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**Special Resource Study**

National Park Service  
 U.S. Department of the Interior



Harry S Truman Birthplace • Missouri  
 Newsletter 1 • April 2010

# Harry S Truman Birthplace Special Resource Study



**Harry S Truman Birthplace, Past and Present**

America's 33rd President, Harry S Truman, was born in his family's home in Lamar, Missouri, on May 8th, 1884. The first child of John Anderson Truman and Martha Ellen Young, Harry was born in the home his parents had purchased in the city of Lamar in 1882, which still stands today as the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site. Though he only lived in the home for 11 months, Harry S Truman was influenced by his humble beginnings in Lamar and other Missouri towns during his presidency, and returned to Independence when he retired from public office. His home in Independence and a home in Grandview are now part of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site.



constructed by the State. The City of Lamar has aided this effort by purchasing properties and transferring them to the state, as well as making road improvements near the property.

**Harry S Truman Birthplace Study Launched**

First introduced by Congressman Ike Skelton in 2007, the Harry S Truman Birthplace Study Act became law as part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, signed on March 30, 2009, as Public Law 111-11. The Act instructs the NPS to explore the possibility of adding the birthplace site to the Harry S Truman National Historic Site, the possibility of adding it as a new unit of the national park system, and to explore other alternatives for its protection and interpretation by other government entities, private, or nonprofit organizations.

In response, the NPS formed a Harry S Truman Birthplace Special Resource Study Team tasked with conducting a Special Resource Study of the site. The NPS process for conducting these studies includes five steps:

- First, the national significance of the site is assessed. The criteria used to determine whether or not a property is nationally significant enough for inclusion in the national park system are the same as national historic landmark (NHL) criteria. Though the birthplace was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1969, and has been a State Historic Site since 1959, it has not been evaluated for a higher level of recognition as an NHL.

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## Harry S Truman Birthplace Special Resource Study Newsletter



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After the Trumans moved, the birthplace remained a private residence until 1957, when the United Auto Workers organization purchased the property, restored it, and gave the title to the Missouri Park Board as a gift to the people of Missouri. The State of Missouri installed period furnishings. On April 19, 1959, the restored birthplace was dedicated to the public, with Harry S Truman in attendance.

Harry S Truman's father was a livestock trader during the family's tenure in Lamar, and the State of Missouri has acquired the parcel where the mule barn once stood, among others, to expand the State Historic Site as per a Conceptual Development Plan (CDP). The CDP process began in 1997, and the plan was approved in 2002. Since that time, new parcels have been acquired and a new maintenance facility



For more information about the 2002 Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) go to <http://www.mostateparks.com/trumansite/plans.htm>

- Second, the suitability of the site for inclusion in the national park system is assessed. The suitability assessment will involve comparing the Harry S Truman Birthplace to other sites already included in the national park system or comparably protected by others (by park systems of other federal agencies, states, and localities or privately). If the study team finds that preserving and interpreting the Harry S Truman Birthplace would not duplicate comparable efforts elsewhere, then it will be found suitable for inclusion in the national park system.
- Third, the feasibility of the site for inclusion in the national park system is assessed. According to the management policies that govern the National Park Service, an area must be “(1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment, taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries, and (2) capable of efficient administration by the Service at a reasonable cost.”
- Fourth, the study team will determine whether or not there is a need for direct management by the National Park Service.

- Lastly, a range of management alternatives to preserve and interpret the Harry S Truman Birthplace will be developed. For this study, the NPS was specifically asked to study alternatives regardless of findings on significance, suitability, and feasibility. Alternatives will be presented to the public for feedback, and evaluated in terms of costs, benefits, and environmental impacts in order to determine how to most efficiently and effectively manage significant resources. Unless direct NPS management of the Harry S Truman Birthplace is identified as the clearly superior management alternative, the Service will recommend that another organization (for example, state, local or private entities or another federal agency) continue or assume a lead management role. One alternative will examine the possibility of managing the birthplace as part of the existing Harry S Truman National Historic Site, an alternative explicitly mentioned in the study’s enabling legislation. Another alternative will explore the possibility of continuing state protection and administration of the site.

The Harry S Truman National Historic Site preserves and interprets the home in Independence, Missouri where Truman lived with his wife and daughter most of his adult life and the Grandview farm where he lived as a youth.

*Public involvement is a critical part of this study process. The purpose of this newsletter is to invite you to participate by introducing you to the study process and encouraging your feedback about key issues we should consider as we proceed. See “How to Participate in this Study” discussion on this page.*

Once we develop a range of management alternatives, we will issue a second newsletter asking for your specific feedback on them. In the meantime, please check our website for project updates. Questions about this study can be addressed to:

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**Harry S Truman Birthplace Special Resource Study**  
**National Park Service Midwest Regional Office**  
**601 Riverfront Drive, Omaha, NE 68102**  
**Ruth\_Heikkinen@nps.gov**  
**ph: 402-661-1846**

### How to Participate in this Study

There are three ways to provide feedback at this early stage:

1. **Send comments through our study website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>.** Once at this site, click on the “plans/docs” tab and then select “Special Resource Study” for the plan type and scroll down to “Harry S Truman Birthplace.”
2. **Send in the enclosed, postage-paid comment form.**
3. **Attend the public meeting to learn more about the study and offer comments.**

**The meeting will be held on**  
**Wednesday, April 21**  
**from 5-8 pm**  
**at the**  
**Thiebaud Auditorium Conference Room**  
**105 East 11th Street**  
**Lamar, Missouri**  
**Presentations will be made at 5 pm and at 6:30 pm.**  
*Please feel free to come to either presentation at your convenience.*

TIMEFRAME	PLANNING ACTIVITY	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
2010	<b>Begin the Study</b> Gather team members to visit the site, become familiar with related work affecting it, and make preliminary significance, suitability, and feasibility determinations	Attend the public meeting and let us know what you think. You can also send a note through our website or use the postage-paid response form in this newsletter.
Winter 2010/2011	<b>Develop Alternatives</b> Draft the Special Resource Study using public comment and feedback to develop proposed management alternatives.	Attend a public meeting to provide comments on alternatives. You will receive another newsletter that describes the alternatives and includes a comment form.
Fall 2011	<b>Analyze Alternatives and Produce Draft Study</b> Use feedback from the public on alternatives, analyze their benefits, costs, and impacts to identify the most efficient and effective alternative. The result will be a draft of the study, including an environmental assessment if necessary.	Provide comments on the draft study.
Spring 2012	<b>Finalize the Study and Submit to Congress</b>	