

# INTERPRETIVE CONCEPT PLAN

## MARTIN VAN BUREN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

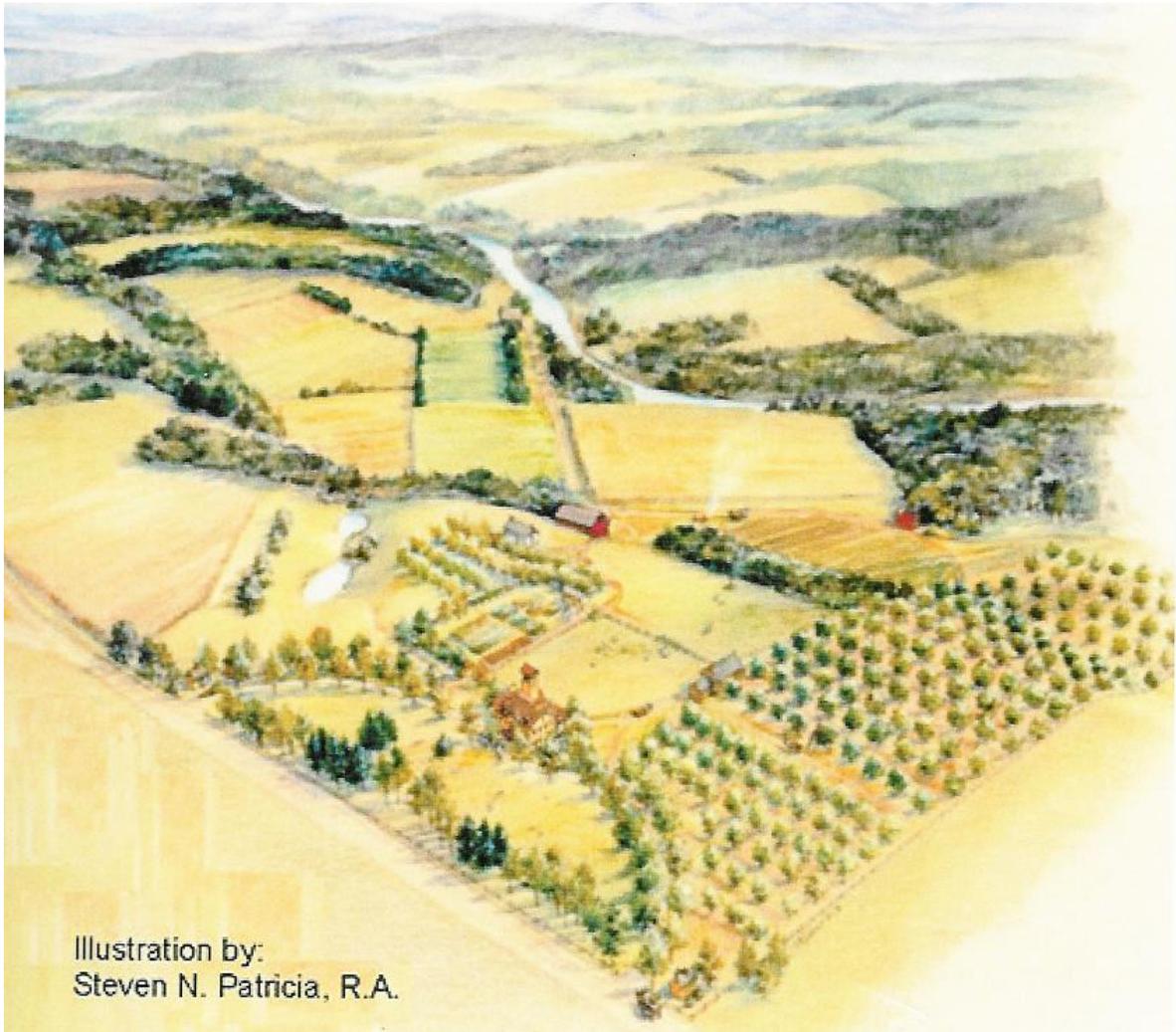


Illustration by:  
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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE





