



Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park Initiates New Plans for the Future

Please Join Us in this Exciting New Plan

“There’s something different about this country from any other part of the nation. The climate is generally pleasant; the sun generally bright; the air seems to be always clean; and the water is pure.”

Lyndon B. Johnson

Lyndon B. Johnson served as the 36th president of the United States. He took office following the death of President John F. Kennedy and guided the nation through some of the most trying times. During President Johnson’s service in office, the nation faced the War in Vietnam and domestic unrest over civil rights. His Great Society program inspired many reforms that improved the lives of millions of Americans, such as the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and the creation of the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1965.

While his duties as a Congressman, Senator, and later as President kept him away from the Texas Hill Country, throughout his life President Johnson maintained strong ties to the LBJ Ranch. He was born, died, and was buried on the Ranch. The close proximity of the Texas White House, his reconstructed birthplace, his grandparent’s home, and the family cemetery reflects a deep attachment for place and heritage. The operation of the LBJ Ranch is critical to understanding the image of Johnson as a rancher/president. President Johnson’s own desire to demonstrate ranching cultural and conservation practices prompted him to stipulate that the property remain a working ranch and not become a “sterile relic of the past.”

Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park protects historic resources while telling the story of the 36th president,



New plans will support NPS’s goal to open the entire Texas White House to the public.

beginning with his ancestors and ending with his own final resting place on his beloved LBJ Ranch. This entire “circle of life,” when combined with a visit to the LBJ Library and Museum in Austin, gives the visitor a unique perspective into one of America’s most noteworthy citizens by providing a complete picture of an American president.

With the recent transfer of the Texas White House from the Johnson estate to the National Park Service (NPS), the story of Lyndon B. Johnson’s life can be expanded.

We invite you to participate in developing the future of the park through an amendment to the park’s General Management Plan (GMP). This newsletter describes the planning process that will result in new access

and circulation options for the LBJ Ranch, the development of new facilities for visitors, and will continue the direction laid out in the park’s previous GMP.

This is your opportunity to help us plan for the future of Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park. We intend to communicate and consult with all individuals and groups of the interested public in this planning process. Your thoughtful participation is essential.

Russell Whitlock,
Superintendent,
Lyndon B. Johnson
National Historical Park

What is a General Management/ Environmental Assessment Amendment?

GMPs identify the overall direction for future management of national parks. They take a long-range, broad, conceptual view, answering the question "what kind of place does the community and the nation want this park to be?" GMPs provide a framework for managers to use when making decisions about such issues as how best to protect resources, what levels and types of uses are appropriate, what facilities should be developed, and how people should access the park.

All concepts and actions in a GMP must be consistent with federal law, including the reasons Congress established the park, the NPS Organic Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. NPS policies also direct what the planning process can and cannot consider.

The park's previous GMP was completed in 1999 and is still used to guide park management. Since the 1999 plan, several conditions at the park have changed. The passing of Mrs. Johnson, in 2007, ended the U.S. Secret Service security restrictions on the park. It is now possible to open the site up to the public and fulfill President Johnson's vision for the future of the ranch. In order to achieve this vision and address other infrastructure needs, the park is preparing an amendment to its GMP. The amendment will address issues related to accessing the park and reassigning uses of facilities surrounding the Texas White House. The new uses would support expanded interpretation of the ranch and future opening of the Texas White House. The amendment will be limited to these issues, which are described in this newsletter. The park will continue to operate under the overriding principles developed in the 1999 GMP.

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the GMP amendment will be developed as part of an environmental assessment (EA). The GMP amendment/EA will include further opportunities for public involvement and comment.

Concepts for Accessing Park Resources

One of the most notable changes at the park since the 1999 GMP came with the passing of Ladybird Johnson in July 2007. Prior to her passing, Mrs. Johnson regularly spent time at the park, specifically at the Texas White House. In order to protect her privacy and comply with the U.S. Secret Service security requirements, the NPS restricted visitor access through the park to the NPS operated tour buses. Following the passing of Mrs. Johnson, the NPS received full access to the Texas White House, and the U.S. Secret Service removed its security restrictions on the park. These changes prompted the need for an amendment to the 1999 GMP. This GMP amendment/EA will consider new means of providing public access to the resources within the ranch. Over the past few months, the park has experimented with different access options. These options are among those that are being considered for the amendment and are described below. Under all of these options, the park would open the ranch to pedestrian and bicycle access.

