



**Rock Creek Park
Nature Center Complex
Development Concept
Plan Section 106
Assessment of Effects
Report**

March 2019

This page intentionally blank.

CONTENTS

Project Summary	1
Description of the Undertaking	3
Purpose of and Need for the Action	3
Identification of Historic Resources	4
Historic Properties Located within the Area of Potential Effect	4
Rock Creek Park Historic District	4
Nature Center (Visitor Exhibition Center and Planetarium)	6
Horse Center Area.....	7
Joaquin Miller Cabin.....	8
Existing Conditions	8
Site Description	8
Character-Defining Features	10
Integrity	10
Alternatives	11
Alternative 1: No Action	11
Alternative 2: Fix It	13
Alternative 3: Preferred Alternative	15
Alternatives Dismissed From Further Consideration.....	18
Identification of Effects	19
Criteria of Adverse Effect.....	19
Determination of Effect	20
Documentation of Section 106 Consultation	24
Public Involvement.....	24
Agency Consultation and Coordination	25
Acronyms and Abbreviations	27
Bibliography.....	28

FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of Rock Creek Park Development Concept Plan Area of Potential Effect	2
Figure 2. Map of Rock Creek Park Development Concept Plan Historic Buildings	5
Figure 3. Rock Creek Park—Nature Center Complex Development Concept Plan— Alternative 1: No Action	12
Figure 4. Rock Creek Park—Nature Center Complex Development Concept Plan— Alternative 2: Fix It	14
Figure 5. Rock Creek Park—Nature Center Complex Development Concept Plan— Alternative 3: Preferred Alternative	16

TABLES

Table 1. Listed Resources within the Area of Potential Effect	4
Table 2. Summary of Adverse Effects	23

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project is a federal undertaking led by the National Park Service (NPS) that is subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA). The National Park Service initiated consultation with the DC state historic preservation office (DC SHPO) in October 2016 and invited the DC SHPO to an agency scoping meeting in November 2016. At that time, the National Park Service identified a list of consulting parties and a preliminary Area of Potential Effect (APE) (figure 1). The identified organizations represent national and local interests in preservation and development, particularly those concerned with maintaining the historic integrity of the Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Horse Center. The preliminary area of potential effect was presented in a letter dated October 27, 2016. For the purposes of this plan, the project area is defined as the Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium; Horse Center Area; and Maintenance Area; as well as the immediate surroundings, including picnic areas #13 and #14 and nearby trails.

The implementation of individual elements of the development concept plan (plan) has the potential to result in direct and indirect adverse effects to historic properties or their contributing features. Improvements under the proposed alternative would be incrementally implemented and assessed for effects as relevant for the project/undertaking. If each element is implemented according to the plan and the guidance set forth by *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, the net result will conditionally be no adverse effects. The National Park Service has a nationwide programmatic agreement and works closely with the historic preservation office to review and provide guidance on projects that may adversely affect historic properties. Concurrently with the Section 106 consultation process, the National Park Service is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) to analyze the environmental impacts of the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Two action alternatives and one no-action alternative have been identified and are analyzed in the environmental assessment. The National Park Service hosted a series of meetings to discuss the alternatives, including public open houses in 2016 on November 16th and 17th and in 2017 on January 25th and November 15th. A summary of the 2016–2017 public and agency scoping comments has been included in appendix A: Nature Center Complex Development Concept Plan and Environmental Assessment Public Scoping Report.

This Assessment of Effects Report (AOE) analyzes the three alternatives and provides the following documentation required by 36 CFR 800.11(e):

- Description of the undertaking;
- Description of the project and each alternative;
- Description of the area of potential effect and identification of historic properties;
- Assessment of effects on historic properties from each alternative; and
- Copies and summaries of views provided by consulting parties and the public.

Based on the analysis presented in this report and in consultation with the DC state historic preservation office, the National Park Service has determined that the project will conditionally have no adverse effect on historic properties. This determination is conditional, as the National Park Service will further review design and construction and landscape details during the design phase of all implemented projects.

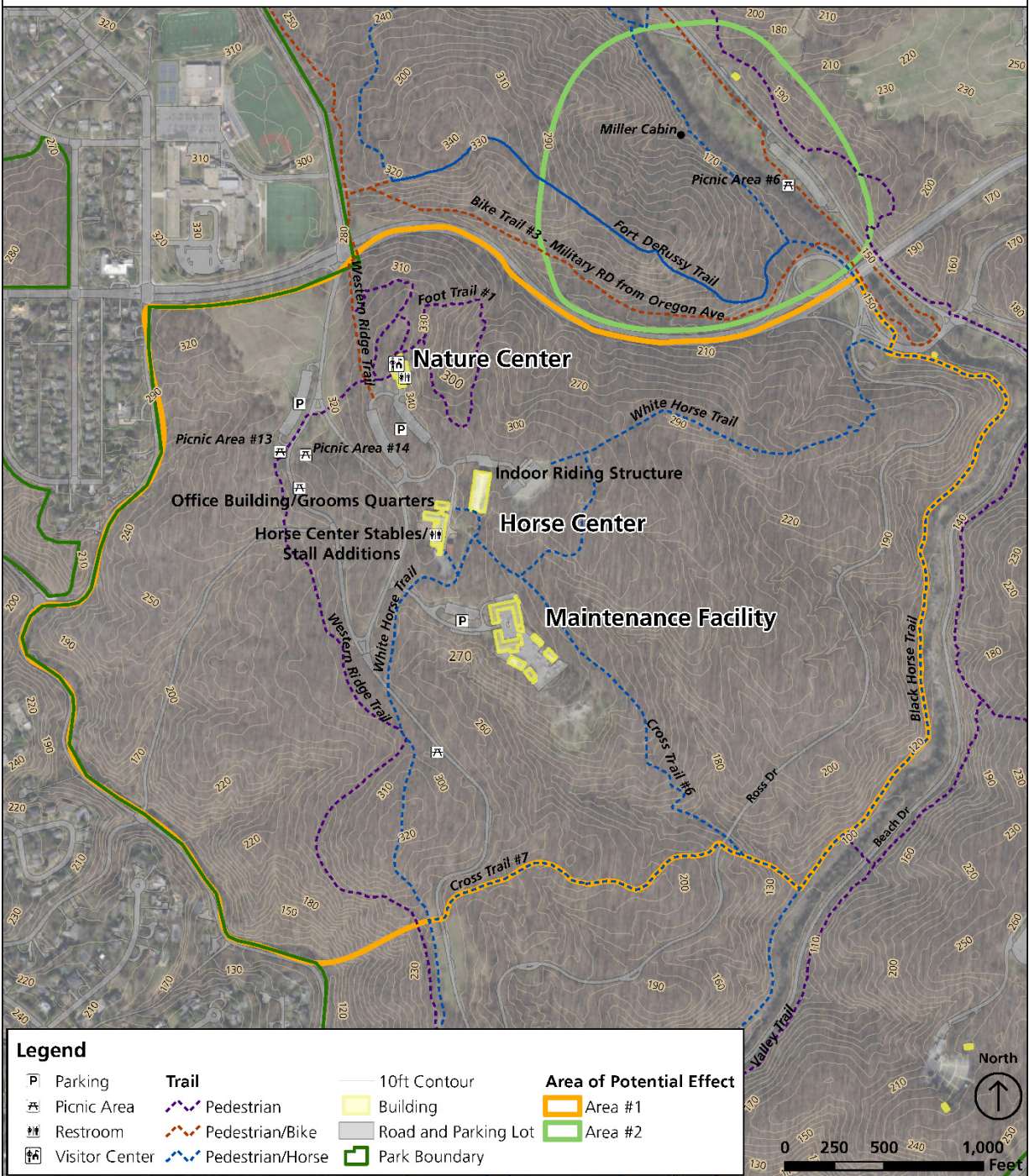
Rock Creek Park

Feasibility Development Concept Plan

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Area of Potential Effect



Produced by Denver Service Center Planning Division

December 2018

FIGURE 1. ROCK CREEK PARK DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

DESCRIPTION OF THE UNDERTAKING

The National Park Service has prepared a development concept plan and environmental assessment (plan) for Rock Creek Park to establish a vision and clear guidance for the future management of the Nature Center area at Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC. For the purposes of the plan, the project area is defined as the Nature Center and Planetarium; Horse Center Area; Maintenance Area; as well as the immediate surroundings, including picnic areas #13 and #14 and nearby trails as shown in the project area overview map (figure 1).