# **INTERPRETIVE CONCEPT PLAN**

## **MARTIN VAN BUREN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

**2005**

**Prepared by**

**Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**Martin Van Buren  
National Historic Site**

**Harpers Ferry Center  
Interpretive Planning**

*“My farming operations for the present [have] been very successful  
& I am fast getting my farm in good order.”*  
Martin Van Buren



The mission of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site is to preserve Lindenwald, the home and farm of the nation’s eight president. Martin Van Buren’s life bridged the 80 years between the American War for Independence and the United States Civil War, the critical formative years of the American Republic. He was among the most prominent Jacksonian Era politicians, one whose political activities were prototypical and are still an influence. When coupled with its surroundings and vistas, Lindenwald appears as it did when Martin Van Buren lived; it provides an aesthetically pleasing resource which is intimately and tangibly related to his life. As such it allows for successful study and understanding of President Van Buren’s life and times as well as a refreshing recreational resource.

# **CONTENTS**

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## **INTRODUCTION 5**

## **BACKGROUND FOR PLANNING 7**

- Interpretive Planning Foundation 8
- Mission Goals 9
- Issues 13
- Project Focus 16

## **FUTURE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION 17**

- Outreach 18
- Park-wide Recommendations 21
  - Interpretive Experience Areas 21
  - Information / Orientation 21
  - Interpretation 22
  - Guided Tours 26
  - Education 27
  - Access 29
- Interpretive Areas 31
  - Arrival 31
  - Visitor Center 34
  - Transition Area 40
  - Historic House 41
  - Cultural Area 43
  - Lindenwald Farm 46
  - Woods and Creek 48
  - Park Operations Area 50

## **PROJECT SUMMARY/SCHEDULE 51**

## **APPENDIX 55**

- Planning Team and Consultants 56
- Visitor Center Planning Specifications 57



# ***INTRODUCTION***

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This Interpretive Concept Plan identifies issues and influences affecting visitor experience opportunities at Martin Van Buren National Historic Site and describes program concepts to guide future management planning at the park. The plan will guide park interpretation, education and visitor experience programs for the next decade. It recommends ways to improve visitor experience through facilities (interpretive buildings, media, landscapes, and trails) and personal services. It relates visitor experience and interpretive concepts to park purpose, significance, management goals, resource condition goals and other relevant plans.

Previous interpretive planning by Harpers Ferry Center and Martin Van Buren National Historic Site staff in 2003 involved stakeholders in preparing an Interpretive Planning Foundation document. The foundation document established purpose, significance, and interpretive themes and identified visitor/audience categories and visitor experience objectives. Future management planning and implementation at the park includes initiation of a General Management Plan (GMP) in 2007 and possible boundary expansion in the future. This Interpretive Concept Plan and the Interpretive Planning Foundation document previously completed will describe desired future visitor experience programs for incorporation into the General Management Plan. The two documents also provide information necessary to complete the park's Comprehensive Interpretive Plan process.



# ***BACKGROUND FOR PLANNING***

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## ***INTERPRETIVE PLANNING FOUNDATION***

Park staff has struggled to find the most effective media and activities to interpret Martin Van Buren and his significance in context with physical resources: his house and a portion of the farm he loved and nurtured. It is often difficult to effectively interpret Van Buren's historical and political significance using a guided tour of tangible resources such as furniture and house. Staff has relied on a Master Plan approved in 1972 and an outdated Interpretive Prospectus approved in 1985.

Park staff and Friends of Lindenwald began developing new interpretive themes in 2001. A review by scholars knowledgeable of Martin Van Buren, early national and antebellum history, and history of the presidency resulted in the themes currently used to interpret the site. Park managers contracted a Harpers Ferry Center Interpretive Planner to facilitate an interpretive planning workshop in 2003. The resulting Interpretive Planning Foundation incorporated the themes into a document that also included park purpose statements, significance statements, visitor experience goals, and description of potential park audiences. The intent of the foundation document was to guide development of improved park visitor activities and inform future planning, including this Interpretive Concept Plan and a General Management Plan.

