

# Welcome!

Virtual Public Scoping Meeting for  
the Upper Beach Drive  
Management Plan/Environmental  
Assessment

July 8, 2021



## Meeting Mechanics

- This meeting is being recorded
- You will be in listen-only mode
- Type your questions at any time into the Chat Box



Open chat box to  
Type a comment  
Or question.

- We will answer your questions at the end of our presentation as time allows



## Questions and Comments

We will not record comments from the meeting chat, so please formally submit your thoughts using our online portal or send them to us by mail.

### **Online:**

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/beachdrive>

### **U.S. Mail:**

Attn: Beach Drive  
Rock Creek Park  
3545 Williamsburg Lane, NW  
Washington, DC 20008

Comments must be submitted online by 11:59pm or postmarked by **August 22, 2021** to receive consideration.



# Agenda

- Meeting Purpose
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) /National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Project Background
- Proposed Concepts
- Schedule
- How to Comment
- Questions and Answers



## Meeting Purpose

This evening the National Park Service will:

- Describe the existing conditions in the park;
- Present concepts for the management of upper Beach Drive NW; and
- Invite your comments on concepts and identify issues, concerns, and ideas.



## What is NEPA?

- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is part of a planning and decision-making process.
- NEPA requires federal agencies to:
  - Analyze the environmental impacts of federal actions; and
  - Engage the public in the decision-making process.
- The goal is to ensure informed decision-making.



# NEPA Planning Process

Scoping is an early and open process for determining the range of issues to be addressed and for identifying issues related to the proposed action

## Internal Scoping

- NPS staff identified the purpose of and need for action, the range of the plan, and preliminary issues and concepts

## Public Scoping

- The engagement of interested and affected public related to the proposed action, concepts, issues, and sources of data



## What is NHPA?

- The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) establishes a process (Section 106) for federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places.
- Can conclude in a determination of No Adverse Effect or a Memorandum of Agreement with Consulting Parties.
- The goal is to avoid and minimize potential harm to historic resources.



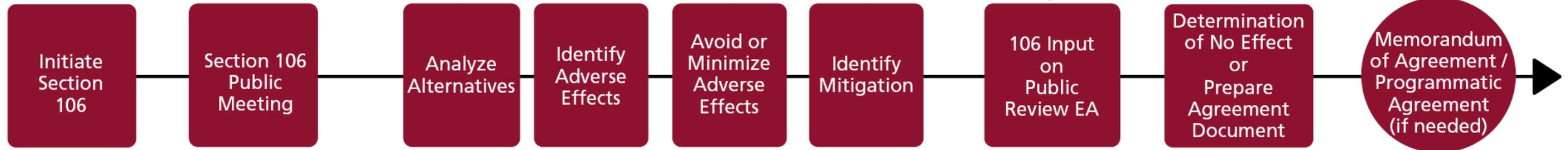
# NEPA + Section 106: A Coordinated Approach

## NEPA Process



↑  
We are here

## Section 106 Process



↑  
We are here



# Environmental Assessment

## Potential Issues and Impact Topics:

- Visitor Use and Experience
  - Access/Accessibility
  - Traffic Impacts
  - Visitor Safety
  - Availability of Recreational Opportunities
- Historic Districts
- Cultural Landscapes



Rock Creek Park  
Beach Drive NW

## Project Background

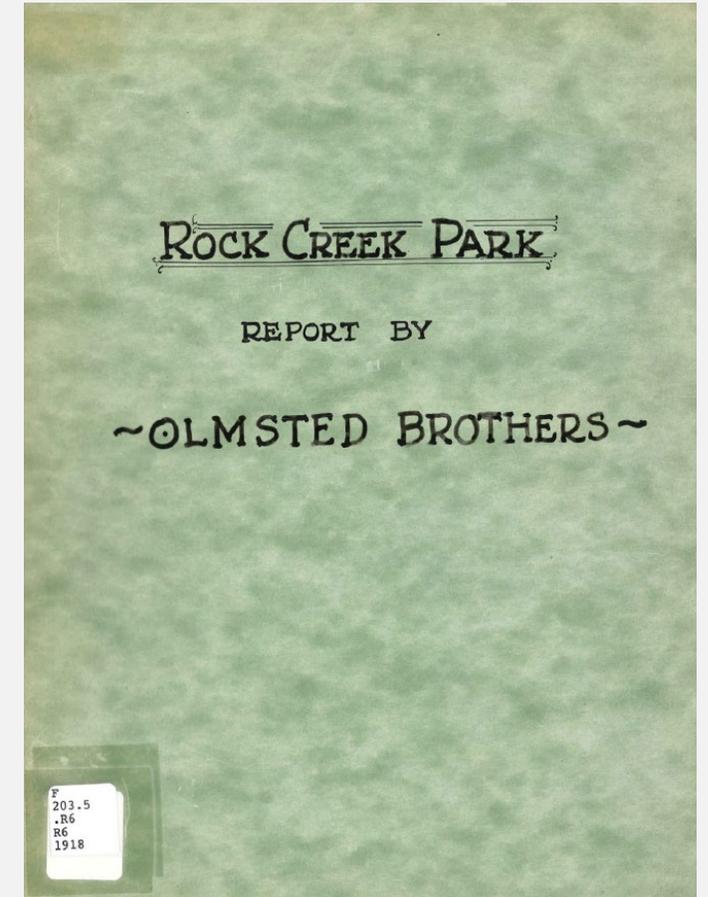
- Rock Creek Park was established by an act of Congress on September 27, 1890.
- Perpetually dedicated as a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States.
- Congress specifically authorized construction of driving roads and trails for horses and pedestrians, while mandating that park resources be preserved “in their natural condition, as nearly as possible.”



