the shared regional facility at Fort Stanwix National Monument in Rome, New York. The park will seek to acquire, collect and display artifacts that could have been used, worn or owned by the Van Burens and Lindenwald's domestic and farm workers. Such items could include reproduction farm tools and personal effects illuminating the social history of the Van Buren era. The park's Scope of Collections Statement will be updated to reflect this new priority emphasizing agricultural and social history.

Administrative Zone

The park will construct a multi-use facility to house visitor services and administrative support. The current parking lot could be relocated and screened from neighboring properties with appropriate landscaping. The new maintenance facility will be located in the Administrative Zone.

Agricultural Zone

The 2009 boundary adjustment has significantly expanded the range of the cultural landscape so that Van Buren's farming techniques could be related to contemporary views of sustainability and modern agricultural technology. The park will be able to extend both ranger-led and self-led tours to areas where Van Buren practiced progressive farming. Collaboration will continue with Roxbury Farm and others to support active farming on the Lower Terrace and portions of the Upper Terrace using contemporary progressive techniques to preserve the viability of the agricultural soils.

The modern landscape will be enhanced with interpretive signage to guide the visitor through comparisons of life on a farm in the mid-19th century and the contemporary farm of the early 21st century. The park will explore the feasibility of restoring or rehabilitating some areas of the Upper Terrace.

Natural Resource Zone

The park includes terrestrial and aquatic habitats. The NPS will continue to promote protection and stewardship of natural communities and the processes that shape them in consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, New York Department of Environmental Conservation, Columbia County, Roxbury Farm and the Town of Kinderhook.

Visitor Experience

The park will focus on having visitors walk in the footsteps of Martin Van Buren – as eighth president, politician, progressive farmer and family man. The property will evoke the historic period at the time of Martin Van Buren's residence during his later political career to his death in 1862.

The park will also immerse visitors in direct experience of Lindenwald as a farm and its cultural landscape. Talks, demonstrations and workshops will give visitors an opportunity to learn about historic and contemporary sustainable farming techniques. Artifacts illuminating the agricultural and social history of Lindenwald will be collected and displayed in the visitor contact station and in historic interiors where appropriate.

Motivation to Visit

A goal of the alternative is to increase visitation by exposing visitors to new ways to experience the park. Since the park will emphasize historical and current experimental agricultural practices, visitors will experience how Martin Van Buren's farming practices relate to contemporary sustainable agriculture. The Hudson Valley has a concentration of farm businesses that practice sustainable agriculture and, therefore, the park will have the capacity to generate a good number of visitors from the region.

Orientation

Visitors will arrive and circulate through the property and experience the place as Martin Van Buren did—they will walk as he walked. Visitors will receive orientation at the visitor contact station. Visitors will be able to learn about farming at Lindenwald, both in Van Buren's time and today.

Interpretation and Education

Lindenwald will remain a core visitor experience. The theme of “walking in the footsteps” of Martin Van Buren will tell the story of his political career and impact while also focusing on the daily lives of the Van Buren family and the workers of Lindenwald. Exhibits, demonstrations, and waysides will interpret the farming techniques of Native Americans, the Dutch and Van Buren, up to the present day. Artifacts such as reproduction agricultural implements and personal effects of workers will be displayed in the Lindenwald basement and in other historic interiors. New interpretive exhibits will be installed to communicate stories about the farm workers who lived at the South and North Gatehouses and Farm Cottage.

When feasible, programming will invite visitors to actively participate in agricultural activities and the maintenance of the cultural landscape. Visitors will have opportunities to observe modern sustainable biodynamic farming and participate in gardening and farming workshops. Nature walks, farming demonstrations and farm ecology programs will be offered as a regular component of the interpretive program.

Impressions

Visitors will achieve a broader understanding of Martin Van Buren’s experiment in progressive farming and the centrality of agriculture to antebellum politics. Visitors will learn how the history of land use and politics at Lindenwald reflected the complexity of political and social upheaval prior to the Civil War. These impressions will integrate the story of Van Buren’s life as a political strategist with his later life as gentleman farmer. Visitors will leave with a new appreciation of the eighth president and an understanding of his role in the history and development of the United States. With modern intrusions removed, visitors will experience the working farm fields that are part of the original cultural landscape and the scenic views spanning to the Catskill Mountains.

Transportation

Additional alternatives may be available to the public for transportation and this could increase visitors. The Alternative Transportation Study focuses on the feasibility of utilizing a shuttle system or some other form of transportation to provide the connection between local Amtrak train stations (Hudson and Albany-Rensselaer), Martin Van Buren NHS and other sites. Connections to historic sites in Columbia County will be explored to encourage heritage travelers to visit multiple sites in the same trip. The park will continue to work with the Landmarks Visitor Collaborative and other historic sites to support transportation connecting sites in the region.