The Interpretive Planning Foundation document is an essential companion to this Interpretive Concept Plan. Together they form the park's Long-Range Interpretive Plan component of the National Park Service Comprehensive Interpretive Planning process.

## ***MISSION GOALS***

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site was established in 1974 as a unit of the National Park System. The purpose of this unit is to interpret the life and times of Martin Van Buren, the eighth United States president, through the preservation of significant resources at Lindenwald, his home and farm. Interpretation activities make clear to visitors the purpose and significance of park resources and stories that define and describe the site's importance to the nation's natural and cultural heritage.

The following goals of park managers will help accomplish the mission of the national historic site for the next 7-10 years.

### ***Preserve and Protect Resources Related to Martin Van Buren and Lindenwald.***

The significant cultural and natural resources relating to Martin Van Buren National Historic Site will be maintained and preserved in good condition in compliance with National Park Service standards and managed within their broader cultural context. Management decisions about resources and effective planning for interpretation for current and potential audiences will be based on adequate scholarly and scientific information. An active program of research, inventorying, and monitoring will contribute to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values.

Maintenance and enhancement of natural and cultural resources will preserve the character-defining features of the park's cultural landscape that today represents the dynamic inter-relationship of people and the land. Protection of natural resources will maintain ecological and biological diversity of the abundant plant and animal species found in the historic agricultural landscapes of New York. Significant structures, sites, features and (cultural) traditions will be protected to assure research accessibility and to interpret the local color, character and diversity of the environment loved and nurtured by Martin Van Buren.

The park's historic records and objects will be properly managed and preserved. Historic records and objects will be an integral part of education and interpretation programming to bring visitors into direct contact with the stories of the park.

### ***Implement Recommended Park Boundary Expansion Alternative.***

The scenic and cultural views surrounding Lindenwald have been identified as some of the park's important resources. Within these vistas the relationship of earth and sky and field and forest contribute to a "sense of place" where past meets future. Existing resources will be managed to enhance appropriate views, and future developments will enhance and not detract from this important resource.

Previous planning activities indicate that the boundary of the park may not adequately protect resources and values related to Martin Van Buren and Lindenwald. Resources contributing to the significance of the national historic site exist on lands outside the park boundary, diminishing their potential for protection and interpretation. Conservation easements established by Congress to preserve the site's key agricultural views no longer offer adequate protection. A boundary study completed by the National Park Service in 2003 proposed three alternatives related to the park boundary. The preferred alternative proposes acquisition of 167 acres that was included in Van Buren's farm. The alternative also proposes expansion of the conservation easement to include 160 acres critical to the historic setting. The proposed expanded easement would largely prohibit development and convey rights to farm on selected parcels. Implementation of the preferred alternative will contribute to fulfillment of Congressional intent to protect the historic setting from development. It would also enhance visitor understanding of the agricultural atmosphere of the historic site and help maintain the long-standing agricultural tradition of Kinderhook into which Martin Van Buren was born.

The selected boundary alternative may still not protect all resources related to Martin Van Buren and Lindenwald. Additional interpretive activities, facilities and media will be developed to provide a balanced story of Martin Van Buren and his legacy.

### ***Complete General Management Plan to Guide Future Park Management.***

Much has changed at Lindenwald since the national historic site was established in 1974. A new general management plan is needed to provide the park with better guidance and direction in regard to management of natural and cultural resources and providing a quality visitor experience. The plan will guide improvement of existing management deficiencies through the establishment of management

prescriptions, carrying capacities and appropriate types and levels of development and recreational use.

***Enhance Site-based and Outreach Visitor Services.***

A variety of visitor services will be made available to park visitors, neighbors, and general public through on-site and outreach programs. Services will emphasize the park primary interpretive themes. The goal of visitor service activities will be to help audiences understand and appreciate: the environment in which Martin Van Buren lived; and the accomplishments he made toward a party-based political system that has been a defining feature of the United States of America.