All NEPA documents require the consideration of a *no-action* alternative. Under this concept, the park would continue to implement the selected alternative described in the 1999 GMP. The NPS would maintain the current shuttle bus operation through the park. As the shuttle bus fleet has outlived its lifespan, most of the buses would be replaced.

Another concept that the amendment could consider would be the use of an NPS "drop and run" shuttle system. This would replace the existing NPS tour buses with shuttles that would continually circulate through the park at regular intervals. This circulation pattern would include options for stopping at different locations within the park. At each stop, visitors would be able to exit the shuttle bus and spend time at the site. Then, visitors could board a later shuttle bus to travel to other points in the park.

The state park would continue to function as the point of arrival, providing visitors with orientation to the state park and national historical park and serve as the launch site for the NPS "drop and run" shuttle system. The shuttle system would be operated and maintained by either the NPS or a private concessioner. Under this concept, private vehicles may have access to the park, as well. In addition, a small portion of Bailey Road would be widened to create a two-lane access road to and from the Texas White House complex. The recently established practice of step-on tours, in which park rangers provide interpretation on private tour buses, would continue if staffing allows.



Interpretive experiences would become more common under the new plans.

A third concept for accessing park resources would be to open the park to *private vehicle access* and discontinue the NPS tour bus system. Under this concept, the state park would continue to function as the point of arrival, providing visitors with orientation to the state park and national historical park and serving as the start of the auto tour. From this point, visitors would be permitted to visit selected sites by private vehicle. The recently established practice of step-on tours, in which park rangers provide interpretation on private tour buses, would continue if staffing allows. The expansion of Bailey Road would be completed to facilitate private vehicle access to the Texas White House complex. Parking for private vehicles would be provided along the taxiway, allowing one-way travel around

the LBJ Ranch and pedestrian-only visitor use around the Texas White House complex.

The final concept the amendment could consider is a *combination of the private vehicle access concept and an NPS tour bus*. Under this concept, an NPS tour bus would provide a fully interpreted tour of the park, lasting approximately 120 minutes. However, visitors also would have the choice to enter the park by private vehicle. The state park would continue to function as the point of arrival, providing visitors with orientation to the state park and national historical park and serving as the launch site for the NPS tour bus and the start of the auto tour. The NPS tour bus would be maintained and operated by either the NPS or a private concessioner. The expansion of Bailey Road would be complete. Parking for private vehicles would be provided along the taxiway, allowing one-way travel around the LBJ Ranch and pedestrian-only visitor use around the Texas White House complex. The recently established practice of step-on tours, in which park rangers provide interpretation on private tour buses, would continue, if staffing allows.

Other Issues Considered in the Amendment

In addition to the options for vehicle access, the GMP/EA Amendment will also consider concepts for activities in the structures surrounding the Texas White House. Although the 1999 GMP defined uses for these structures, developing plans for the future opening of the Texas White House have identified more appropriate functions. The structures and proposed functions are described below.

Shuttle Bus Maintenance Facility. The 1999 GMP suggested options for moving the shuttle bus maintenance facility from its current location to areas