The National Park Service proposes three alternatives, including the no-action alternative and two action alternatives.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE ACTION

The purpose of the development concept plan is to provide guidance for the improvement and management of high-priority buildings and other facilities in the Nature Center Complex of Rock Creek Park. The proposed improvements would protect park resources and enhance the visitor experience, while ensuring that the long-term costs of implementation, operations, and maintenance are feasible for the National Park Service within its available financial resources.

The facilities within the Nature Center Complex currently do not meet the full needs of park visitors and staff. These facilities require a number of upgrades for code compliance purposes, including improvements for physical and programmatic accessibility, fire suppression, and electrical and mechanical system upgrades. The current configuration of the Nature Center, a contributing resource to the Rock Creek Park National Register Historic District, does not make optimal use of its existing square footage and limits its use for community gatherings and potential revenue generation.

The Nature Center also has flooding issues that need resolution. Similarly, buildings and spaces in the Maintenance Area would benefit from improved configuration of workspaces, with the potential to eventually house consolidated park offices and operations. Buildings and spaces at the Horse Center do not adequately house and support the horses, concessioner, and visitors. Navigation around the Nature Center Complex is challenging for visitors and would benefit from improved signage.

In addition, the facilities in the Nature Center Complex currently have a deferred maintenance backlog in excess of \$4 million, as well as forecasted future capital needs of approximately \$8 million. This plan outlines a series of targeted capital improvements that would revitalize these facilities and the project area to address needed repairs and deficiencies, extend their lifespans, and lower the total cost of facility ownership. Improvements would be financed within the constraints of available project funds from the National Park Service and its partner groups.

IDENTIFICATION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Upon initiation of Section 106 consultation, the National Park Service identified a preliminary area of potential effect. This area encompasses a geographic area where potential direct (physical) and indirect (visual) effects on historic properties may occur as a result of the project.

The National Park Service has defined the area of potential effect (APE) for the Nature Center Complex area to be bounded in the north by Military Road, on the west by 27th and Broad Branch Road, on the south by Cross Trail 7, and on the east by Beach Drive. Should Miller Cabin be relocated as proposed under alternative 3, there would be a second area of potential effect in the area of Miller Cabin's current location. This area would be bounded by Beach Drive, the south end of the Picnic Grove 6 parking area, Rock Creek, and the Milkhouse Ford stream crossing.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES LOCATED WITHIN THE AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

Section 106 regulations define a historic property as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The identification of resources within the area of potential effect was conducted through review of existing documentation, on-site survey, and consultation with the DC state historic preservation office. The project area is located in the central portion of the park, south of Military Road, and approximately 0.5 mile west of Rock Creek, an area that has been extensively researched and documented. The area of potential effect includes a portion of the Rock Creek Park Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the DC Inventory. All of the resources and their designations are listed in table 1 below, and their locations within the area of potential effect are provided in figure 2.

TABLE 1. LISTED RESOURCES WITHIN THE AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT

Property	Designation
Rock Creek Park Historic District	Listed DC/NRHP
Nature Center	Listed NRHP
The Horse Center	Listed NRHP
Joaquin Miller Cabin (Not currently in the Nature Center Complex APE but would be relocated to the project area under alternative 3.)	Listed DC/NRHP

Rock Creek Park Historic District

Date: 1791-1941; *Designation:* Listed in the DC Inventory (November 8, 1964) and National Register (October 23, 1991) (Draft amendment 2015).

The Rock Creek Park Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991, under National Register Criteria A, B, and C, with architectural and historic qualities and associations related to nine Areas of Significance with a period of significance from 1791 to 1941. As described in the 1991 registration form, the core of the Rock Creek Park Historic

Rock Creek Park

Development Concept Plan

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Historic Buildings



Produced by Denver Service Center Planning Division

May 2018

FIGURE 2. MAP OF ROCK CREEK PARK DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN HISTORIC BUILDINGS

District is the creek itself and the picturesque scenery surrounding it. The original historic district conformed to the boundaries of United States Reservation 339 and included approximately 1,429 acres of natural forest growth as well as a little over 310 acres of development, including recreational facilities, roads, trails, structures, and sites. The Rock Creek Park Historic District retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The amended nomination in 2015 expands the Rock Creek Park Historic District boundaries to include several adjacent and related United States reservations considered part of Rock Creek Park: Reservations 356, 402, 432, 433, 308A, 545, 635, 630, and 563. Formed between 1913 and 1950, the added reservations serve as access routes into the park and as a means of preserving Rock Creek Valley's watershed. Reservation 308A is a correction related to the inclusion of the Peirce Springhouse; the original nomination incorrectly recorded it as being within Reservation 339. The reservations include park land that is both contiguous and non-contiguous to Reservation 339. Formed under several planning bodies, including the National Capital Park Commission, later renamed the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, an administrative reorganization brought these bordering reservations into the Rock Creek Division of the National Park Service's National Capital Parks in 1976.

Additional research and documentation projects have required the re-evaluation of several resources for their contribution to the park. These resources include cultural landscapes, archeology, trails, roads, and bridges, located in both the historic district's original boundaries and within the added reservations. Resources from the post-World War II and the Mission 66 periods that are located within the existing boundaries of the Rock Creek Park Historic District have also been re-evaluated for their contribution to Rock Creek Park.

Nature Center (Visitor Exhibition Center and Planetarium)

Date: 1959; *Architect:* Unknown; *Designation:* Listed in the National Register as a Contributing Resource (2015).

Integrated into the surrounding landscape, the Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium (figure 2) is representative of NPS Mission 66-era design. The Nature Center is composed of three distinct, but contiguous, sections defined by the roofline: there is a shallow gable roof on the southern end, followed by V-shaped shed roofs at the center, and a pyramidal roof on the northern end.

Set on a brick foundation, the wood-framed southern section incorporates the existing 1935 caretaker's dwelling. The six-bay section is clad with a combination of stone veneer and vertical wood siding. Typical fenestration consists of 1/1 windows with precast concrete sills. The southeast corner of the block features a recessed porch. The interior consists of offices and a small reading room.

The centrally located, V-shaped shed roof section serves as the focal point and primary entrance of the Nature Center. In this section, architect William Max Haussmann successfully integrated the building into its surrounding environment, while incorporating character-defining features of the Modern Movement and Mission 66. The two-story section is banked into a hill, creating the effect of a single story from the façade. Set on a concrete-block foundation, the masonry structural system is primarily clad with stone veneer. The building is capped with symmetrical shed roofs that reflect one another to create a V-shaped roof plan, a form widely used by

modern architects. The eastern shed encompasses the majority of the interior, while the western shed extends over the interior lobby and exterior concrete porch. As the shed roof rises above the porch, the roof is extended farther to the west at its northern end, resulting in an angled portico. Three slender posts and a stone pier support the roof. The porch provides access to the main entry, consisting of elongated, double-leaf, aluminum-framed glass doors with single-light sidelights and a four-light transom. To the north of the porch, the stone-veneered wall has 1-by-1, slider windows with a continuous precast stone sill. On the rear elevation, both the first and second stories are visible. The walls are not clad in stone veneer, thereby exposing the concrete-block structural system. The first-story wood viewing deck accessed from the exhibition space defines the rear elevation. From the deck, a wood stair leads to the nature trail to the east of the center.

A small, recessed hyphen with a single-leaf door connects the V-shaped shed roof section with the northern end pyramidal roof section. The one-story, northern section houses the planetarium. Set on a concrete foundation, the masonry building is clad with vertical wood siding and has no fenestration or additional ornamentation.

As documented in the Rock Creek Nature Center Historic Structure Report (2017), the Nature Center retains its integrity as it continues to reflect its historic period of significance. The building remains in its original location and setting with no obtrusions from new development. Typical to visitor centers, alterations include the infill or replacement of a number of the doors and windows. However, the character defining massing, roof, covered entrance, deck, and stone and wood veneer remain intact. The building continues to house the Nature Center and Planetarium, thereby retaining its integrity of association and feeling.

Horse Center Area

Date: 1958; *Architect:* Unknown; *Designation:* Listed in the National Register as a Contributing Resource (2015).

Funded by the Mission 66 initiative, the Rock Creek Stables were the first public stables within the limits of Rock Creek Park. (figure 2). The stables were constructed from an architectural plan created by the Engineering Branch of National Capital Parks.

Rock Creek Stables is located south of Military Road and east of Glover Road. A single access road leads to the Nature Center and the Stables. Accommodating 40 horses, the building features an L-shaped plan. The concrete block structural system is typically exposed on the lower field of the wall and clad with vertical redwood siding above the window openings and in the upper gable ends. Dormer windows pierce the gable roof, and a cupola is located at the intersection of the gable roofs. The stable includes a lobby, tack room, office, storage, and bathrooms. Sun Construction Company built the structure in 1958 for \$104,000.