Management activities will provide opportunities for public enjoyment of on-site and off-site experiences that lead to greater understanding of unique and diverse park resources and stories. Most audiences will safely enjoy and be satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities and services. Park visitors, neighbors and the general public will have many opportunities to understand the historic and present context of the park within the Hudson River Valley and the nation. Understanding will lead to appreciation of the values of the park and support for its mission.

Education and interpretation activities will extend beyond the boundary of the park in order to reach a wide audience. Although on-site experiences will be the primary component of education and interpretation program, interpretive efforts cannot be successful if they are directed only toward those who visit the site. Outreach to communities, educational institutions, senior citizen organizations and potential visitors through off-site activities, dissemination of written materials, and development of long distance learning opportunities will be pursued.

***Maintain Human Factor of Park Operations (Staff and Partners) at a High Level.***

The park management team will maintain effective working relations with park neighbors, adjacent communities, and other partners. The purpose of these partnerships will be to identify and cooperate on issues of mutual interest that increase capability to accomplish the mission of the park. Many issues related to vistas, water quality, and fire management can be addressed effectively only through partnership efforts. For example, educators and researchers may have important current knowledge, other landowners may have similar needs and concerns, and nearby communities may have valuable resources.

Accommodating diverse viewpoints and interests and sharing information will be very important for the successful, long-term management of the park.

Park staff and partners will become more productive utilizing the best available technology, management systems, and practices. Park employees and partners will work in a cooperative environment and effective organization structure that fosters a safe, diverse, well-trained work force to provide optimal stewardship of resources and high quality visitor experiences.

## ***ISSUES***

### ***Outreach***

This issue goes beyond the lack of recognition or esteem the park has locally or nationally; it has much to do with a societal myopia of history. Potential visitors need more avenues of familiarization with the park and its stories. Dissemination of information about the park and promotion of experience opportunities need to reach local communities and regional, national, and international audiences. Additional research is needed to assess levels of knowledge and attitudes of Columbia County residents toward the park so staff can determine how to attract regional visitors. Activities should focus on taking programs to people in surrounding communities and schools and on promotion of local, repeat visitation.

### ***Arrival***

The current arrival experience offers visitors choices for turning onto Old Post Road – right turn or left turn. The primary park entrance sign states “Reopens June 1.” This seems to indicate no visitor activities are available until June 1 and that visitors are not welcome until then. Design of facilities associated with the arrival experience should intuitively indicate that there is only one preferred route so decision making is as easy as possible for visitors traveling in an unfamiliar area.

### ***Facilities***

Small size of the building currently used for a visitor information station near the park entrance is inadequate. Additional space is needed to serve current and future visitor requirements for information, orientation and interpretation. More permanently dedicated space is needed to provide out-of-weather areas for visitor assembly and a location for visitor service activities, including rotating activities, and for exhibits, audiovisual projection and sales.

Some other facilities are non-existent or inadequate in size, design and location. Current facility conditions results in adverse impacts on staff efficiency and visitor experience. The park especially needs quarters for temporary employees due to lack of available, affordable temporary housing in the communities surrounding the park. Also, additional space is needed for maintenance operations, curatorial storage, and administrative offices.

### ***Intrusive Development***

The location of some administrative and maintenance facilities negatively impact visitor experience. Maintenance and curatorial storage buildings are located in the center of the park historic area and adjacent to the primary historic structure, the Lindenwald mansion. The visitor contact building and parking lot may not be located in the best sites to facilitate optimum visitor experience.

### ***Resource protection***

Park managers are actively exploring appropriate resource management programs to protect natural and cultural resources related to Martin Van Buren's life and legacy. Additional program guidance is needed to protect extant resources. Implementation of proposed boundary adjustment is needed to include critical resources in the park. Expansion of partnership programs can conserve scenic and cultural vista resources that remain outside the park. These resources are critical to visitor understanding of park significance and to local resident's continued enjoyment of the resource character that makes the region a great place to live. Education and interpretation activities can pique stakeholder interest in protecting resources inside and outside the park.