Operations and Facilities

The park will construct a multi-use facility to house visitor services and administrative support. This facility will replace existing trailers. Visitor parking needs will be reviewed and parking could be relocated near the visitor facility. The 20th-century maintenance and collections storage facilities will be removed and relocated and historic circulation patterns will be re-established. Museum storage will be relocated to the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site. The maintenance facility will be relocated outside the historic core in a new building. The park will work with Roxbury Farm to develop a trail system.

The towns of Kinderhook, Stockport and Stuyvesant are implementing the first part of their trail plan that will eventually connect both Lindenwald and the village of Stuyvesant Falls. This trail section is part of the greater Hudson River Greenway trail system and represents an important link to other regional resources.

Partnerships and Outreach

The development of a positive working relationship with Roxbury Farm is a high priority for the park. The park will also seek to create other partnerships to develop long-term, mutually beneficial projects with an emphasis on sustainability, the agricultural history of Lindenwald and the history of agriculture in the Hudson Valley region. Projects will be developed with existing partners such as the Open Space Institute and others to preserve and support sustainable farming at Martin Van Buren NHS. Partnerships also will be sought with scholarly organizations and individuals engaged in agricultural research and contemporary farm issues and practices. Outreach will be expanded to identify new partners to place park literature and/or exhibits at their sites. The park will identify Martin Van Buren related sites throughout the greater area and work with partners to develop an agricultural heritage driving tour.

The park will continue to enhance the existing strong working relationships with the Friends of Lindenwald, Columbia County Historical Society, Landmarks Visitor Collaborative, the State University at Albany and other organizations to present special events and promotional activities about the park and to protect cultural landscape and historic farmland within the park boundary. The mutually beneficial relationship with the Friends of Lindenwald, a public support group that contributes constituency support and funding for a variety of park goals, will continue. The park will continue to accept donations and seek public and private funds, where appropriate, to accomplish the resource preservation and activities described. Consultation will continue with landowners, state and federal agencies regarding protection of archeological resources, scenic viewsheds and the historic resources associated with the park. On matters related to natural resources, consultations will also continue with local, state and federal agencies and other environmental organizations. The park will consult with the Tribal Preservation Offices of the Stockbridge – Munsee Community of the Mohican Nation, Delaware Nation and Delaware Tribe of Indians regarding potential partnership initiatives at the park.

NPS will maintain agreements with other agencies and organizations for purposes of resource preservation, visitor access, visitor and resource protection and public programming. The park will continue to pursue formal agreements with fire, medical, and law enforcement protection through the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, New York State Police, Columbia County Sheriff's Department, and Stuyvesant Falls Volunteer Fire Department.

NPS will continue to maintain up-to-date and accurate websites; supply printed materials at the visitor contact station and other appropriate off-site areas; and will continue coordinating with other nearby national parks, historic sites, the media, and tourism organizations to provide visitors with basic information and orientation before and during their visit.

Responding to Climate Change

Climate change is expected to result in changes in the Northeastern United States. Both historical trends and future projections suggest increases in temperature, precipitation levels and intensity of weather events, such as storms, should be expected. In addition, climate change is expected to affect Kinderhook, New York's weather, wetlands, habitats, agricultural land, historic sites, and archeological resources. These changes will have direct implications on resource management, park operations, and visitor use and experience. Some of these impacts are expected at Martin Van Buren NHS in the time frame of this management plan.

Opportunities exist for Martin Van Buren NHS to incorporate climate change adaptation into long-term planning for the park. Specific options to protect Martin Van Buren NHS's resources include integrating long-term planning into park operations, monitoring observed and projected climate trends, conducting climate-related vulnerability assessments for fundamental resources and values, monitoring climate sensitive species, and implementing a range of adaptive management actions.

Martin Van Buren NHS has adopted the management goal of using and promoting innovation, best practices, and partnerships to respond to the challenges of climate change and its effects on park resources. NPS staff and partners will proactively monitor, plan, and adapt to the effects of climate change on natural and cultural resources and visitor amenities by using the best information as it becomes available. The park will coordinate with other agencies in developing tools and strategies to help identify and manage climate change impacts. By adopting the best information on climate change as it becomes available, the park will be positioned to respond quickly and appropriately to the local effects of climate change.

