



Johnstown Flood National Memorial Environmental Assessment

Adaptive Re-Use of the South Fork Fishing
and Hunting Club Clubhouse,
Clubhouse Annex, Brown Cottage
and Moorhead Cottage



National Park Service
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U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
Johnstown Flood National Memorial
South Fork, Pennsylvania
Adaptive Re-Use of the 1889 South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club
Clubhouse, Clubhouse Annex, Brown Cottage, and Moorhead Cottage
February 2007

Proposed Action: On October 5, 2004, Congress enacted Public Law 108-313, the “Johnstown Flood National Memorial Boundary Adjustment Act of 2004,” which expanded the boundary of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial and enabled the National Park Service (NPS) to acquire lands from willing sellers or through donations. Enactment of this legislation ensures the future protection and preservation of the 1889 South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club Clubhouse, the Clubhouse Annex, Brown Cottage and Moorhead Cottage, which are four of the 10 remaining buildings that were in existence at the time of the Johnstown Flood of 1889.

NPS has prepared this Environmental Assessment to evaluate a broad range of alternatives to determine appropriate adaptive re-uses of these historic structures. The purpose of this action is to preserve, protect, and maintain these buildings to more accurately depict the story of the events leading up to and after the flood. The need to permanently preserve these structures is based on their significant contributions to the story of the Johnstown Flood of 1889. These structures are situated about 3 miles south of the core of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial in the village of St. Michael, Cambria County, Pennsylvania. The structures are situated within the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club Historic District.

This Environmental Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. §4321-4347), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and NPS policy.

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SUMMARY

On October 5, 2004, Congress enacted Public Law 108-313, the “Johnstown Flood National Memorial Boundary Adjustment Act of 2004,” which expanded the boundary of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial and enabled the National Park Service to acquire lands from willing sellers or through donations. Enactment of this legislation ensures the future protection and preservation of the 1889 South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club Clubhouse, the Clubhouse Annex, Brown Cottage and Moorhead Cottage, which are four of the 10 remaining buildings that were in existence at the time of the Johnstown Flood of 1889. This environmental assessment describes the purpose and need for the Federal action, evaluates a range of alternatives addressing the adaptive re-use of these structures and assesses the potential effects to the natural, cultural and socioeconomic environs.

The purpose of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial is to commemorate the Johnstown Flood of 1889 and to preserve the remains of the South Fork Dam, which failed during the flood disaster that occurred on May 31, 1889. The proposed Federal action is to determine an appropriate adaptive re-use of these structures. The purpose of the proposed action is to preserve, protect, manage and maintain these buildings to more accurately depict the story of the events leading up to and after the flood. The need to permanently preserve these structures is based on their significant contributions to the story of the Johnstown Flood of 1889.

The four structures that are the subject of this assessment are situated about 3 miles south of the core of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial in the village of St. Michael, Cambria County, Pennsylvania. These structures lie within the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club Historic District and were determined significant because their architectural significance and because the Clubhouse was the exclusive country retreat of some of the most influential individuals in the industrial development of the nation during the nineteenth century. The Club and its property are inextricably associated with the Johnstown Flood, the most notable flood of the nineteenth century and the greatest national tragedy of the post-Civil War era.

Two alternatives are evaluated in this document: Alternative 1-No Action addresses the circumstances and potential impacts associated with maintaining the existing management practices and uses of the structures, and Alternative 2-Adaptive Re-Use of Historic Structures evaluates a broad range of adaptive re-uses for the four structures. These re-uses are residential; tourism; entertainment; community uses; park orientation, interpretation and education; and concessions and exhibit space.

Under all alternatives, park visitation is expected to increase during the construction and development phase to a peak 44 percent higher than the average visitation before the project, and then decline. The average visitation to the Memorial for 2002-2005 was nearly 111,000 visitors, and the projected peak was estimated to be an estimated 159,000 in 2009, assuming the completion of the rehabilitation of the structures.

No federally or State threatened or endangered species are known to occur on the subject properties or in the immediate area. There are no regulated wetlands onsite and all properties are located beyond the 100-year floodplain. Consultation with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation, is continuing to ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Based on the evaluation conducted in this environmental assessment, as well as the agency consultations, no significant irreversible or irretrievable effects would occur to park resources or to the natural, cultural or community resources.