### ***Visitor Statistics***

Professional visitor use studies have not been conducted at the park. Basic visitor profile information was developed by park staff from observation of general visitor behavior and review of comments and suggestions from visitors. Much of the information is unreliable in content and inadequate in scope to be useful in designing interpretive activities for current and potential audiences.

### ***Agricultural landscape***

From the conception of Lindenwald as a national historic site, an agricultural setting was planned as emphasis for the area. Although elements of the landscape have changed since Van Buren's occupancy, the cultural landscape on and surrounding the park retain wonderful agricultural character reflecting farming interests of Van Buren and succeeding landowners. Future activities and development should contribute to visitor's opportunity to experience an agricultural sense-of-place.

### ***Visitor Circulation***

Improved and intuitive way-finding is needed to direct attention of arriving visitors toward the information station. Location and orientation of the station, parking lot, access roads, and pedestrian

paths contribute to visitor confusion about the preferred route of travel through the park. As visitors approach the parking area on Old Post Road, they are oriented toward the historic Lindenwald mansion. Most visitors park on the right side of the parking area; from there the pedestrian route to the information station is not intuitively apparent. Small signs with extensive text limit visitor interest in reading important messages. Visitors are further confused by signs alternately referring to the contact station as “Ranger Station” and “Visitor Center”.

Clearly identified preferred routes and compellingly designed visitor center entry, parking lot, and paths should attract visitors from the parking lot to the visitor center and then to the cultural area of the park. Plans for intuitive way-finding must assure that patterns of use provide optimum opportunities to effectively experience site resources.

### **Access**

Physical access to three levels inside the historic Van Buren house is difficult for many visitors and impossible for some. Future interpretation activities should provide physical access to as many spaces as acceptable in this historic structure. Virtual access through a variety of media should be available to all interior areas that significantly reflect site themes and cannot be made physically available to visitors with mobility impairment.

## **PROJECT FOCUS**

Planning for visitor experience opportunities in this Interpretive Concept Plan will focus on the following functional activities.

### ***Outreach***

Long-term offsite activities will target international and national audiences, but activities will initially focus on local stakeholders.

### ***Information / Orientation***

Information provided to site visitors and potential visitors will feature basic materials about site themes and adequate description of resources and experience opportunities.

### ***Interpretation***

A variety of interpretive activities appropriate for anticipated audiences will feature site resources and provide detailed treatment of site themes. Media will feature Personal Services, Publications, Museum Exhibits including offsite exhibits, Audiovisuals and Wayside Exhibits.

### ***Guided Tours***

Guided tour media and services in the house will assure that all tour participants receive at least a basic level of interpretation related to site themes that are targeted for presentation inside the house.

### ***Education***

Education programs will be made available for all audiences, but initially will focus on local school systems. Park staff will develop self-sustaining education activities that can be implemented effectively by school teachers with limited involvement of park employees.

### ***Access***

A variety of interpretive media will provide virtual access to resource features (such as inaccessible areas of the historic house) that are impossible or difficult for some people to physically visit.

# ***FUTURE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION***

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## **OUTREACH**

**Continue to work toward integration of park and surrounding community.** Managers and staff of the national historic site will actively participate in planning, development, promotion and presentation of programs and activities of mutual interest and concern to the community. Jointly sponsored activities will enhance visitor and resident knowledge and appreciation of resources in and outside the park that reflect regional values. For example, park staff might work with community organizations and individuals to maintain or improve landscape integrity of scenic and cultural views. Community facilities could include trails and a public use corridor along Kinderhook Creek. Continued participation in Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area activities will emphasize the presence of the park in the community and expand public awareness of all participating sites and their value to community residents.