Rock Creek Stables is also served by Equitation Field, established in 1945 along Ridge Road. The field had been located at this present location since 1945. Both resources continue to reflect their historic period of significance. The Horse Center area also includes a training ring, constructed in 1972, and a maintenance shed, constructed in 2010, that are considered non-contributing resources because of the date of construction. The training stable identified in the 1991 registration form was misidentified and given a construction date of 1958 that specifically refers to the Rock Creek Stables.

The Rock Creek Horse Center is open to the public seven days a week and offers trail rides, riding lessons, pony rides, boarding facilities, and summer day camp sessions. The Horse Center averages 21,250 visitors per year with the highest use periods occurring from April through October. Trails extending from the Horse Center provide access to horse riding trails throughout the park. The main access trail extends southeast from the Horse Center toward Ross Drive and Rock Creek just to the east of the Maintenance Area. This is the most heavily used horse trail in the park.

Joaquin Miller Cabin

Date: 1883; moved 1912; *Architect:* Miller, Joaquin; *Designation:* Listed in the DC Inventory (November 8, 1964). Listed in the National Register (1991) as a Contributing Resource.

The Miller Cabin is located at picnic area #6, approximately 75 feet west of Beach Drive and approximately one-half mile north of Military Road NW. The one-and-a-half story building is sited at the north end of a large meadow-like picnic grove. Noted American poet Joaquin Miller (1837-1913) built the L-shaped cabin in 1883 at a site near the intersection of 16th and Belmont Streets NW across from what is now Meridian Hill Park. Historic photographs indicate that Miller erected his house on a log foundation with log walls tied together by double-saddle notching and concrete chinking. The gable ends of the building were finished with smaller vertical timbers, and the steep pitched, cross-gabled, hipped roof was covered by shingles. All fenestration openings were trimmed with simple frame surrounds, sills, and lintels and filled with six-over-six window sash. A fieldstone fireplace was built at the center of the cabin, and the protruding stack section was common bond brick with a stepped decorative corbel.

In 1911-1912, the cabin was disassembled, moved to its present site, and dedicated on June 2, 1912. Newspaper coverage of the building's move and reconstruction in Rock Creek Park indicate great care was taken in dismantling the building and replicating its appearance. Original building fabric was lost in the move, but Miller's cabin was reconstructed with a high degree of visual accuracy in terms of its design, materials, and workmanship. The log cabin was rebuilt at its present site on a concrete foundation with its principal elevation facing south. Paired windows with six-over-six sash are on the first level of the north and south elevations and single six-over-six gable-end windows light the attic story. In addition, there is an identical single window on the stepped back wall of the main elevation of the L-shaped cabin. Historic photographs indicate this fenestration pattern appears identical to that built in 1883. The remaining openings are simple framed doorway entries on the east side of the cabin. These doors provide access to the two rooms in the building. An L-shaped flagstone walk creates an outside patio connection between the two doors.

Miller Cabin currently is located within the 100-year floodplain for Rock Creek.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Site Description

Rock Creek Park administers 2,749 acres within the District of Columbia and is both an individual unit of the national park system and an administrative unit that oversees numerous park sites and resources beyond the original core of Rock Creek Park (US Reservation 339) that is addressed in the park's enabling legislation. The park administers 99 distinct land areas, which include the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, the Old Stone House, part of the Civil War Defenses of Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Park, Meridian Hill Park, and Glover Archbold

Park, in addition to numerous triangles, circles, and squares located the northern and western portions of Washington, DC.

First established in 1890, Rock Creek Park is one of the earliest federal park units in the United States and protects a 9.6-mile segment of Rock Creek and its associated natural landscape. Rock Creek Park also protects a number of historic structures, historically significant designed landscapes, archeological sites, and Civil War era fortifications. As the largest green space within Washington, DC, Rock Creek Park offers a variety of popular recreational activities, including hiking, cycling, horseback riding, boating, organized sports, and the opportunity for relaxation and rejuvenation in a quiet, natural atmosphere.

The Nature Center project area is located within the park close to the intersection of Military Road and Glover Road. The project area includes the Nature Center itself; the Rock Creek Horse Center Complex; the park maintenance facility; and related road, parking, trail, and landscape assets. The area makes up 54 acres of the total 2,749 acres of Rock Creek Park.

Built in 1959 as part of the Mission 66 program, the Nature Center is the primary park location for visitor contact and orientation. It is the most consistently staffed facility in the park and offers numerous visitor programs, including the only planetarium within the National Park Service. The Nature Center received 36,701 visitors in 2015. The center also serves as a hub for the majority of the park's volunteer activities. Rock Creek Park had 4,391 volunteers in 2015 performing nearly 43,000 hours of work, which is equivalent to 20 full-time staff.

As stated in the park's 2005 general management plan, the Rock Creek Nature Center and Planetarium and the Horse Center buildings have been included as contributing features to the National Register of Historic Places Historic District for Rock Creek Park as part of the NPS Mission 66 development program of the 1950s and 1960s. They were subsequently rehabilitated and/or expanded to improve the effectiveness of programs for the public.

The Horse Center is a concessions-operated complex located between the Nature Center and the Maintenance Area. The buildings at the Horse Center were constructed over a 33-year time span, with the stables built in 1958, the indoor riding structure in 1972, and the office building in 1985. The Horse Center received 24,806 visitors in 2015. A network of pedestrian pathways leads visitors around both the Nature Center and the Horse Center and provides a non-motorized connection between these two areas.

The Maintenance Area serves as the primary location for Rock Creek Park maintenance operations and provides office space for other divisions in the park. Since its initial construction in 1959, the facility has evolved, with several garage bays reconfigured for use as staff offices.

Visitors often approach the Maintenance Area for birding opportunities and to see the "Stones of the Capitol" stored in the Maintenance Area.

Picnic grove #13 is a reservable site with two time periods available each day, a morning (9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.) and an evening (3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. or dark) time slot. It includes dispersed picnic tables, fire ring (stone grill), and covered pavilion. Park picnic regulations stipulate that the maximum number of people per reservation per site is 75. In 2017, 125 reservations were made for the site.

Picnic grove #14 is a first come, first served site. It includes dispersed picnic tables, fire rings, and no shelters. Park regulations stipulate that for first come, first served picnic sites, the maximum number of people at any time is 25.

Character-Defining Features

Nature Center. The Nature Center, designed by William Haussmann, provides an example of how Modernism coalesces with the natural environment. Haussmann includes core tenets of the Modernist Movement such as expansive glass, while remaining true to the ideals of Mission 66, thereby concealing the building within the natural environment. His designs aptly consider the location and site, allowing for the structure's mass to be hidden from view. Further, the exposed concrete surfaces do not compete with the surrounding natural beauty, and the stone veneer and vertical wood siding complement the existing landscape. The purpose of the Nature Center is to provide facilities for outdoor programs and environmental education that promoted the retention and preservation of the natural environment. In particular, the Nature Center originally housed programs targeted for young children by exposing them to the wonders of nature in an attempt to build an early appreciation. The programs were later adapted to satisfy visitors of all ages.

Rock Creek Stables. Horseback riding remained popular in Washington, DC, into the mid-20th century. The Great Depression and World War II forced many of the horse riding schools and stables in the area to close, but at least eight riding academies remained open. Riding, however, was still limited to affluent residents who could afford the costs of maintaining or renting a horse. Although horseback riding had been a popular activity in Rock Creek Park since its inception, the park had no riding academies or stables within its boundaries. Further, the closure of numerous private stables along the park's boundaries led the National Park Service to construct two public stables as part of the Mission 66 program to improve visitor facilities. Both stables were constructed from the same design completed by the Engineering Branch of National Capital Planning. Completed in 1958, Rock Creek Stables are located off Glover Road near the Nature Center.

Nature Center Planetarium. A historically significant aspect of the Nature Center is the attached planetarium, which is the only planetarium in the National Park System. After the Russians successfully launched Sputnik on October 4, 1957, the American education system, particularly within the fields of mathematics and science, was widely scrutinized for failing to teach basic astronomy to students. As a result, construction of planetariums dramatically increased and played an important role in the exposure of children and young adults to science. At the time, educational theorists proposed that planetarium-trained students emerged better prepared to enter the field of science. The Nature Center's planetarium, designed by Haussmann, is the direct result of the increased importance placed upon science and astronomy by the government in the late 1950s and 1960s. The facility continues its function as a planetarium and serves as a reminder of the Cold War and arms race.

