



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Joe Manchin III
Chairman, Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I hereby transmit the enclosed *George W. Bush Childhood Home Special Resource Study*. The study was conducted pursuant to Public Law 116-9, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the George W. Bush Childhood Home at 1412 West Ohio Avenue, Midland, Texas, for potential inclusion as a new unit of the national park system. The study was conducted by the National Park Service (NPS).

The Bush family, which included two future Presidents (George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush), and a future First Lady (Barbara Pierce Bush), lived at 1412 West Ohio Avenue from November 1951 through November 1955. The George W. Bush Childhood Home is a Texas Historical Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its association with the 43rd President of the United States at an important and formative period in his life. The nonprofit George W. Bush Childhood Home, Inc. (GW BCH Inc.) purchased the property in 2001 and restored it to its 1955 appearance. At the time of the study, the nonprofit organization managed the property as a historic house museum interpreting the Bushes' connections to Midland. The house museum was named the 36th state historic site in Texas Historical Commission (THC) historic site portfolio in early February 2023; site ownership and management is currently being transferred to the State of Texas.

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 be appropriate for direct NPS management.

In evaluating national significance, the NPS determined that 1412 West Ohio Avenue meets the criterion for national significance. As the home of two future Presidents of the United States, the property is associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States. While childhood homes are usually not associated with the national significance of an individual under National Historic Landmark criteria and special resource study criteria, 1412 West Ohio meets the exception because the property is representative of the Bush family's home life as well as George W. Bush's upbringing—which he later touted as the cornerstone of his political identity on the presidential campaign trail.

In evaluating suitability, the NPS determined the addition of the George W. Bush Childhood Home would constitute a suitable addition to the national park system as there is no existing NPS unit that primarily focuses on the lives, presidencies, and legacies of George W. Bush or his father George

Herbert Walker Bush. The site represents a cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the park system (association with past Presidents Bush) and for its educational and interpretive potential related to the Bush family's time in Texas.

In evaluating the third criterion, the NPS found that study area meets all the factors considered under the analysis of feasibility. It is of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment. Land ownership patterns, economic and socioeconomic impacts, and potential threats to the resources do not preclude the study area from potentially becoming a new unit of the national park system. The site would not require substantial new infrastructure to support visitation and to meet the standards of an NPS unit.

The NPS found that the George W. Bush Childhood Home would benefit from additional support, technical expertise, and longevity provided by a larger preservation organization or government entity such as the NPS or the THC. The GWBCH Inc. is currently providing sufficient resource protection but opportunities for visitor enjoyment are limited by low staff and volunteer numbers and the management entity has concerns over its ability to maintain the historic structure in the future.

As noted above, in early February 2023, the George W. Bush Childhood Home was named a state historic site in THC's historic site portfolio, and site ownership and management is currently being transferred to the State of Texas. Because THC's Historic Site Program can provide equivalent level of resource protection and visitor services, management by the NPS does not represent a "clearly superior alternative". As the study concludes, the site does not meet the need for direct NPS management. Affiliated area status may be appropriate if THC wishes to seek NPS recognition or technical assistance.

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

Sincerely,

Shannon Estenoz
Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable John Cornyn
The Honorable Ted Cruz
The Honorable August Pfluger (TX-11)



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Ranking Member
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The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
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Dear Representative Grijalva:

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