**Update and expand the park Internet web site.** The depth and breadth of current web site content is good with up-to-date text and well-chosen photos. The site includes an excellent education section with detailed activity plans for teachers and students. As national historic site development continues, additional detailed pages about other park activities will be developed. Design of the web site will make navigation from page to page easy and assure visual consistency with an overall thematic appearance. National Park Service staff or a contracted web coordinator will update and maintain the site as Internet technology advances.

**Develop, coordinate and present personal service activities to nearby communities.** Interpretive, educational, and informational activities will encourage stakeholder participation and support of park programs. Managers will encourage all park staff to participate in activities sponsored by organizations that foster communication, recognition, and acceptance of the park and its programs. Park staff will consider taking personal service activities to local people who may not visit the park. Activities will help neighbors understand management and staff actions, provide basic understanding of park activities and values, and alleviate any community misconceptions about park resources and management practices.

**Plan and develop traveling exhibits.** Movable wayside exhibits, portable museum exhibits, or a Harpers Ferry Center Discovery Station are appropriate for a variety of audiences and display sites. Traveling exhibits can accommodate education curricula geared toward specific

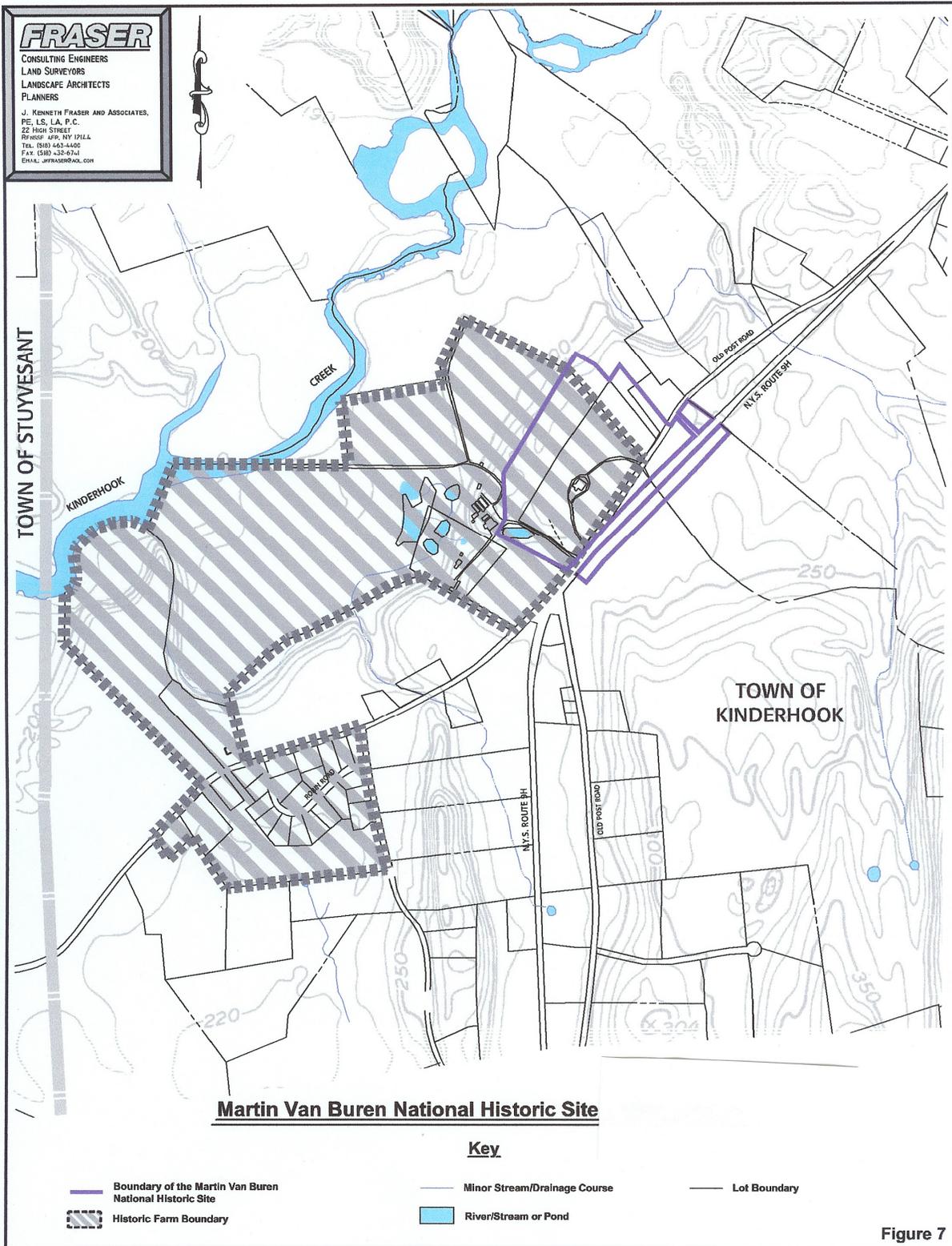
school groups, reflect a specific interpretive theme, or depict seasonal cycles at the national historic site.

