



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Barrasso:

I hereby transmit the enclosed Amache Special Resource Study. The study was conducted pursuant to Public Law 116-9, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (2019), which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study (SRS) of the Granada Relocation Center, commonly known as Amache, in Granada, Colorado, to evaluate its potential for inclusion as a unit of the national park system. The SRS was conducted by the National Park Service (NPS).

Section 100507 of Title 54, United States Code, establishes the criteria to be considered in the study of an area for potential inclusion in the national park system. To be recommended as a new unit, a study area must possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources and represent one of the most important examples of a particular resource type in the country; be suitable and feasible for addition to the system; and appropriate for direct NPS management.

Amache was one of 10 incarceration camps established by the War Relocation Authority during World War II (WWII) to unjustly incarcerate Japanese Americans who were forcibly removed from their communities on the West Coast under the provisions of Executive Order 9066. During its operation from 1942-1945, over 10,000 people passed through Amache, which housed 7,318 incarcerated at its peak. Although the original buildings associated with the incarceration camp were removed or demolished after Amache closed, several have since been reconstructed or returned to the site, and widespread archeological evidence of its structures' foundations remain.

Designated as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 2006, Amache's significance is well established. The NPS confirmed that the 593-acre site continues to meet the NHL criteria for national significance for its direct association with the WWII Japanese American incarceration experience and serves as an outstanding example of this event. In the years since the NHL designation, preservation efforts and extensive archeological research have enhanced the understanding and appreciation of the site's national significance.

In evaluating suitability, the NPS determined that the Amache site depicts a distinct and important aspect of United States history associated with civil liberties in times of conflict. While other national park units interpret WWII Japanese American incarceration, Amache is one of the most physically intact, retaining visible archeological remnants of the incarceration camp. It would expand the representation of the WWII incarceration beyond the West Coast in the NPS to allow more adequate interpret this nationwide history.

In evaluating feasibility, the NPS found that most of the Amache site is a feasible addition to the national park system. Among other factors including strong public support for designation, the site has high potential for interpretation and enhancing visitor experience. Costs associated with the acquisition, one-time facility development and improvements, and long-term operations of the site appear to be acceptable given Amache's historical significance.

And upon further evaluation, the NPS found that the Amache site meets the fourth criterion: the need for direct NPS management. Despite significant ongoing preservation and interpretation efforts, direct NPS management of the site is necessary to ensure its preservation and accessibility to the American public. Numerous opportunities exist for partnerships with the Amache Preservation Society, the Town of Granada, and others for advancing interpretation and stewardship of the site.

Therefore, the NPS developed a management alternative for resource preservation, visitor facilities, and interpretation. Establishment of Amache National Historic Site was found to be the most efficient and effective way to protect the resources and expand opportunities for visitors to experience Amache.

On March 18, 2022, President Joe Biden signed the Amache National Historic Site Act (P.L. 117-106), designating Amache as part of the national park system, and we applaud the Congressional designation for passing this legislation. The SRS is being transmitted to Congress to complete the SRS process and meet the requirement of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (P.L. 116-9). NPS emphasis is now focused on utilizing information from the SRS for planning to ensure the successful management of the area into the future.

Thank you for your interest in the National Park Service. A similar letter is being sent to the Honorable Joe Manchin III, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate; the Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives; and the Honorable Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives. The affected members of the Colorado delegation will also receive a copy of the SRS and this letter.

Sincerely,

Shannon Estenoz
Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Joe Neguse
The Honorable Ken Buck
The Honorable Michael Bennet
The Honorable John Hickenlooper



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The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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Committee on Natural Resources
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