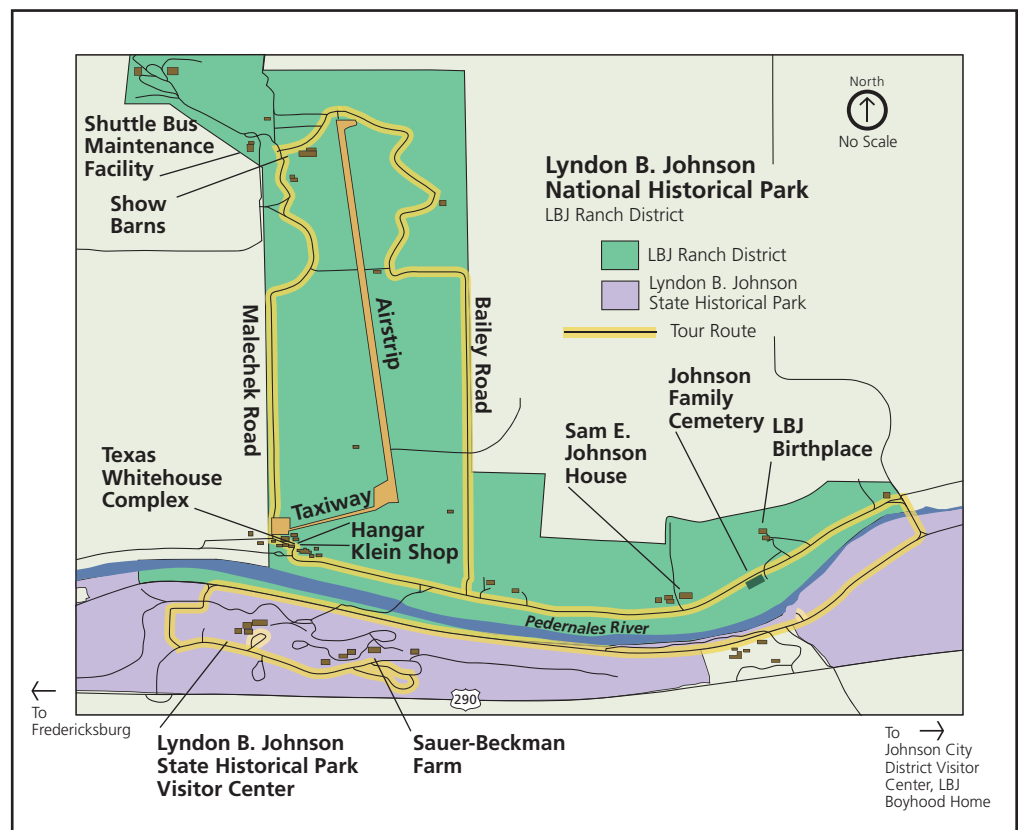
in the state park or offsite. Since that time, these options have become unavailable. The GMP/EA Amendment will consider concepts for renovating the maintenance facility in its current location or discontinuing its use if shuttles are no longer to be provided (see Concepts for Accessing Park Resources on page 2). If the shuttle bus maintenance operation was to be discontinued, the site would become home to the general maintenance activities that are currently carried out in the Klein Shop.

Klein Shop. The Klein Shop currently supports maintenance activities. If the maintenance activities are relocated to the existing shuttle bus maintenance facility, then the Klein Shop would be available for visitor use. The GMP/EA Amendment will consider concepts for providing increased opportunities to park visitor vehicles at the Klein Shop.

The Hangar. Currently, the hangar serves as a visitor contact station with maps and displays of the site. As the area around the hangar becomes more accessible to the public, the hangar will

become an important element in the interpretation of the Texas White House. The GMP/EA Amendment will consider concepts for further interpreting the Johnson presidency at the hangar, as well as providing access and parking to support the transportation concepts discussed on page 2.

Sam E. Johnson House. The president's grandparents' house was an important part of his childhood and the history of the ranch. During the Johnson presidency, the house was expanded to serve as a guest house. The expansion does not reflect the structure that Johnson knew as a child. In order to more accurately reflect the conditions that influenced his childhood, the amendment will consider the possibility of returning the structure to its original appearance.



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Questions or comments related to the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment Amendment should be forwarded by **January 15, 2009**, to:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/lyjo>

If no internet access, send comments to:
Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park
P.O. Box 329
Johnson City, TX 78636
Or Call:
(830) 868-7128 x222

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Next Steps in the Plan

Planning for the GMP/EA Amendment has already begun. In early 2008, representatives from the state park and national historical park met to discuss the issues that would be addressed in the amended plan. Following this meeting, the national historical park staff presented these issues to the NPS Intermountain Region Deputy Director and received approval to develop an amendment to its existing GMP.

In September 2008, the two parks met again with their consultants to begin refining the concepts that are summarized in this newsletter. The group will continue to refine these concepts into alternatives and develop the GMP/EA Amendment. During this process, there may be opportunities for additional public involvement. If additional public involvement opportunities are to occur, notices will be published in local newspapers and posted on the park's web site
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/lyjo>

The park plans to release its GMP/EA Amendment for public review in the summer of 2009. We look forward to presenting this document to you and working with you to develop the future of Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park.