Examples of future actions:

- Inventory, monitor and assess vulnerability of key inventory and monitor attributes of the natural systems, cultural resources, and visitor experiences likely to be affected by climate change.
- Restore key ecosystem features and processes, and protect key cultural resources to increase their resiliency to climate change. By reducing other types of impacts on resources, the overall condition of the resources could more easily recover from or resist the impacts of climate change.
- Reduce current and future stressors to the resource and the environment; this will improve the condition of the resource and build resiliency in the ecosystem that will help to minimize future adverse effects of climate change.
- Give highest priority to preserving cultural resources and artifacts in situ, coupled with sustainable efforts (intervention techniques) to mitigate and reduce any stressors that might adversely affect the resource.
- Use up-to-date policy guidance to respond to changing conditions.
- Opportunities will be pursued in park operations and visitor services to use and promote "green" technologies and products and reduce overall energy and resource consumption. In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the park will increase its use of renewable energy and other sustainable practices so it is a carbon neutral park. Park education and interpretive efforts will engage park employees, partners, visitors, and the public on

climate change, providing the latest park research and monitoring data and trends, informing the public about what responses are being taken at the park, and inspiring visitors to reduce their carbon footprint. Some examples of future actions include:

- Test, use, and promote carbon-neutral energy, innovations, and infrastructure for NPS and partner operations.
- Consolidate park operations to reduce energy consumption.
- Construct and operate visitor facilities with the highest sustainability standards possible
- Use biodegradable/recycled resources and zero waste options.
- Reduce vehicle miles.

MITIGATION MEASURES

To help ensure the protection of natural and cultural resources and the quality of the visitor experience, the following protective measures are included in the selected alternative and will be implemented where feasible. The NPS will implement an appropriate level of monitoring throughout the construction process to help ensure that protective measures are being properly implemented and are achieving their intended results.

Specific mitigation measures will include:

- Historic Structure Reports (HSR), Cultural Landscape Reports (CLR), and the Cultural Landscape Treatment Plan and Agricultural Management Guidelines will be used to guide rehabilitation efforts and future maintenance of the park's historic structures and landscape.
- All activities will comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation (48 Federal Register 44716, revised) and National Park Service Management Policies 2006.
- Construction projects and agricultural use will mitigate any runoff, erosion, and sedimentation through best management practices.
- Mitigation measures will be taken to avoid adversely impacting federally-listed threatened or endangered species during construction and cultural landscape rehabilitation efforts. For example, the park may survey trees that could serve as habitat for the Indiana bat and the Northern Long-Eared bat to determine how to avoid adverse impacts on those trees, or may limit tree cutting during seasons when bats might be present. As site-specific actions are implemented, the park will consult with the USFWS on potential adverse impacts to federally-listed species and measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts.
- As site-specific actions are implemented, the park will continue to consult with the SHPO regarding potential effects on historic properties.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

As described in the GMP/EA, the selected alternative has the potential for adverse impacts on federal- and state-listed species and wetlands and surface water; however, no potential for significant adverse impacts was identified through the analysis of impacts or the results of agency and tribal consultation or public comment.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service database identifies three federally-listed species that have the potential to be located within Columbia County and the boundary of the park: the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*)-endangered; the Northern Long-Eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)-threatened; and the bog turtle (*Clemmys (Glyptemys) muhlenbergii*)-threatened. None of the species were identified during previous park surveys (most recent 2005) as being present at the park, but suitable habitats for these species do occur within park boundaries. The park is also within a focal area of the New England Cottontail rabbit, identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a priority species of conservation concern. As site-specific projects are planned, the park would seek to avoid and minimize potential impacts to these species and their habitats through consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and incorporating appropriate mitigation and conservation measures; for example, surveys for presence of one or more of these species and/or suitable habitats or seasonal restrictions on construction activities. There are no actions planned that would affect habitat for the bog turtle, and no impacts on this species are expected.

The New York State Natural Heritage Program's database identifies five species which are of state concern: the Indiana bat, the Northern Long-Eared bat, the bog turtle, the Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) and the Jefferson Salamander (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*). The harrier and salamander were both identified through surveys as being present in the park. The state lists three rare plant records found in the vicinity of Martin Van Buren NHS: Davis' Sedge (*Carex davisii*) - New York State Threatened; Rattlebox (*Crotalaria sagittalis*) - New York State Endangered; Spotted Pondweed (*Potamogeton pulcher*) - New York State Threatened. Although these species have been located within one to two miles of the site, only the Davis' Sedge has been located within the park boundary along Kinderhook Creek.

As described for the federally-listed species, while the selected alternative could potentially have adverse impacts to some of these state-listed species during construction activities, the park will incorporate appropriate mitigation measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts. Increased restoration, interpretation, and education will provide mostly beneficial effects to threatened and endangered species and habitat. No significant adverse impacts to listed species or species of conservation concern are expected to result from implementation of the selected alternative.