**Focus some outreach activities to specific stakeholder populations near the park.** Recurring activities and special events can be targeted to reach special audiences in the region surrounding the park, such as farming and Hispanic/Latino cultures. Informational presentations offered to civic groups can keep people knowledgeable of park resources, planned and completed development, and tourism opportunities that benefit the regional economy.

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## ***PARK-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS***

### ***Interpretive Experience Areas***

The Interpretive Concept Plan recommends geographic interpretation areas that reflect the distinctive character of different sections of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site. Based on key resource features and visitor experience opportunities the following interpretive experience areas will be evaluated and implemented as appropriate when developing visitor use programs: **Arrival, Visitor Center, Transition Area, Historic House, Cultural Area, Lindenwald Farm, Woods and Creek, and Park Operations**. The INTERPRETIVE AREAS section of this Interpretive Concept Plan describes recommendations for each area.

### ***Information / Orientation***

**Routinely update the park Internet web site to include current information about changing conditions at the national historic site.** Frequent updates will provide accurate, current, easily accessible, and compelling content. A variety of media (text, photograph, graphic, audio, video clip) will describe what visitors can expect during their visit, including limitations, restrictions and opportunities, and how to prepare for safe, enjoyable experiences. An innovative web site incorporating current technologies will offer more interactive opportunities for people to learn about significant resources, resource management programs, visitor experience opportunities, and special activities and services.

**Frequently use a variety of media to assure that potential visitors have access to current, reliable information.** Personal services and non-personal media will describe what visitors can expect during their visit, including limitations, restrictions and opportunities, and how they can prepare for safe, enjoyable experiences. People can plan their visit with information from telephone, publications distributed by mail, rack cards at visitor service facilities, local radio and television broadcasts, and publications purchased from the park cooperating association.

Marketing through regional newspapers and radio and personal visits to community organizations will encourage local stakeholders to participate in national park programs. Some communication activities can target specific audiences. Topical activities including scenic and cultural landscape protection, historical research findings, and park management plans will help park staff and local residents respond to threats inside and outside the park. These presentations will help

neighbors understand decisions and actions of park managers and staff. Media distributed through travel agencies (American Automobile Association), bus tour operators, and historical organizations will reach national and international audiences.

Frequent interaction between park staff and other visitor service providers in the region will ensure that potential visitors have accurate information about experience opportunities to prepare for a safe and enjoyable visit to the national park site and surrounding communities.

**Improve information station media.** The current visitor contact station or a visitor center developed in the future will present orientation and information about the site and an introduction to primary interpretive themes. A variety of personal service and information media will orient visitors to the various interpretive experience areas in the park, explain experience opportunities for each interpretive area, and tell visitors what they can do to assure a safe visit. Information station media will provide context for experiences throughout the national historic site and related sites. Media will include a staffed information desk, exhibits, a small audio-visual presentation area, and a cooperating association sales area.