Integrity

The Rock Creek Park Historic District, which includes all of the historic buildings in this assessment, is located in the northwest quadrant of Washington, DC, and lies entirely within the District of Columbia. The district is predominantly a picturesque, forested valley with sloping hills and meadows. The park is surrounded by commercial and residential development, and it has only two modern areas of concentrated recreational and administrative activity. These areas are located just below Military Road in the vicinity of Sixteenth and Kennedy Streets and just

east of Glover Road in the park's interior. Otherwise, Rock Creek Park Historic District retains a high degree of integrity that reflects the historic use and development of this public landscape between 1791 and 1941.

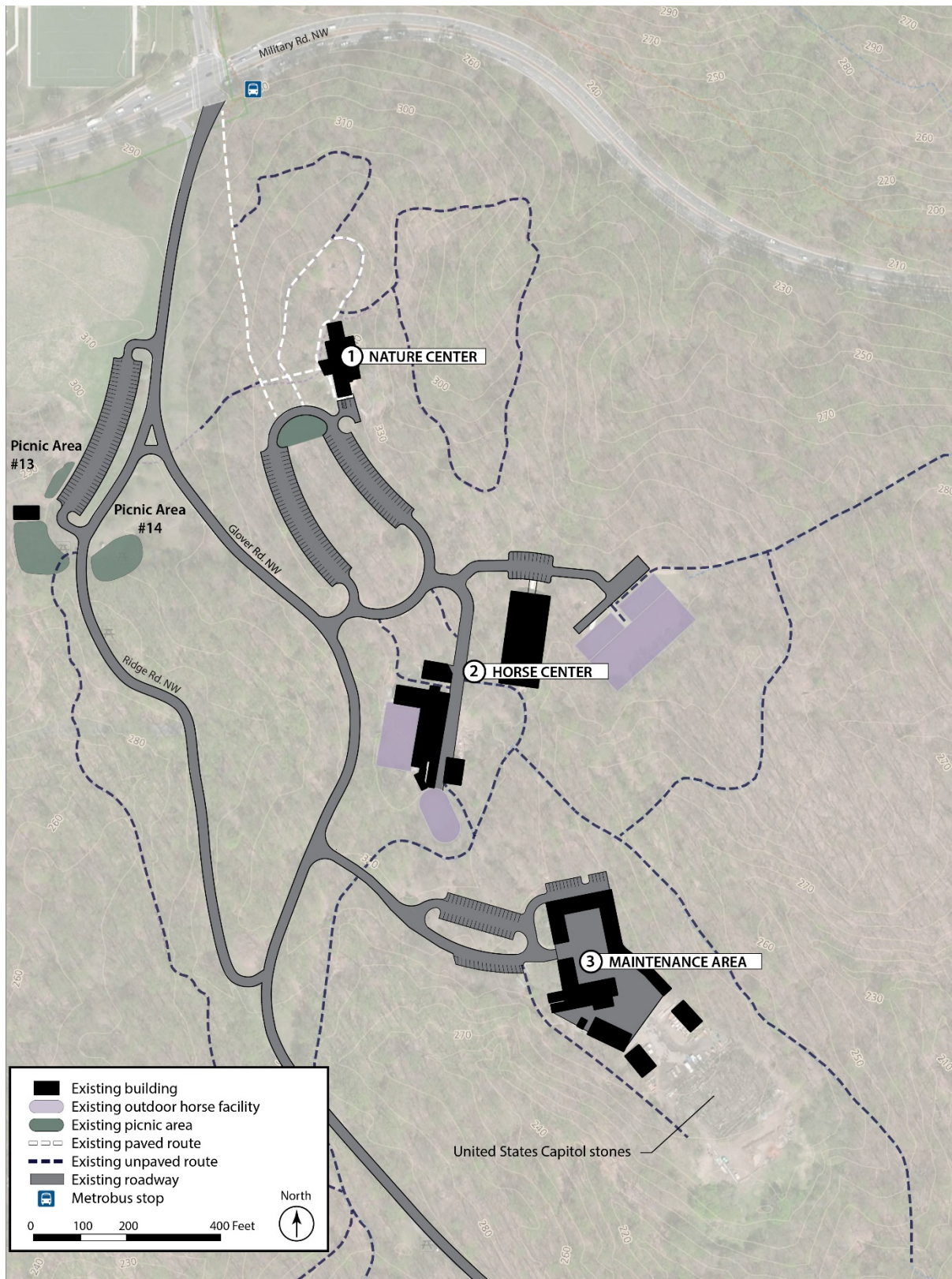
ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: No Action

Under alternative 1, current management practices for the Nature Center Complex would be retained, maintenance and repairs would continue at facilities, and previously approved plans would be implemented (figure 3). Existing facilities would continue to act in their current capacities, and no new construction would occur. The Nature Center would continue in its capacity as the primary visitor contact station in the park, containing a bookstore, exhibit space, auditorium, planetarium, and office for interpretive staff. The building would continue to prevent full accessibility, with no level connections between rooms and spaces and an inaccessible auditorium; the planetarium would remain ill-equipped; and exhibit space, the bookstore, and the office would continue to neither satisfy the needs of visitors nor staff. Flooding occurring at the Nature Center may be resolved. The Horse Center would continue to be managed and run by a concessioner. Its facilities would continue to support visitors seeking horseback rides and locals seeking boarding, and the concessioner and park staff would continue to offer equestrian programs in facilities and on the grounds. The needs and health of the horses would continue to be met with inadequate facilities. The Maintenance Area would continue to serve as the operational hub for the park and other park units administered by the Rock Creek Park staff. It would continue to house offices and maintenance and service structures, and the facilities and grounds would continue to support maintenance activities. In addition, the United States Capitol stones would remain in the area behind the maintenance fence. The Joaquin Miller cabin would remain at its current location in a floodplain near the east bank of Rock Creek. Lastly, picnic areas #13 and #14 would continue to serve as visitor facilities for picnicking, although no new routes would connect these areas to improve access for visitors with disabilities.

Pedestrian facilities throughout the area would remain non-compliant with ABA standards. Curbs would remain in place at pedestrian crossings, and some routes to facilities would retain their significant grade changes. No additional, compliant paths would be installed to connect facilities, such as the Nature Center, with city sidewalks, bus stops, and other popular areas of visitor use. The National Park Service would consider minimal improvements such as installing a requested curb ramp or painting accessible parking stalls, but no other improvements would be undertaken.

Park landscaping and lighting would remain unchanged under this alternative. The National Park Service would continue to maintain vegetated areas in the current condition. Similarly, existing light fixtures would be retained, although the park may update light bulbs with more sustainable options. Facilities throughout the area would continue to rely on older, energy-intensive technologies, and stormwater management would continue its present course.