Beach Drive NW at  
Sherrill Drive NW,  
date unknown

## Project Background

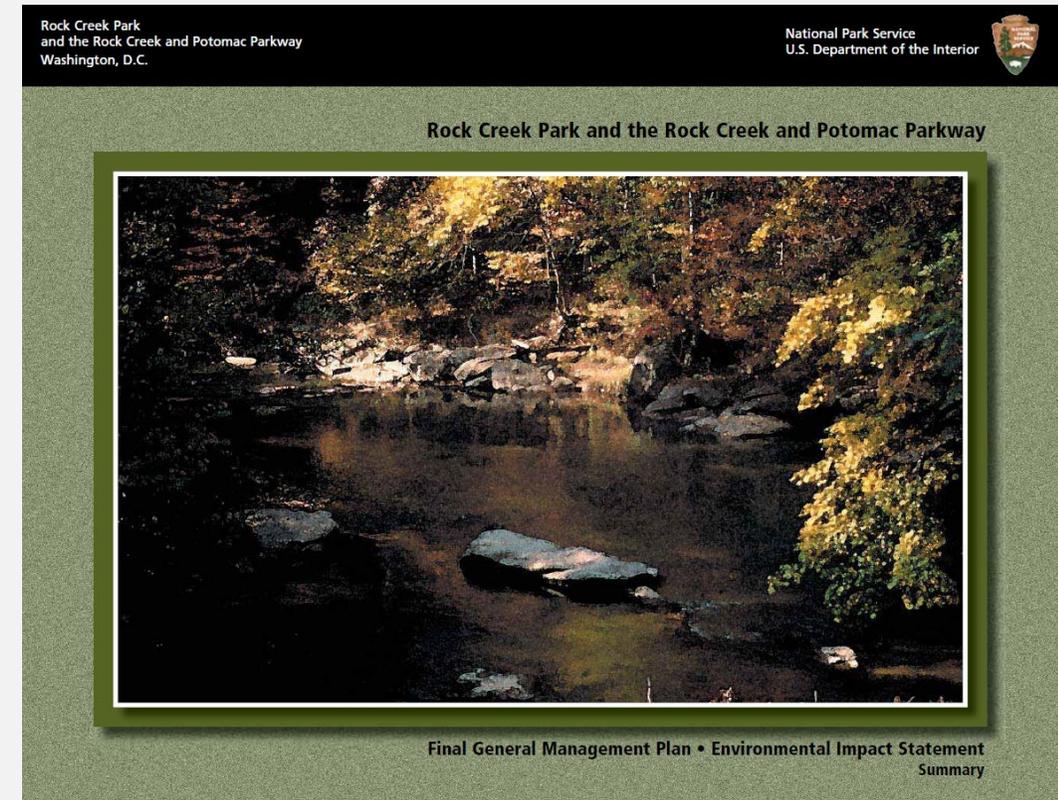
- Beach Drive NW runs from the DC-Maryland boundary to Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway.
- In 1966, the section from Joyce Road NW to Broad Branch Road NW was first limited to bicycle and pedestrian traffic on Sunday mornings.
- Temporary Beach Drive automobile closures grew to include additional sections of the roadway as well as other park roads such as Bingham Drive NW and Sherrill Drive NW, and the bicycle trail was extended.