No new development will occur in a floodplain and any wetlands located within the project area will be avoided and protected from sedimentation during construction. Even though the soil types within the study area are designated as prime farmland soils, the selected alternative will not result in a change to existing agricultural uses or an irretrievable loss of these soil types.

Finding of No Significant Impact
General Management Plan for Martin Van Buren National Historic Site

The selected alternative will result in beneficial impacts on historic structures, cultural landscapes, museum collections, visitor use and experience, public health and safety, park operations and facilities, and socioeconomics.

Under the selected alternative, rehabilitation efforts will be undertaken for historic and cultural resources, including Lindenwald, the Farm Cottage, the South Gatehouse, and the cultural landscape. Rehabilitation of the historic structures and landscape will return their appearance to the period of significance and preserve their character-defining features. Ground-disturbing activities will be preceded by archeological investigations to ensure that there are no significant archeological resources that could be impacted by the work. Should archeological resources be encountered, the NPS will take appropriate steps to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects to the resources.

Other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions were analyzed for their potential to contribute to cumulative impacts in association with implementation of the selected alternative. The selected alternative seeks to ameliorate any adverse effects associated with proposed actions so that the overall level of cumulative impact under each impact topic would either be arrested or would decline compared to existing conditions. The effects of the selected alternative would comprise a very small component of these cumulative impacts, given the size and scope of the landscape within and surrounding the park. Overall, the impacts of the selected alternative, combined with the cumulative beneficial and adverse impacts from other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, would not result in significant adverse cumulative impacts.

The selected alternative will not have a significant adverse effect on the human environment. There are no significant adverse impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, sites or districts listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the NPS selected alternative will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an EIS is not required for this action and thus will not be prepared.

DECISION REACHED AND RATIONALE

The NPS has selected Alternative C: In the Footsteps of Martin Van Buren for implementation as described in this Finding of No Significant Impact. This alternative best addresses such issues raised in the general management plan as enhancing the visitor experience in relation to historical farming activities at President Marin Van Buren's Lindenwald farm, rehabilitation of the cultural landscape, preserving the site's historical structures and collections, and making operational facilities more efficient. This alternative also causes the least negative impacts to the biological and physical environment.

Therefore, I have decided to select Alternative C as the approved GMP for MAVA.

Recommended: *Sarah Olson* *1/14/16*
Sarah Olson, Superintendent Date
Martin Van Buren National Historic Site

Approved: *Michael A. Caldwell* *1/21/16*
Michael A. Caldwell, Regional Director Date
Northeast Region, National Park Service

- Appendix A Agency and Tribal Consultation
- Appendix B Public Involvement and Comments Received on the EA
- Appendix C Errata Sheet
- Appendix D Non-Impairment Determination

APPENDIX A

Summary of Agency and Tribal Consultation

Section 7 Endangered Species Act Consultation

On January 29, 2009, NPS sent a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) informing of preparation of the GMP/EIS and requesting input into the plan and information regarding federally-listed threatened and endangered species in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. NPS staff has coordinated with this agency during the planning process. On August 20, 2015, NPS sent a letter and a copy of the GMP/EA requesting agency review and comment on the plan. USFWS responded with a letter dated December 24, 2015.

The USFWS letter helped clarify potential impacts on threatened and endangered species by providing more detailed information about the presence of such species on the park site. The USFWS provided updated information on the presence of federally-threatened and endangered in the park. This information has led to modifications in the GMP/EA, which are included in the Errata section. For example, the USFWS indicated that removal of trees on the site could affect the habitat for the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*)-endangered; and the Northern Long-Eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)-threatened; therefore, possible measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts such as tree surveys and seasonal limits on tree cutting have been incorporated. USFWS advised that NPS consult with the agency about impacts on habitats for these threatened and endangered species on a project-by-project basis as funding becomes available. Thus, as site-specific actions are implemented, the park will consult with USFWS on potential impacts to federally-listed species and appropriate measures to avoid and minimize adverse impacts.

Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act Consultation

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the 2008 Nationwide Programmatic Agreement, the NPS consulted with the New York State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in the preparation of the GMP/EIS. On January 29, 2009, NPS sent a letter to the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) announcing the GMP/EA process and requesting input. On August 18 and 20, 2015, NPS sent letters and copies of the GMP/EA requesting agency review and comment on the plan.

A letter from the New York SHPO dated October 23, 2015 supported the preferred alternative, stating: "Based on our overall review of the General Management Plan, the New York State Historic Preservation Office finds that the plan would have No Adverse Effect on the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site. Each of the options defined for the long range goals of the property appear to be carefully plan[ned] for the protection of the physical resources of this site."