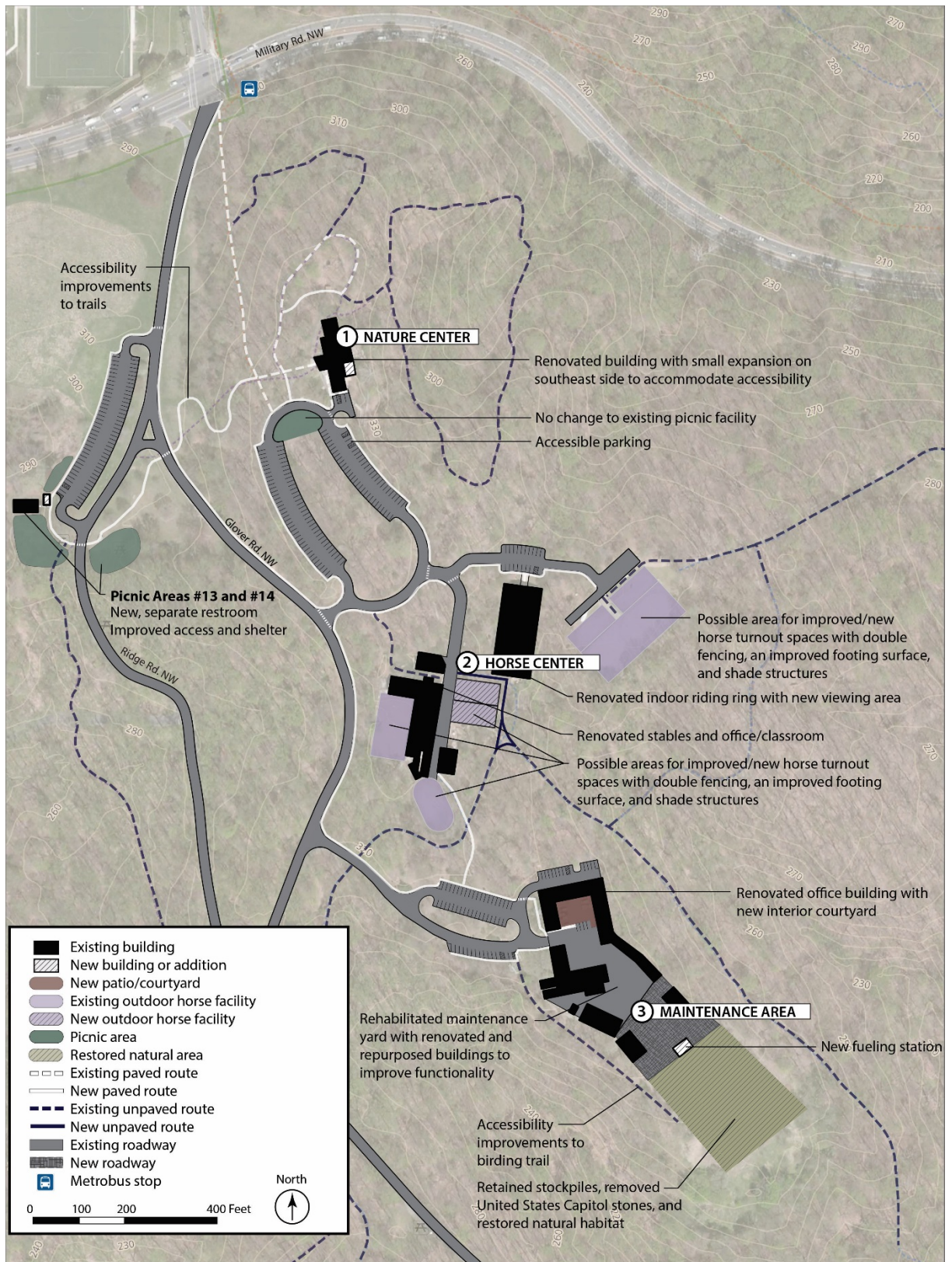
**FIGURE 3. ROCK CREEK PARK—NATURE CENTER COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN—
ALTERNATIVE 1: NO ACTION**

Alternative 2: Fix It

Under alternative 2, the Nature Center Complex would see modest upgrades intended to provide visitors, volunteers, partner organizations, and park staff increased access to facilities and programs throughout the area (figure 4). In general, building footprints would remain the same, except where accessibility cannot be easily accommodated within the existing building envelopes. Buildings would be reconfigured, renovated, and/or repurposed to improve functional use and upgrade visitor and staff accommodations. This would include the reconfiguration of office spaces to meet adopted standards for the most efficient and optimal use of workspace. Renovations and improvements would make use of and showcase sustainable technology. All new and renovated buildings will strive to meet LEED certification standards and incorporate low impact development standards for exterior surfaces. Accessibility and safety improvements in the Nature Center Complex would be completed and deferred maintenance would be addressed. Actions would be taken to encourage visitors to stay, explore, and further familiarize themselves with the area. The Joaquin Miller cabin would remain at its current location in a floodplain near the east bank of Rock Creek.

Nature Center. In this alternative, the Nature Center would be reconfigured, with the upper floor opening up to include a larger lobby and sales area; an outdoor deck at the back of the exhibit room to support exhibits and events; and new accessible, larger restrooms. The exhibit room would also be redesigned and reduced in size, and the small staff stairway and some corridors would be removed. To provide accessibility to all floors, an elevator would be installed and wrap-around stairway constructed on the southeast side of the building, conveniently connecting upper and lower levels while making use of bird-friendly glass to mitigate impacts to the historic structure and birds, and to open up views of the park. On the lower level of the Nature Center, flooding would be addressed, the planetarium floor raised to improve accessibility and eliminate the need for ramps and stairs, and storage space added. New seats, lighting, electrical, and HVAC systems would be installed in the planetarium, and the dome would be improved. The angled auditorium floor would be leveled to create an accessible multipurpose room, and a small catering kitchen and new accessible restrooms would be built to support large groups. The existing patio and outdoor access ramp would be updated and used as protected outdoor classroom space. A total of approximately 700 square feet would be added to the Nature Center on the northwest and southeast side of the building. Finally, programming throughout the building and nearby area would be expanded and enhanced in accordance with the park's interpretive themes.

Horse Center. In this alternative, the Horse Center would continue to be managed and run by the concessioner, and no new development would occur outside of the concessioner land assignment. Facilities, such as the stables, office, classroom, and manure/muck storage building, would remain on their existing footprints and would be renovated to more effectively serve visitors and support the safety and health of horses. The indoor riding ring would be renovated to improve riding and viewing conditions, with an improved footing surface, upgraded systems, and a new small viewing area to enhance public enjoyment of the horses and activities. Existing outdoor horse turnouts and riding facilities would be improved, and two new 50 by 100 foot turnouts would be built, with new footing surfaces, double fencing, and shade structures. Picnic benches with views to the horse-riding areas and new waysides welcoming visitors and interpreting current and historic uses of horses within the park would be installed. The Horse



**FIGURE 4. ROCK CREEK PARK—NATURE CENTER COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN—
ALTERNATIVE 2: FIX IT**

Center arrival plaza would be improved to welcome existing and new users and visitors, and interpretive and recreational programming and volunteer programs would encourage visitors to remain in the area.

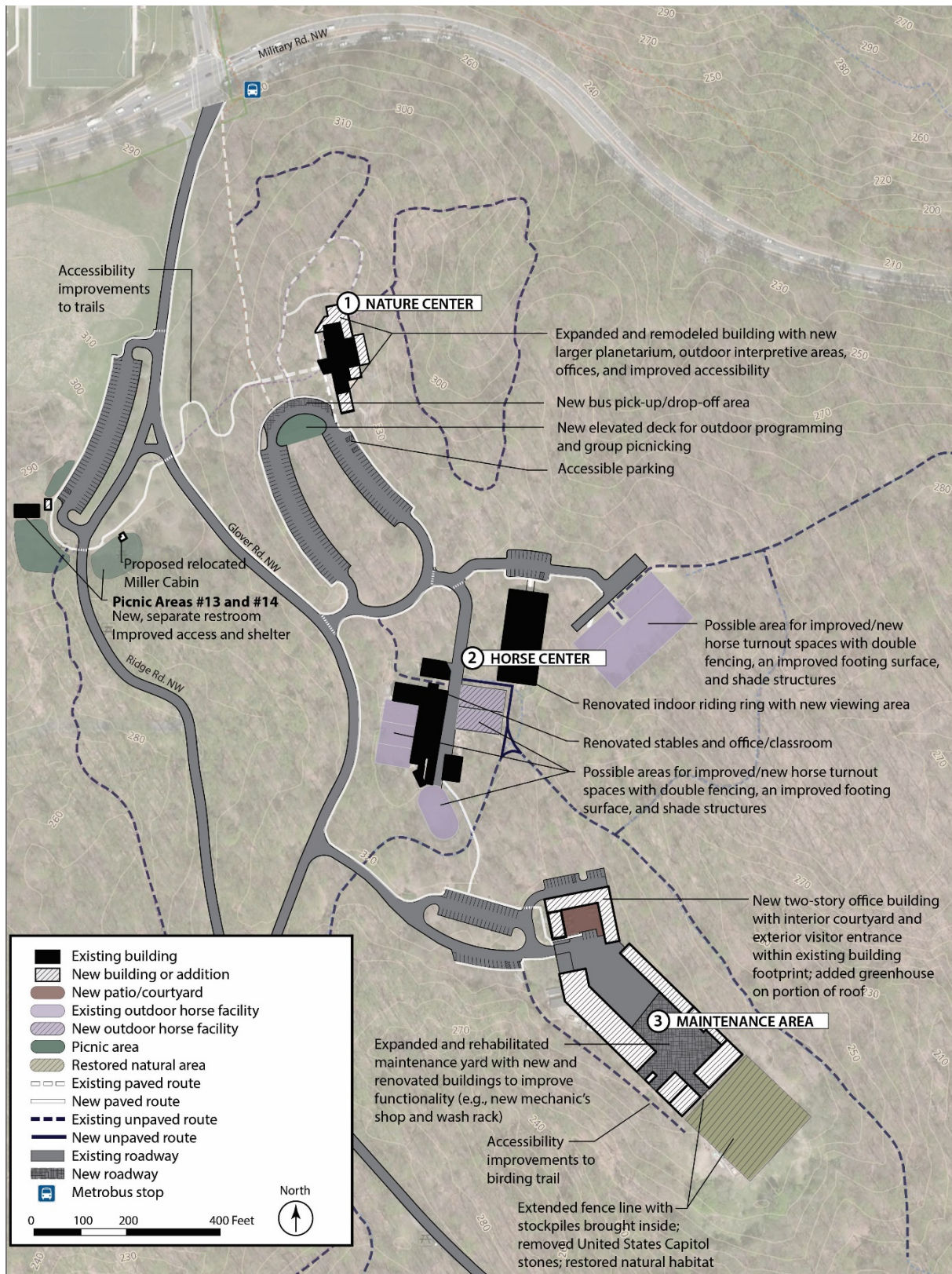
Maintenance Area. In this alternative, Maintenance Area facilities would be renovated, reconfigured, and rehabilitated to improve functionality and corral additional park property. Maintenance Yard facilities would be renovated, reconfigured, and reprogrammed to more effectively meet functional and operational needs and address accessibility. The maintenance yard office building would be renovated with new offices, restrooms, lockers, and showers, and a landscaped courtyard would be constructed between the east and west wings. Some buildings would be repurposed, including the stonecutter shed which would be converted into a mechanic shop. The waste and recycling area would be covered to address environmental concerns, and the maintenance yard would be paved and otherwise improved on the southern end. Energy-efficient mechanical building systems would be installed to improve functional use, reduce energy use, and lengthen the life of the systems. A new fueling station would be constructed in the south end of the yard. Stockpiles outside of the fencing would be retained, while the United States Capitol stones would be removed and the area restored to natural habitat. The birding trail on the west side of the maintenance yard fence would receive upgrades, with a new accessible stone surface and minor cribbing where needed.