Cover of the Olmsted  
Brothers Report, 1918

## Project Background

- Rock Creek Park and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP) was completed in 2007.
- Determined that this section of Beach Drive NW would remain open to motor vehicles from Monday through Friday, and remain closed for non-motorized recreational use on weekends and on Federal holidays.
- GMP also concluded that non-recreational through-traffic would be accommodated in the park.



Cover of Rock Creek Park and Rock  
Creek and Potomac Parkway GMP,  
2007

## Project Background

- Weekend/holiday closures temporarily extended to include weekdays in April, 2020 COVID 19-related public health emergency.
- Closures were extended to “provide sufficient room for park visitors to undertake essential recreation while maintaining a six-foot distance from each other.”
- Park staff observed increased weekday non-motorized recreational use roadways.
- The temporary closures have been extended until December 31, 2021.



Beach Drive NW North of  
Military Road NW, 2020



## Purpose and Need for Management Upper Beach Drive

The **purpose** of the plan is to develop a comprehensive management approach for upper Beach Drive NW and adjacent roadways that accounts for the **needs of motorized and non-motorized users** while **minimizing impacts to park resources**. If existing park management strategies change, this plan will also serve to amend the General Management Plan regarding management of these park roadways.

This plan is **needed** to better understand possible long-term changes in the use of upper Beach Drive NW and adjacent roadways, and to determine if existing park management strategies need to change as a result.



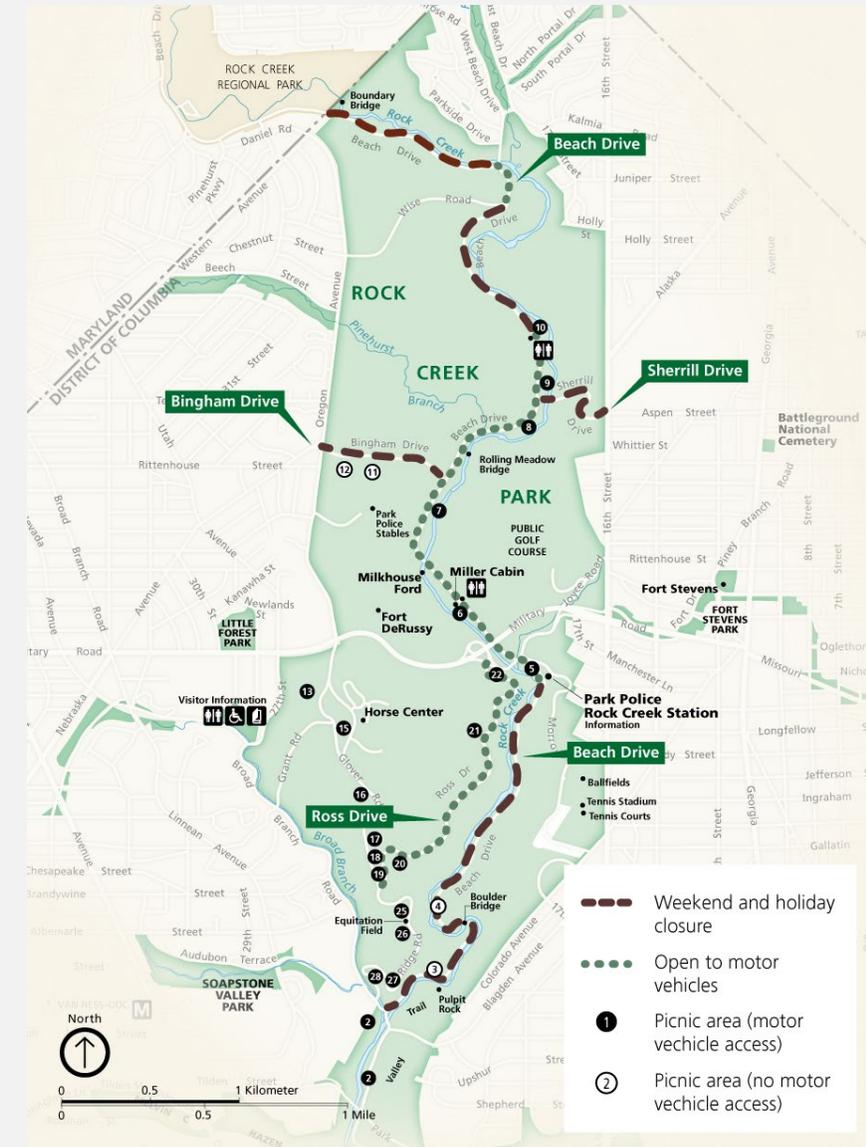
## Project Area

- Beach Drive NW between Broad Branch Road NW and Joyce Road NW
- Beach Drive NW between Joyce Road NW and Wise Road NW
- Beach Drive between West Beach Drive NW and the Maryland boundary.
- Ross Drive NW
- Bingham Drive NW
- Sherrill Drive NW