Some of the actions proposed in the GMP/EA will fall under the guidance of the NPS nationwide Programmatic Agreement for Section 106 while other planning and actions will require the standard Section 106 process. The park will continue to consult with the New York SHPO as project-specific details of the park's rehabilitation efforts become available.

Tribal Consultation

On January 29, 2009, NPS sent consultation letters regarding the plan preparation to Indian tribes historically associated with the region around Martin Van Buren NHS. These letters invited participation in the planning process. These tribes were the Delaware Nation, the Delaware Tribe, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. On August 18, 2015, NPS sent a letter of consultation and the GMP/EA seeking comment on the plan from the three tribes. NPS sent a consultation request letter to a second historic preservation official of Stockbridge-Munsee Community on August 21, 2015. No responses have been received from the tribes.

APPENDIX B

Public Involvement and Comments Received on the EA

The GMP/EA for Martin Van Buren NHS represents input from cooperating park partners; participants in local community meetings; local, regional, and national government agencies; and comments gathered at a public scoping session. The public was informed about the process and invited to participate through newsletters, emails, letters and response cards. NPS held a public scoping meeting on February 18, 2009. A GMP newsletter was published for distribution prior to the public scoping meeting.

The GMP/EA was made available for public review and comment on August 5, 2015 and was followed by a 60-day comment period that concluded on October 5, 2015. The park distributed a news release announcing the availability of the GMP/EA and posted the document on the park planning webpage. The NPS mailed printed copies of the GMP to interested parties. The NPS held public meetings on the GMP/EA on August 26, 2015 and August 27, 2015, at Hudson, New York, and Valatie, New York, respectively. NPS sent out an announcement of the public meetings to identified organizations and individuals. Three members of the public attended the Hudson meeting and seven attended the Valatie meeting. All who spoke supported the plan's preferred alternative. One person lauded the plan's emphasis on including the historic farm and cultural landscape in the visitor experience. Another person expressed concern that, by moving the archival collection to the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS, the collection might lose its sense of context.

At the conclusion of the public comment period on October 5, 2015, one public comment was submitted online via the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website. This correspondence, from The Friends of Lindenwald, was supportive of the actions described in the Preferred Alternative of the GMP/EA. NPS also received one email with comments.

Comments are fully documented in the project's administrative record (which is accessible on the PEPC website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/depo>).

APPENDIX C

Errata Sheet for Martin Van Buren National Historic Site General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment

Following is a revision to the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment discovered after publication of the document. This errata sheet should be maintained with all copies of the General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment for a complete and final record on which the Finding of No Significant Impact will be based.

The revision is listed below, noted by page and paragraph. The changes is indicated by presenting the revised sentence with deleted text shown in ~~strikeout~~ and added text shown in underline.

Page 66, 6th paragraph:

The relationship with the Friends of Lindenwald, a public support group that contributes constituency support and funding for a variety of park goals, would ~~be considered~~ continue.

Page 91, 4th & 5th paragraphs:

The Southern Swamp is located on property owned by Roxbury Farm.

Of the 295.53 acres within the park boundary, the National Park Service owns 44.53 acres. This is the area where the National Park Service would build new structures, which will require NEPA and Section 106 review. The only wetland on NPS property is a fresh water pond located near the Farm Cottage. The General Management Plan does not propose any projects that would impact this wetland.

Page 91, 7th paragraph and Page 92, 1st & 2nd paragraphs:

Federally-listed Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website indicates that ~~four~~ three federally-listed species have the potential to be located within Columbia County and the boundary of the park: the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*)-endangered; the Northern Long-Eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)-~~proposed endangered~~threatened; ~~the New England Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus transitionalis*)-a candidate species;~~ and the bog turtle (*Clemmys (Glyptemys) muhlenbergii*)-threatened. None of the species were identified during previous park surveys as being present at the park, but suitable habitats for the species do occur within park boundaries.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Northeast Region has identified the New England Cottontail rabbit as a priority species that is of conservation concern. Since Martin Van Buren NHS is located within an identified New England Cottontail rabbit focal area, the park seeks to take conservation measures for this species.

State-listed Species

The New York State Natural Heritage Program's website indicated ~~two~~ five species which are of state concern: the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*)-endangered; the Northern Long-Eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)-threatened; the bog turtle (*Clemmys (Glyptemys)muhlenbergii*)-threatened; the Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)-threatened; and the Jefferson Salamander (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*)-special concern, all of which were identified through surveys as being present in the park. The NHP lists three rare plant records found in the vicinity of Martin Van Buren NHS (see February 19, 2009 letter in Appendix B): ~~Davis' Sedge (*Carex davisii*)-New York State threatened; Rattlebox (*Crotalaria sagittalis*)-New York State endangered; Spotted Pondweed (*Potamogeton pulcher*)-New York State threatened~~. Although these species have been located within 1-2 miles of the site, only the Davis' Sedge has been located within the park boundary along Kinderhook Creek.