Other Site Improvements. Other site improvements are proposed to enhance visitor recreational and learning opportunities and focus on universal accessibility, safety, and pedestrian connections to facilities within the Nature Center Complex. These include:

- Approximately 1.2 miles (6,000 linear feet) of four-foot-wide paved paths would be constructed. One would run between the picnic areas and the Nature Center. North of the Nature Center, the wheelchair-accessible interpretive nature trail would be extended into a loop. Another would run from the south end of the Horse Center to the north parking lot at the Maintenance Area. Lastly, to connect pedestrians with site facilities and the bus stop on Military Road, new sidewalks would be constructed along Glover Road NW and between the Nature Center, Horse Center, picnic areas, and Maintenance Area. The majority of lands on which newly paved paths would be constructed are maintained as mowed grass within the right-of-way.
- Wayfinding signs and park information would be provided at site facilities and nearby bus stops.
- The picnic shelter at picnic area #13 would be repaired and other improvements would be made to address accessibility.
- Restrooms would be constructed at picnic area # 13.
- Lighting features would be improved, with new fixtures that meet current national electric codes or other NPS preferred lighting standards installed along sidewalks and paths.

Alternative 3: Preferred Alternative

Under alternative 3, the Nature Center Complex would see significant upgrades intended to enhance visitor opportunities at the Nature Center, Horse Center, and surrounding area. In addition, areas that support park operations, such as the Maintenance Area, would be reorganized and expanded for maximum efficiency and functionality (figure 5). Similar to alternative 2, buildings would be reconfigured, renovated, and/or repurposed to improve functional use and upgrade visitor and staff accommodations. Accessibility and safety



**FIGURE 5. ROCK CREEK PARK—NATURE CENTER COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN—
ALTERNATIVE 3: PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

improvements in the Nature Center Complex would be completed, and deferred maintenance would be eliminated. The Nature Center Complex would use and showcase sustainable green solutions and technology, minimize damaging impacts to the environment, and strive for net zero emissions in an urban environment. A more walkable campus would be developed to provide additional amenities to the community, along with the opportunity to generate revenue with new classrooms, public meeting spaces, and event spaces.

Rock Creek Park Nature Center. In this alternative, park staff would consider rebranding the Nature Center as the Rock Creek Park Visitor Center to better reflect what is available in this space. The building would receive interior and exterior renovations and additions intended to increase the use, enjoyment, and lifespan of the facility, with a reconfigured main level, new outdoor interpretive deck, new offices, new restrooms, and an expanded planetarium with increased capacity (90-100 seats). As in alternative 2, an elevator would be installed and a wrap-around stairway constructed on the southeast side of the building, connecting upper and lower levels while making use of bird-friendly glass to mitigate impacts to the historic building and birds. The building would be expanded on the north and northeast sides to accommodate the larger planetarium, which would be served by a larger lobby and queuing area. The floor of the planetarium would be raised to the same level of the exhibit area to eliminate the need for a ramp or second elevator. New seats, lighting, electrical, and HVAC systems would be installed in the planetarium, and the dome would be improved. On the upper level of the building, a new glass-walled multipurpose corridor and small outdoor interpretive deck would be constructed within the current footprint of the lower level concrete patio to showcase views and replace lost space in the indoor exhibit area. On the lower level, the angled auditorium floor would be leveled to create an accessible multipurpose room, and a small catering kitchen and new accessible restrooms would be built to support larger groups. The outdoor access ramp would be replaced with a glass-walled ramp to the auditorium, and the patio would be used as protected outdoor classroom space. Another building expansion on the south end of the facility into what is currently a small parking lot would accommodate new interpretive staff offices. A total of approximately 6,700 square feet would be added to the Nature Center on the north, east, and south sides of the building. Finally, programming would be expanded and enhanced in accordance with the park's interpretive themes.

Outside of the Nature Center, an elevated deck would be constructed within the parking lot island to host interpretive programming and group picnicking. Although the area currently supports group picnicking, the elevated deck would protect adjacent vegetation and reduce compaction. A small expansion of the parking lot on the north end would allow for bus pickup/drop-off and support three buses. The parking lot would be restriped to provide the appropriate number of accessible parking stalls.

Horse Center. In this alternative, the Horse Center would receive the same treatments as those proposed in alternative 2.

Maintenance Area. In this alternative, the maintenance area would be expanded and rehabilitated to improve functionality, consolidate park staff, and corral additional park property (e.g., stockpiles brought inside the fence). A new, two-story office building would be constructed on the footprint of the existing building and have a public-facing front entrance. A greenhouse for native plants sourced from seeds in the park and maintaining native species would be built on a portion of its roof. The new office building would meet facility management and park operational needs and provide additional offices for staff. In addition, it could consolidate park headquarters, maintenance, and resource management staff located

throughout Rock Creek Park. Staff located at the Pierce-Klingler Mansion could be moved to the new building, and the mansion could then be offered as a leased space for partners or events. A landscaped courtyard would be constructed between the east and west wings of the new office building.

The maintenance yard would be expanded 75 feet to the southeast, into the area currently housing stockpiles and the United States Capitol stones. To improve functionality, existing buildings on the site would be replaced with new structures, such as a maintenance shop building, wash rack, and covered waste and recycling building. The new maintenance shop building would consolidate many of the disjointed structures in the maintenance yard and provide efficient use of limited space. A new, covered outdoor storage structure to house and protect park vehicles, heavy equipment and materials, snowplow blades, waste, and salt would also be built. In addition, a new vehicle and heavy equipment wash rack would be constructed on site. Energy-efficient mechanical building systems would be installed to improve functional use, reduce energy use, and lengthen the life of the systems. A new fueling station would also be constructed in the south end of the yard. Stockpiled materials (e.g., trail tread mixture, topsoil, riprap, boulders) located outside of the maintenance yard fencing would be brought inside the fencing, while the United States Capitol stones would be removed and the area restored to natural habitat. The birding trail on the west side of the maintenance yard fence would receive minimal upgrades, with a new accessible stone surface and minor cribbing where needed.

Other Site Improvements. Similar to alternative 2, this alternative recommends the same treatments for other areas in the Nature Center Complex, with new sidewalks and paths, updated picnic facilities, improved wayfinding and signage, and new restrooms. Elsewhere in the project area, the historic Miller Cabin would be transported from its current location approximately a half-mile from the project site, in a floodplain near the east bank of Rock Creek to picnic area #14. A new, accessible route would connect the cabin to parking at picnic area #13 and the Nature Center. The cabin would be repurposed for new exhibits and programming. Any ground disturbance associated with the move of the Miller Cabin to this location would require archaeological clearance.

