



United States Department of the Interior

National Mall and Memorial Parks
National Park Service
National Capital Region
900 Ohio Drive, NW
Washington, DC 20024

December 09, 2022

Mr. David Maloney
State Historic Preservation Officer
Historic Preservation Office
District of Columbia Office of Planning
1100 4th Street SW Suite E650
Washington, DC 20024

Re: Rehabilitate Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park Seawalls: Section 106 Consultation and Determination of Effect

Dear Mr. Maloney:

As previously discussed, the National Park Service (NPS) is preparing a plan and corresponding Environmental Assessment (EA) to rehabilitate and reconstruct approximately 6,800 linear feet of the seawalls in the Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park that are administered by National Mall and Memorial Parks (Park). The NPS is writing to inform the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended, (54 U.S.C. § 306108) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR § 800) of the Determination of Effect of the undertaking.

Purpose and Identification of Historic Properties

The Section 106 consultation for the rehabilitation of the seawalls was initiated with the DC Historic Preservation Office, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and Federally Recognized Tribes in letters dated May 19, 2022. The Tribal letters were delivered to: Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma Nation, Catawba Indian Nation, Cherokee Nation, Chickahominy Indian Tribe, Chickahominy Tribe Eastern Division, Delaware Nation, Monacan Indian Nation, Nansemond Indian Nation, Pamunkey Indian Tribe, Rappahannock Tribe, Shawnee Tribe, and Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe.

The NPS held the first Consulting Parties meeting on August 2, 2022, which introduced the draft Area of Potential Effect (APE) that considers potential visual and physical effects, from the Virginia shoreline, from construction staging areas, and the area within the Limits of Disturbance for construction activities.

The list of historic resources within the APE included the National Mall Historic District, the Washington Monument and Grounds Historic District, East and West Potomac Parks Historic District, Mount Vernon

Memorial Highway Historic District, George Washington Memorial Parkway Historic District, and the Arlington National Cemetery Historic District, all of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Additional individually NRHP-listed resources include Arlington Memorial Bridge and Related Features, Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, and Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

The project undertaking and seawall concept were also introduced at the August 2nd Consulting Parties meeting. The rehabilitation proposes the removal of the existing stone masonry seawall and its reconstruction along the historic alignment to its historical functional height. The design includes foundations that bear on bedrock, relieving the weight of the structure on the alluvial soils that caused the existing settlement. This type of foundation allows additional capacity for the walls to be extended vertically in response to future sea level rise or increasing storm surge elevations. The new wall would be able to withstand future sea level rise and settlement, and the construction would re-install salvaged historic stones at the top of the wall with new stones installed at the lowest points of the wall. The stones will be stacked and laid in an ashlar pattern that reflects the predominant conditions found along the seawall today.

The NPS assessed potential adverse effects to all contributing resources in the attached draft Assessment of Effects (AOE) Report (**Attachment A**). The assessment considers physical aspects of integrity, temporary effects, as well as any adverse effects to views and viewsheds.

Determination of Effect

After applying the criteria of adverse effect in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800.5 we have determined that the undertaking will result in an adverse effect to historic resources. During construction, full visitor access to the Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park would be restricted, resulting in temporary adverse effects. Portions of Ohio Drive may require closure during construction, also resulting in temporary adverse effects. Construction fencing and equipment will have temporary adverse effects to viewsheds.

The undertaking would result in adverse effects to the seawalls themselves. Though the original workmanship and design would be lost with the new construction of the seawall, master masons will stack the historic stone in the same ashlar pattern to maintain the historic appearance of the seawall at the face while the new foundations and structure are inserted behind and below. The removal of numerous trees and other vegetation, including Japanese cherry trees, as part of the rehabilitation efforts would result in an adverse effect, however this is an opportunity to correct deficiencies in the upland area behind the walls.

Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation

The NPS will outline in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) those design directives that avoid, minimize, and mitigate identified adverse effects.

To avoid adverse effects NPS would carefully design the new seawalls to maintain the historic alignment of the seawalls avoiding any changes to the shape of the Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park while salvaging and reusing the maximum amount of historic stone possible. Other design efforts to minimize adverse effects include design and construction of the new seawalls to ensure the historic ashlar pattern of the stacked stone walls would be retained in the visible portion of the walls. The bottom edge of the seawall where new stone will be used would be visible only during extreme low tide events and only until it is

naturally coated with sediment and algae. Construction of the new wall would be consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Efforts would be made during construction to minimize temporary adverse effects to visitor experience with sensitive fencing and signage directing the public around the construction. Where possible, trees and vegetation would remain and be protected during construction.

To mitigate the adverse effects from the loss of contributing vegetation, the approximately 300 trees removed from the cultural landscape, including Japanese cherry trees, would be replaced in kind, or with a more acceptable/suitable species for the location and soil conditions, and in consultation with the historical landscape architect and arborist.

As part of the rehabilitation of the seawalls extensive additional research has been undertaken to supplement existing documentation and inform design decisions regarding the appropriate treatment and rehabilitation of the historic seawalls. To mitigate adverse effects that cannot be avoided or minimized, the NPS would install interpretive signage in the Tidal Basin educating the public on the history and significance of the Tidal Basin and the seawalls. Additionally, NPS would complete a Tidal Basin Master Plan that outlines a comprehensive approach for long-term preservation and management goals.

Section 106 and NEPA Coordination

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NPS is preparing an EA to analyze potential impacts of the proposed rehabilitation and reconstruction of the seawalls. NPS plans to release the EA, with the AOE Report attached, for public comment in early 2023.

We look forward to your comments on the Determination of Effect. If you have any questions on the AOE Report, Determination of Effect, and avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures, please contact Catherine Dewey, Chief of Resource Management, at catherine_dewey@nps.gov or 202-510-1117.

Sincerely,

**JEFFREY
REINBOLD**

Digitally signed by
JEFFREY REINBOLD
Date: 2022.12.09
12:35:28 -05'00'

Jeffrey P. Reinbold

Superintendent

National Mall and Memorial Parks

Attachments: A: AOE Report
B: Draft Memorandum of Agreement

cc: Mr. Andrew Lewis, DC SHPO
Dr. Ruth Troccoli, DC SHPO
Tammy Stidham, NPS – National Capital Region
Catherine Dewey, NPS – National Mall and Memorial Parks