Page 125 2nd paragraph – Page 127, 2nd paragraph:

Alternative A: No-Action

Impacts

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, three federally-listed species have the potential to be located within the boundary of the park: the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*)-endangered, Northern Long-Eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)-~~proposed endangered~~threatened, and the bog turtle (*Clemmys (Glyptemys) muhlenbergii*)-threatened. The park is also within a focal area for the New England Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus transitionalis*), a species of conservation concern. It should be noted that none of the species were identified during previous park surveys as being present at the park, but suitable habitats for the species do occur within park boundaries. Under the No-Action Alternative, existing management strategies would continue for the agricultural fields which would not alter existing habitat conditions and no measureable change in ~~federal or state-listed species habitat~~ existing habitats would occur outside of natural variability. ~~Impacts to species and communities due to restoration or rehabilitation projects are not likely due to habitat preferences and a lack of documented occurrences of these species in and surrounding the structures. Further, no construction or rehabilitation projects are proposed under Alternative A that would affect existing habitats. Therefore, Alternative A would have no impacts on any of these species.~~

Cumulative Impacts

Present and reasonably foreseeable future actions that would contribute to the cumulative impact to federally-listed threatened and endangered species at Martin Van Buren NHS is increased development pressure in the Hudson River Valley. Additional development in the area of the park would have an adverse impact on these species by reducing areas of natural habitat. Depending on the level of development, these adverse impacts could potentially be noticeable. When the impact of future projects is combined with the adverse impact on threatened, endangered, and special concern species as a result of Alternative A, adverse cumulative impacts would be expected. Alternative A would not contribute an imperceptible adverse increment to the overall cumulative impact.

Conclusion

~~Alternative A would result in adverse impacts to federally listed threatened and endangered species as areas of the cultural landscape are disturbed during rehabilitation and construction efforts. These adverse impacts, however, would be mitigated through the implementation of mitigation measures including pre-construction surveys. In addition, adverse impacts would only exist during construction efforts and long term impacts would not be expected to continue. When these impacts are combined with the adverse cumulative impacts under Alternative A, an overall adverse impact would be expected. Adverse impacts associated with Alternative A would not be significant because they would only exist short term and mitigation measures would help to ensure that threatened, endangered, or special concern species and their habitats would continue to be protected. Alternative A would have no impacts on federally-listed or state-listed threatened or endangered species, or on species of conservation concern, and would not contribute to adverse cumulative impacts.~~

Alternative B: Martin Van Buren and Civic Discourse

Impacts

Under Alternative B, existing management strategies would continue for the agricultural fields which would not alter existing habitat conditions and no measure able change in federal or state-listed species habitat would occur outside of natural variability. ~~Impacts~~ There is potential for adverse impacts to species and communities the two species of bats and the cottontail rabbit due to park structural stabilization proposed construction or rehabilitation projects are not likely if these activities alter existing habitat conditions; for example, if tree removal is needed, this may potentially have adverse impacts on the two listed bats. due to habitat preferences and a lack of documented occurrences of these species in and surrounding the structures. Rehabilitation of the cultural landscapes have the potential to disturb habitat areas for federal and state listed species, however. This adverse impact would be temporary and would only last during the period of construction. In addition, all species are mobile and would be expected to vacate those areas during construction activities. As site-specific projects are planned, the park would incorporate appropriate mitigation and conservation measures in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Such measures could include pre-construction surveys to identify the presence of these species and/or suitable habitats; using seasonal limits on construction activities; or other appropriate measures that would mitigate minimize the likelihood of impacting any severe or persistent adverse impacts to these species during construction activities. Should construction staging areas be needed, the park would survey the area for federal and state-listed species and select the most appropriate location based on those findings. No actions are planned that would affect the pond located on park lands; therefore, there would be no impacts on bog turtles.

Cumulative Impacts

~~Cumulative impacts to federally listed threatened and endangered species under Alternative B~~ The impacts of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions on the federal and state-listed species and the species of conservation concern would be the same as described under Alternative A above. When the impacts of these projects are combined with the adverse impact on threatened, endangered, and special concern species as a result of Alternative B, adverse cumulative impacts would be expected. Alternative B would be expected to contribute an imperceptible adverse increment to the overall cumulative impact.