Lighting features would be improved, with new fixtures that meet current national electric codes or other NPS preferred lighting standards installed along sidewalks and paths. Improved stormwater management would be pursued for any construction project.

Alternatives Dismissed From Further Consideration

The National Park Service considered a range of alternatives for the Nature Center Complex that were ultimately dismissed from further consideration.

Escape from the City. One alternative considered but dismissed proposed significant alterations to the Horse Center and Maintenance Area, with building and site footprints expanded past the concessioner land assignment for the former and well into the area currently housing the United States Capitol stones for the latter. This alternative included expanded parking lots to house food service and support a new Horse Center indoor/outdoor riding ring, office and classroom, pasture, demonstration gardens, and renovated stables. Some horse center facilities were proposed to move elsewhere on-site, such as the manure/muck storage bin, to be away from pedestrian facilities. The large maintenance yard was proposed to have a consolidated maintenance shop in the center of the yard with additional new facilities on the perimeter of the yard. The concept also proposed additional new trail connections.

During the scoping process, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration by the park and region on the basis that it was not an escape from the city, but in fact would bring additional city life and services into the site. It was argued that large expansions to existing footprints would likely cause too great an environmental impact, disrupting or damaging sensitive species. It was also recognized that the needs and health of horses were not taken into account, and significant alterations to all three areas (i.e., nature center, Horse Center, and Maintenance Area) was not economically feasible or justified. Furthermore, it was believed that this concept and Green Campus (below) were too similar and that both presented unneeded and unrealistic proposals.

Green Campus. Another concept considered during planning proposed similar alterations to facilities and the site as proposed in Escape from the City went further to create a world-class visitor attraction. The nature center, Horse Center, and Maintenance Area all were proposed to undergo significant changes, with a large new planetarium and new canopy walk proposed at the nature center, two new indoor/outdoor riding rings and other new facilities at the Horse Center, and an expanded maintenance yard with all new facilities at the Maintenance Area. The Miller Cabin was proposed to be moved near picnic area #14, where it would have been used in tandem with a new amphitheater for new programming opportunities. Parking was proposed to be expanded at the Horse Center and Maintenance Area to support new visitor use.

This concept was dismissed from further consideration for most of the reasons that Escape from the City was dismissed, along with additional arguments that its implementation would require substantial construction, even greater damage to the environment (e.g., trees, habitats, and birds) and the additional burden that would be required for management by park staff.

IDENTIFICATION OF EFFECTS

Criteria of Adverse Effect

Effect assessments are based on the criteria of adverse effect as defined in the NHPA 36 CFR.

The criteria of adverse effect is defined as follows:

An adverse effect is found when an undertaking may alter, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of a historic property that qualify the property for inclusion in the National Register in a manner that would diminish the integrity of the property's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association. Consideration shall be given to all qualifying characteristics of a historic property, including those that may have been identified subsequent to the original evaluation of the property's eligibility for the National Register. Adverse effects may include reasonably foreseeable effects caused by the undertaking that may occur later in time, be farther removed in distance, or be cumulative. [36 CFR 800.5(a)(1)]

Examples of adverse effects may include:

- physical destruction or damage;
- alterations that are inconsistent with the *Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, including restoration, rehabilitation, repair, maintenance, stabilization, hazardous material remediation, and provision of handicapped access;

- removal of the property from its historic location; change of the character of the property's use or of contributing physical features within the property's setting;
- introduction of visual, atmospheric, or audible elements that diminish the integrity of the property's significant historic features;
- neglect or deterioration (except in certain religious or cultural cases); and
- transfer, lease, or sale of property out of federal ownership or control without adequate preservation controls.

The following analysis is an assessment of the effects of the project on NRHP-eligible or listed historic properties and is based upon the Section 106 criteria of adverse effect.

Determination of Effect

The determination of effects is organized by the historic properties located within the area of potential effect, starting with Rock Creek Park Historic District, then in turn by alternative. A summary of adverse effects is presented at the end of this section in table 2.

Rock Creek Park Historic District. The most dominant physical characteristic of the district is the natural landscape itself. The exceptional natural beauty of this forested valley has determined or influenced historic events and associations in this historic district since intensive settlement in the region after 1790.

Under alternatives 2 and 3, rehabilitation actions at the Nature Center would adhere to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. All actions would be undertaken using sensitive design to minimize impact on the historic fabric of the buildings. Actions would follow the treatment recommendations as stated in the historic structures report for the Nature Center and the Horse Center.

Alternative 1: No Action—There would be an adverse effect to the overall integrity or character defining features of the Rock Creek Park Historic District. No new construction would occur and park landscaping and current conditions of vegetation would be maintained. However, if the historic Miller Cabin remains in its current location within the 100-year floodplain, it will be impacted by flooding and loss of historic materials would likely occur.

Alternative 2: Fix It—Actions taking place under this alternative include the removal of exterior historic material on the Nature Center for expansion to accommodate accessibility. Actions at the Horse Center would add turnout spaces and the addition of a small viewing area. If the historic Miller Cabin remains in its current location, it will be impacted by flooding and loss of historic materials would likely occur. Therefore, the actions under alternative 2 would have an adverse impact on the Rock Creek Park Historic District. The eventual loss of the Miller Cabin would affect the spatial relationship of the resources within the historic district.

Alternative 3: Preferred Alternative—Under alternative 3, there would be conditionally no adverse effect on the Rock Creek Park Historic District. Actions taking place in this alternative include the removal of exterior historic materials associated with the Nature Center because of the expansion of the planetarium and development of interpretive staff offices. Actions at the Horse Center would add turnout spaces and the addition of a small viewing area. While the relocation of Miller Cabin would result in a change in appearance of the historic district surrounding APE #2, moving the cabin out of the floodplain would have an overall beneficial

impact on the Rock Creek Park Historic District, as the current conditions would lead to the eventual deterioration and loss of historic materials at the cabin.

The Nature Center. Integrated into the surrounding landscape, the Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium is representative of NPS Mission 66-era design. The Nature Center retains its integrity as it continues to reflect its historic period of significance. The building remains in its original location and setting with no obtrusions from new development. The building continues to house the Nature Center and Planetarium, thereby retaining its integrity of association and feeling.

Under alternatives 2 and 3, rehabilitation actions at the Nature Center would adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. All actions would be undertaken using sensitive design to minimize impact on the historic fabric of the buildings. Actions would follow the treatment recommendations as stated in the historic structures report for the Nature Center.

Alternative 1: No Action—Under alternative 1, there would be no adverse effect to the overall integrity or character-defining features of the Nature Center.

Alternative 2: Fix It—Under alternative 2, there would be conditionally be no adverse effect on the overall integrity and character-defining features of the Nature Center. Actions under this alternative include the addition of the elevator and wrap-around stairway. Modifications to the lower level would improve accessibility and address flooding issues. Installation of lighting, electrical, and HVAC systems would occur in the interior. A small expansion would accommodate a catering kitchen and new accessible restrooms. An updated patio and outdoor access ramp would be used as a protected outdoor classroom space.

Alternative 3: Preferred Alternative—Under alternative 3, there would conditionally be no adverse effect on the overall integrity and character-defining features of the Rock Creek Park Nature Center. The Rock Creek Park Nature Center would receive interior and exterior renovations as well as additions. There would be an expansion of the Rock Creek Park Nature Center on the north, northeast, and south elevations to accommodate the expansion of the planetarium. As much as possible, the amount of extant material to be removed will be limited to features that are not character-defining. Alternative 3 would also add an elevator and wrap-around stairway. Renovations to the lower level would improve accessibility. Installation of lighting, electrical, and HVAC systems would occur in the interior portions of the building. A new glass-walled multipurpose corridor, small outdoor interpretive deck, and access ramp would also be added under this alternative. Installation of an elevated deck would protect and reduce compaction of adjacent vegetation.

The Horse Center. Operated by a park concessioner, the Horse Center offers boarding services, riding lessons, trail rides, pony rides, and other programs to the public. The Horse Center is constructed largely of timber and has a large corral and covered riding ring. It also provides administration offices for the facility's staff.

Under alternatives 2 and 3, rehabilitation actions at the Horse Center would adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. All actions would be undertaken using sensitive design to minimize impact on the historic fabric of the buildings. Actions would follow the treatment recommendations as stated in the historic structures report for the Horse Center.

Alternative 1: No Action—Under alternative 1, there would be no adverse effect to the overall integrity or character-defining features of the Horse Center.