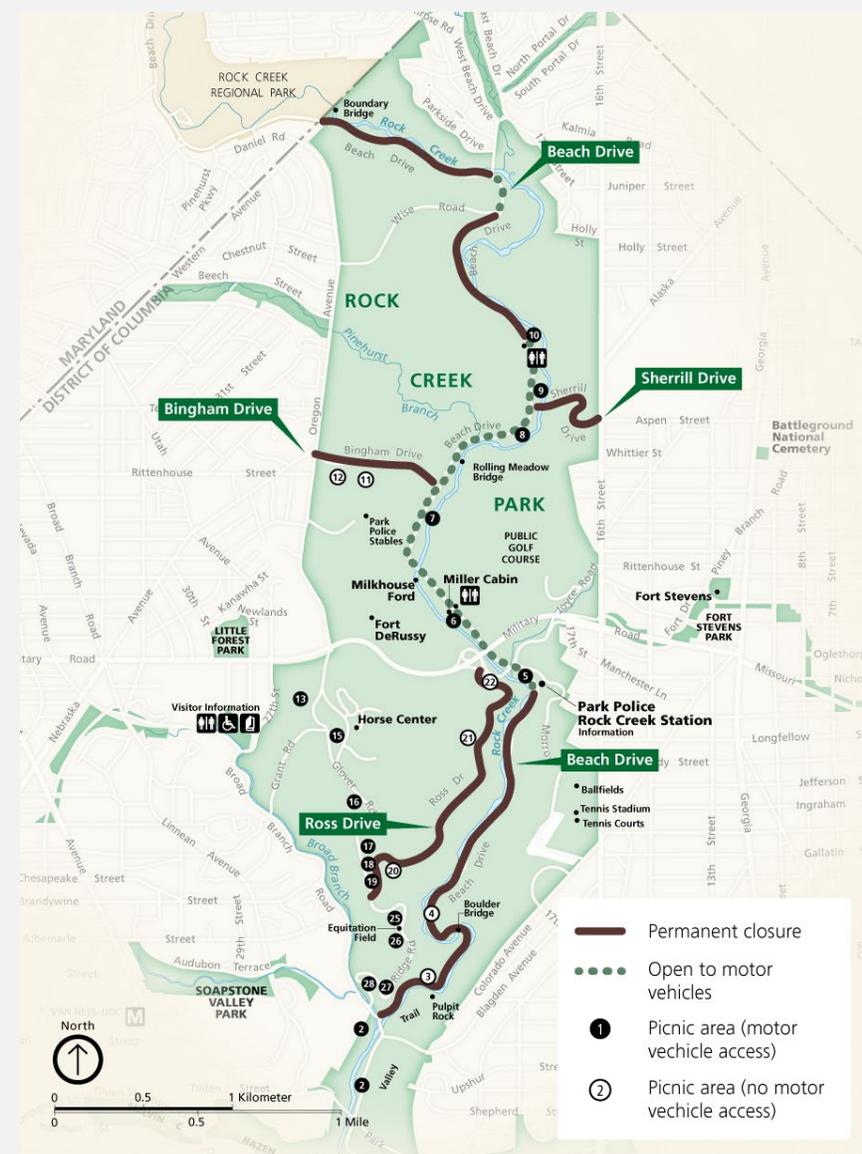
# Concept 1: No Change in Management

- Pre-COVID weekend/holiday closures for recreation remain in place, weekday through-traffic permitted.
- Weekend/holiday closures include:
  - Bingham Drive NW
  - Sherrill Drive NW
  - Beach Drive NW in three sections: from Broad Branch Road NW to Joyce Road NW, from Picnic Area 10 to Wise Road NW, and from West Beach Drive NW to the Maryland boundary.
  - Between Joyce Road and Picnic Area 10, Beach Drive NW would remain open to vehicles only for the purpose of providing access to group picnic areas and parking lots.



## Concept 2: Full Closure for Recreation

- Weekend/holiday closure for recreation would become permanent and remain in place 24-hours a day, seven days a week.
- Affected areas include:
  - Bingham Drive NW
  - Sherrill Drive NW
  - Beach Drive NW in three sections: from Broad Branch Road NW to Joyce Road NW, from Picnic Area 10 to Wise Road NW, and from West Beach Drive NW to the Maryland boundary.
  - Between Joyce Road and Picnic Area 10, Beach Drive NW would remain open to vehicles only for the purpose of providing access to group picnic areas and parking lots.