Conclusion

~~Alternative B would result in short-term adverse impacts to federally-listed threatened and endangered species during periods of construction. Impacts under Alternative B would be much the same as under Alternative A. Alternative B has some potential for adverse impacts to the two species of federal and state-listed bats and the New England Cottontail rabbit, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service priority species of conservation concern. Adverse impacts would be primarily habitat alterations, such as the removal of trees that may be utilized by one or both of the bats. Mitigation measures, including such as pre-construction surveys or seasonal restrictions on construction activities, would be used to lessen the avoid and minimize potential adverse impacts in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Therefore, any adverse impacts on the two bats or the cottontail rabbit are anticipated to be minimal. When these impacts are combined with the adverse cumulative impacts under Alternative B, an overall adverse impact would be expected. Adverse impacts associated with Alternative B would not be significant because they would only exist short-term and mitigation measures would help to ensure that threatened, endangered, or special concern species and their habitats would continue to be protected.~~

Alternative C: In the Footsteps of Martin Van Buren

Impacts

~~Under Alternative C, existing management strategies would continue for the agricultural fields, which would not alter existing habitat conditions and no measureable change in federal or state-listed species habitat would occur outside of natural variability. Impacts to federal and state-listed species and communities due to park structural stabilization construction or rehabilitation projects are not likely due to habitat preferences and a lack of documented occurrences of these species in and surrounding the structures. Rehabilitation of the cultural landscapes has the potential to disturb habitat areas for federal and state-listed species, however, this adverse impact would be temporary and only last during the period of construction. In addition, all species are mobile and would be expected to vacate those areas during construction activities. Pre-construction surveys would mitigate the likelihood of impacting these species during construction activities. Should construction staging areas be needed, the park would survey the area for federal and state-listed species and select the most appropriate location based on those findings. Under Alternative C, management strategies for the agricultural fields and proposed construction and rehabilitation projects would be the same as described under Alternative B; therefore, the potential for adverse impacts to the two bat species and the cottontail rabbit would be the same as under Alternative B, and there is no potential for adverse impacts to bog turtles. As described under Alternative B, the NPS would consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as site-specific projects are planned and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures to avoid and minimize potential adverse impacts to these species; thus, any potential adverse impacts would be expected to be minimal.~~

Cumulative Impacts

~~Cumulative impacts to federally-listed threatened and endangered species under Alternative C would be the same as under ~~Alternative A~~ Alternative B above. ~~When the impacts of these projects are combined with the adverse impact on federally-listed threatened and endangered species as a result of Alternative C, adverse cumulative impacts would be expected, although no adverse impacts are anticipated from Alternative C. Alternative C would contribute an imperceptible adverse increment to the overall cumulative impact.~~~~

Conclusion

~~Overall, Alternative C would result in adverse impacts to federally listed threatened and endangered species due to the temporary disturbance of habitat during cultural landscape rehabilitation efforts. The adverse impacts would be reduced through mitigation measures and would only be expected to last during the time of construction. When these impacts are combined with the adverse cumulative impacts under Alternative C, an overall adverse impact would be expected. Adverse impacts associated with Alternative C would not be significant because they would only exist short term and mitigation measures would help to ensure that federally listed threatened and endangered species and their habitats would continue to be protected. Adverse impacts to federal and state-listed species and species of conservation concern under Alternative C would be the same as under Alternative B. As with Alternative B, mitigation measures developed in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be incorporated under Alternative C to avoid and minimize potential adverse impacts to these species; any adverse impacts would be expected to be minimal.~~

APPENDIX D

Non-Impairment Determination

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site General Management Plan

By enacting the NPS Organic Act of 1916 (Organic Act), Congress directed the U.S. Department of Interior and the NPS to manage units “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such a means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (16 USC § 1). Congress reiterated this mandate in the Redwood National Park Expansion Act of 1978 by stating that NPS must conduct its actions in a manner that will ensure no “derogation of the values and purposes for which these various areas have been established, except as may have been or shall be directly and specifically provided by Congress” (16 USC 1a-1).

NPS Management Policies 2006, Section 1.4.4, explains the prohibition on impairment of park resources and values:

While Congress has given the Service the management discretion to allow impacts within parks, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement (generally enforceable by the federal courts) that the Park Service must leave park resources and values unimpaired unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise. This, the cornerstone of the Organic Act, establishes the primary responsibility of the Nation Park Service. It ensures that park resources and values will continue to exist in a condition that will allow the American people to have present and future opportunities for enjoyment of them.