Alternative 2: Fix It—Under alternative 2, there would conditionally be no adverse effect on the overall integrity and character-defining features of the Horse Center. Renovations to the stables, offices, and classroom would occur within their existing footprint. Additional renovations and rehabilitation to historic elements would take place at the indoor riding ring to enhance public enjoyment of the horses and activities. Additional actions at the Horse Center include upgrades to the building systems and the addition of a small viewing area. Two new 50 by 100 foot turnouts would also be constructed along with interpretive information, benches, and shade structures.

Alternative 3: Preferred Alternative—Under this alternative, the Horse Center would receive the same treatments as those proposed in alternative 2.

The Miller Cabin.

Alternative 1: No Action—Under alternative 1, there would be an adverse effect on the overall integrity and character-defining features of the historic Miller Cabin. The historic Miller Cabin would be maintained and repairs would continue to the extent practicable under current NPS management practices and in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. However, the cabin's location in a floodplain will likely result in significant water damage, deterioration, and loss of historic materials.

Alternative 2: Fix It—In this alternative, the historic Miller Cabin would receive the same treatments as those proposed in alternative 1.

Alternative 3: Preferred Alternative—Under alternative 3, there would be a conditional no adverse effect on the overall integrity and character-defining features of the historic Miller Cabin. The historic Miller Cabin would be relocated from its current location in a floodplain to picnic area #14. The cabin would be repurposed for new exhibits and programming.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF ADVERSE EFFECTS

Properties	<i>Action 1</i> <i>(No-Action Alternative)</i>	<i>Alternative 2</i>	<i>Alternative 3</i> <i>(Preferred Alternative)</i>
<i>Rock Creek Park Historic District</i>	Adverse Effect: The present location of historic Miller Cabin will likely be impacted by flooding, and loss of historic materials is likely to occur. The eventual loss of the Miller Cabin would affect the spatial relationship of the resources within the historic district.	Adverse Effect: The present location of historic Miller Cabin will likely be impacted by flooding, and loss of historic materials is likely to occur. The eventual loss of the Miller Cabin would affect the spatial relationship of the resources within the historic district.	Conditional No Adverse Effect
<i>Nature Center</i>	No Adverse Effect	No Adverse Effect	Conditional No Adverse Effect
<i>Horse Center</i>	No Adverse Effect	No Adverse Effect	Conditional No Adverse Effect
<i>Joaquin Miller Cabin</i>	Adverse Effect: The present location of historic Miller Cabin will likely be impacted by flooding, and loss of historic materials is likely to occur.	Adverse Effect: The present location of historic Miller Cabin will likely be impacted by flooding, and loss of historic materials is likely to occur.	Conditional No Adverse Effect

DOCUMENTATION OF SECTION 106 CONSULTATION

The National Park Service conducted public involvement during the Section 106 process to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed action. Consultation and coordination with federal and district agencies, American Indian tribes, and other interested parties were also conducted to identify issues and /or concerns related to natural and cultural resources. This section provides a brief summary of the public involvement and agency consultation and coordination that occurred during planning of the Rock Creek Park Development Concept Plan. Additional public involvement is anticipated as portions of this project are planned and designed in the future and undergo the Section 106 process for those undertakings.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

As a part of the NEPA process, and to comply with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Park Service involved the public in project planning by conducting a public and agency scoping period from October 31, 2016, through February 8, 2017. The public, agencies, and stakeholders were invited to submit comments on the project during this time. Three public open houses were held to provide citizens with an opportunity to learn about

- the proposed Nature Center Complex Development Concept Plan project;
- identify any areas of concern regarding the proposed project;
- provide the opportunity for the public to share their knowledge of important environmental and cultural issues that should be considered during planning; and
- gain public feedback to help inform the development of project alternatives.

The first public open house on November 16, 2016, took place at the Chevy Chase Library in Washington, DC. The second public open house was held on November 17, 2016, at the Lamond-Riggs Library in Washington, DC. The third open house was held at the Nature Center on January 25, 2017. Seventy individuals signed in at the public open houses. The majority of public comments were from individuals living near the project area.

A second public and agency scoping period was conducted between October 23 and December 15, 2017. A revised set of alternative concepts were presented for public review and comment at this time, and a public open house was held on November 15, 2017, at the Nature Center; 57 individuals signed in at this public open house.

Public comments expressed support and opposition for the alternative concepts presented in newsletter 1, and many made suggestions for improvements. Some of the most frequent suggestions included reducing tree and bird habitat loss, focusing on safety improvements for the Horse Center, focusing on fixing deferred maintenance issues, and reducing overall development and change to the area.

Public comments expressed support and opposition for concepts presented in newsletter 2, with most commenters supporting Alternative 2: Fix It. There was a mix of support and opposition for alternative 3. Comments in opposition were similar to the comments received for newsletter 1, expressing concern for wildlife, wildlife habitat, and tree cover, and encouraging the National Park Service to consider reductions to development proposals. The National Park Service received 300 correspondences related to the development concept plan.

AGENCY CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The National Park Service conducted several agency consultation and coordination activities during planning for the Nature Center Complex. Consultation and coordination included:

- Consulting agencies were invited to consult and comment on newsletter 1 alternative concepts during the public comment period in late 2016 through early 2017. Invitations were sent by letter on October 27, 2016.
- An agency and consulting party meeting was held on December 9, 2016, to present conceptual alternatives and to identify potential issues and concerns. At this meeting, the agencies encouraged the National Park Service to continue to consult on the project in the future and expressed interest in an organized site visit.
- Consulting agencies were invited to comment on newsletter 2 revised alternative concepts during the public comment period in late 2017. Invitations were sent by email on October 23, 2017.
- Two stakeholder meetings to discuss alternatives concepts were held; one on December 5, 2016 to discuss the alternative concepts and one on January 25, 2017 to specifically focus on concerns raised by the birding and equestrian communities. At the first meeting, stakeholders requested additional time to seek more participation from their members and networks. At the second meeting, participants identified areas of concern and suggestions for improvements to the alternative concepts.

The following agencies and stakeholders were contacted to request input on the project:

- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Advisory Neighborhood Commissions 3F03, 3G02, 4A07, and 4A08
- Architect of the Capitol
- Audubon Society
- Casey Trees
- DC Council
- DC Department of Energy and Environment
- DC Department of Parks and Recreation
- DC Department of Transportation
- DC Historic Preservation Office
- DC Office of Planning

- Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy
- Eastern National
- Ferguson Foundation
- Friends of Chevy Chase Circle
- Friends of Georgetown Waterfront Park
- Friends of Peirce Mill
- Georgetown Business Improvement District
- Guest Services, Inc.
- National Capital Planning Commission
- Outdoor Afro
- Rock Creek Conservancy
- US Commission of Fine Arts
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Washington Parks and People
- Washington Tennis and Education Foundation
- Yoga Hikes DC
- Over 60 local residents (names excluded for privacy)

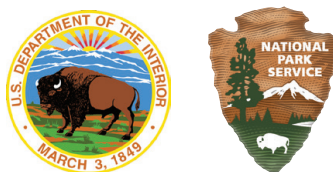
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABA	Architectural Barriers Act
ABAAS	Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards
AOE	Assessment of Effects Report
APE	Area of Potential Park
CFA	Commission of Fine Arts
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DC SHPO	District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office
DC Inventory	District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites
DOEE	District Department of Energy and Environment
DDOT	District Department of Transportation
EA	Environmental Assessment
NCPA	National Capital Planning Act of 1952
NCPC	National Capital Planning Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
NPS	National Park Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
WPA	Works Progress Administration

BIBLIOGRAPHY

National Park Service

- 1991 Rock Creek Park Historic District, National Register of Historic Places National Register # 91001524. On file, Denver Service Center Planning Division, Lakewood, CO.
- 2011 Installation of Fire Suppression Sprinkler Systems at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Public Horse Center and Maintenance Yard. On file, Denver Service Center Planning Division, Lakewood, CO.
- 2012 Rock Creek Park Long Range Interpretive Plan. On file, Denver Service Center Planning Division, Lakewood, CO.
- 2015 Rock Creek Park Historic District, National Register of Historic Places National Register # 91001524. On file, Denver Service Center Planning Division, Lakewood, CO.
- 2016 Draft Rock Creek Nature Center Historic Structure Report 2016. On file, Denver Service Center Planning Division, Lakewood, CO.
- 2018 Draft Rock Creek Park Development Concept Plan Environmental Assessment. On file, Denver Service Center Planning Division, Lakewood, CO.



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

ROCR 821/150184
March 2019



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