# Concept Development

Other management approaches could include closures in certain areas **and/or** by time of day, day of the week or season.

Examples of closures by section could include but are not limited to:

- Valley Closure (Broad Branch Road NW to Joyce Road NW)
- Middle Closure (Joyce Road NW to Wise Road NW) to include Sherrill Drive NW and Bingham Drive NW
- Upper Closure (West Beach Drive NW to Maryland Boundary)
- Ross Drive, from Joyce Road NW to Ridge Road NW
- Or some other combination





# Concept Development continued

Examples of closures by time of day, day of the week or season could include but are not limited to:

- Full roadway open for motor vehicles during weekday rush hours only.
- Seasonal/monthly full closures for recreation, such as Memorial Day through Labor Day
- Extending weekend/holiday closures for recreation to include Friday and Monday
- Or some combination



## Schedule

The table below highlights the important steps in the NEPA and NHPA process and tentative schedule for completion of the plan:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Milestone/Activity</b>
June 2021	Initiate NEPA Scoping
June 2021	Initiate Section 106 (We are here)
July 8 – August 22, 2021	Public Scoping Period (We are here)
July – September 2021	Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting
August 23 – October 2021	Prepare Plan/EA
September – December 2021	Prepare Section 106 Agreement Document (if necessary)
November, 2021	Public Review and Comments on EA
Late December, 2021	NEPA and NHPA Decision Document



## How to Comment

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<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/beachdrive>

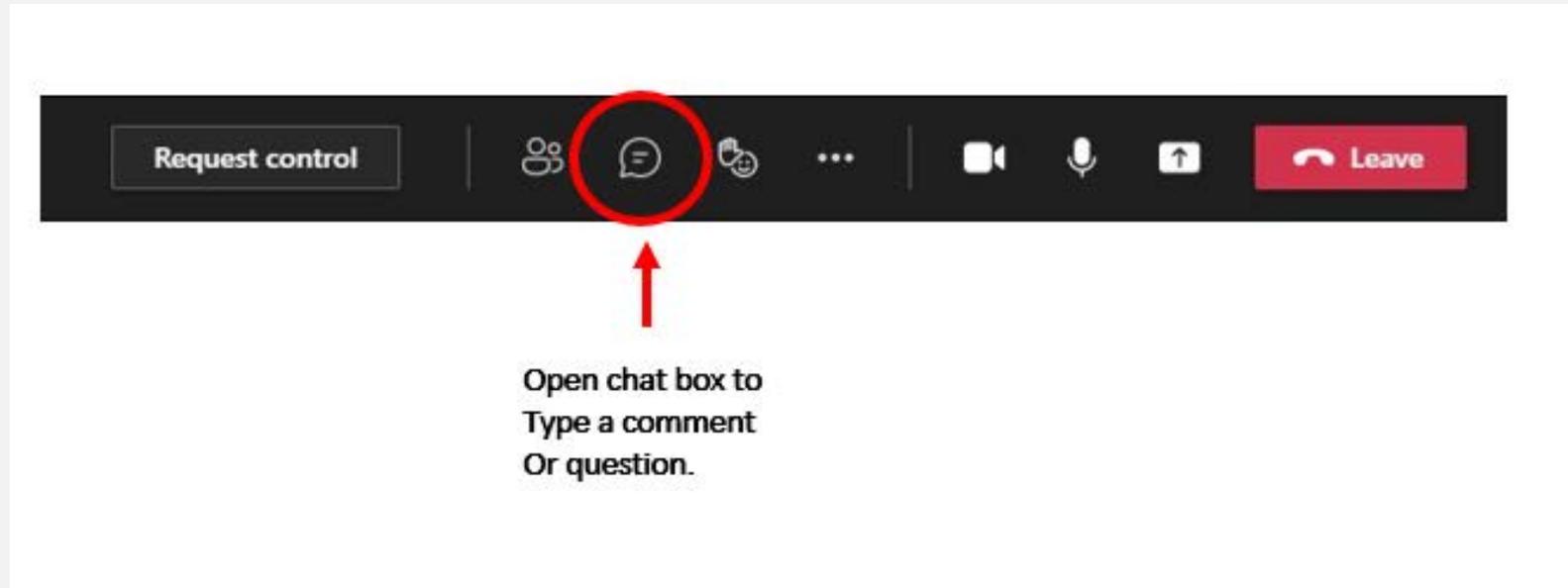
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# Questions?

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**Thank You**