The NPS has discretion to allow impacts on park resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of a park (NPS 2006 sec. 1.4.3). However, the NPS cannot allow an adverse impact that would constitute impairment of the affected resources and values (NPS 2006 sec 1.4.3). An action constitutes an impairment when its impacts “harm the integrity of Park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values” (NPS 2006 sec 1.4.5). To determine impairment, the NPS must evaluate “the particular resources and values that would be affected; the severity, duration, and timing of the impact; the direct and indirect effects of the impact; and the cumulative effects of the impact in question and other impacts” (NPS 2006 sec 1.4.5).

This determination on impairment has been prepared for the selected alternative described in this FONSI. An impairment determination is made for all resource impact topics analyzed for the selected alternative. An impairment determination is not made for visitor use and experience, socioeconomics, and park operations and facilities because impairment findings relate back to park resources and values, and these impact areas are not generally considered to be park resources or values according to the Organic Act, and cannot be impaired in the same way that an action can impair park resources and values.

Implementation of the selected alternative will not result in impairment of park resources or values. The NPS bases this conclusion on a thorough analysis of the environmental impact described in the GMP/EA, relevant studies, and professional judgment of the decision-maker guided by the direction in the NPS *Management Policies 2006*. The analysis did not identify any major adverse impacts that would result from implementation of the selected alternative.

Historic Structures

Under the selected alternative, the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (NHS) structures, namely Lindenwald mansion, South Gatehouse, and Farm Cottage, will be rehabilitated. The rehabilitation of the structures will result in stabilization and preservation of their character-defining features. Construction efforts will be overseen by the NPS and will follow the Secretary's standards for rehabilitation and consultation, as applicable, would be conducted to avoid impacts to the resources. The selected alternative will not constitute an impairment of historic structures because rehabilitation of the structures will improve their current condition and provide additional opportunities for current and future generation to enjoy those resources.

Cultural Landscapes

The selected alternative will rehabilitate the cultural landscape of Martin Van Buren NHS by improving the appearance of the historic structures, removing 20th-century intrusions in the historic landscape, reintroducing vegetative features, and maintaining important views to the surrounding countryside. Under the selected alternative, the Martin Van Buren NHS landscape would continue to be inventoried and evaluated and the NPS would implement resource management policies to maintain the integrity of the landscape, preserving the natural resource values and culturally significant character-defining patterns and features of the landscape. The selected alternative will not result in impairment of the cultural landscape because the landscape will be improved from its current condition.

Museum Collections

The park's museum and archival collections are key elements of the park's purpose and significance. The selected alternative will improve storage curatorial workspace by locating them in a state-of-the-art storage facility at Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt NHS. The current pole barn, where the collections have been stored, is in deteriorating condition. Moving the collections to a state-of-the-art storage facility will result in beneficial impacts to the collections. The selected alternative would not result in impairment of the museum and archival collections because increased work and storage space improve the park's ability to preserve and maintain those resources.

Federal- and State-listed Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website indicates that three federally-listed species have the potential to be located within Columbia County and the boundary of the park: the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*)-endangered; the Northern Long-Eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)-threatened; and the bog turtle (*Clemmys (Glyptemys) muhlenbergii*)-threatened. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also identified the New England Cottontail rabbit as a priority species of conservation concern. None of the species were identified during previous park surveys as being present at the park, but suitable habitats for the species do occur within park boundaries for the Indiana bat, the Northern Long-Eared bat, and the cottontail rabbit. The park would seek to minimize potential

impacts through mitigation measures such as surveys for presence of any of these species and/or suitable habitat prior to taking any actions. Other measures such as limits on tree cutting during bat roosting seasons may also be incorporated. The park also would consult with USFWS about potential impacts of any future site specific actions and appropriate mitigation measures to avoid and minimize potential adverse impacts.

The New York State Natural Heritage Program's website indicates five species which are of state concern: the Indiana bat, the Northern Long-Eared bat, the bog turtle, the Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) and the Jefferson Salamander (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*), both of which were identified through surveys as being present in the park. The state lists three rare plant records found in the vicinity of Martin Van Buren NHS: Davis' Sedge (*Carex davisii*) - New York State Threatened; Rattlebox (*Crotalaria sagittalis*) - New York State Endangered; Spotted Pondweed (*Potamogeton pulcher*) - New York State Threatened. Although these species have been located within one to two miles of the site, only the Davis' Sedge has been located within the park boundary along Kinderhook Creek.

Under the selected alternative, construction activities could result in potential impacts to wildlife, such as noise disturbance and temporary displacement. The majority of construction activity, however, would occur within areas frequently disturbed by human activities. Mitigation measures to minimize disturbance, monitoring during construction, and restoring natural areas would minimize the potential impacts. The selected alternative will not result in impairment of wildlife resources because impacts would be expected to be minimal and mitigation measures would be implemented to avoid and reduce impacts.