A desk located to create minimum congestion at the entrance to the information station will welcome visitors and offer interaction with park staff. Polite, sensitive, knowledgeable, courteous, professional, efficient staff will be available when the station is open. The desk, staff and adjacent exhibits and publications will deliver basic orientation, identify available experience options, provide adequate information about experience options, help people select the options most likely to meet their needs, and encourage them to go to other interpretive areas in the national historic site. Information station staff and media will advise visitors of any current safety issues, inform them how to prepare for a safe visit and provide instruction on how to protect resources. Displays near the desk will encourage children and parents to participate in a Junior Ranger program; promotion of activities will include Ranger conducted tours of the historic house and special events.

### ***Interpretation***

The park interpretive program will assure all visitors opportunity to achieve a basic understanding of primary interpretive themes.

### **Personal Services**

**Create a dynamic staffing plan that adapts to changing conditions.** Currently planned and future development at the national historic site may require additional permanent and temporary employees. A minimum of four seasonal employees are needed to accomplish currently planned basic interpretive activities. Two additional employees would allow the park to increase visitor activity programming proposed in this interpretive concept plan. The recommended staffing plan will also include any additional employees recommended by the general management plan currently programmed for completion. For example, a new visitor center would require an increase in staff.

**Create a housing plan to accommodate seasonal employees.** The staffing plan should include a housing component to respond to the identified issue (See **ISSUES – Facilities**) of lack of seasonal residences in communities near the park. This interpretive concept plan recommends that this issue be addressed in the General Management Plan, i.e. consider seasonal housing when planning for new permanent facilities, or if the farm cottage is acquired in the future, its adaptation as quarters for temporary employees.

**Develop a training program for all staff who presents information, interpretation, and education activities to the public.** The training program will include components that focus on content, accuracy, completeness, and interpretive and communication skills necessary for preparing and presenting visitor services. Interpreters' familiarity with the historic site, current research findings, interpretive methods, and evaluation techniques must be coupled with objectivity and sensitivity to controversial issues, policies, and management directives.

**Continue to improve current personal service activities: stationed assignments, historic house tours, and education program.** Personal service activities, especially tours of the historic Lindenwald mansion, will continue to be a core component of the overall interpretive operation. Personal contact between the interpreter and the visitor has numerous advantages over most other media.

**Plan and present a series of costumed interpretation activities.** Activities can include farming demonstrations – harvesting hops, gardening, landscape maintenance – and domestic activities in the Lindenwald mansion. Interpretive supervisors will document and develop components of the costumed interpretation program for

presentation in first person, living history format. Staff and volunteers knowledgeable of park themes and history and trained in first person techniques will present activities. Such activities are appropriate inside the mansion and other locations where a historic setting will allow true living history experiences. Costumed, third person interpretation will be presented in areas where first person format is not appropriate but historic clothed interpreters will add to the quality of visitor experience.

**Park interpretive manager will routinely evaluate personal services and adapt as needed to assure thematic depth and diversity.**

Continuous appraisal will focus activities on specific resources and compelling stories and assure that visitor needs and management goals are met with the greatest possible effectiveness. Staff will regularly monitor visitor use in all areas of the national historic site and develop personal service activities in response to changing visitation patterns.

***Publications***

**Revise park brochure produced by Harpers Ferry Center.** This project is scheduled for completion in 2006. A new primary publication with larger map to reflect changing development will be designed for onsite use to help people maximize their park experience. Many sites are not clearly identified and accessed by trails or walks; visitors must find their way by walking on lawns. A new map in the brochure will show sites and illustrate travel routes to assure that all visitors know about and can find in a logical and interpretive sequence all important sites and interpretive opportunities – wayside exhibits, gate house, Old Post Road. The map will encourage people to follow a sequential route beginning at the visitor information station, through the proposed information station plaza and transition trail through the woods to the historic house, then through the cultural area (hops planting site, fields, pasture, pond, and gate house) and return to the parking area via Old Post Road in the transition interpretive area.

***Audiovisuals***

**The park web site will expand to include a visual virtual visitor center and historic house tour.** Photographs and video clips will deliver evocative interpretation for people who cannot visit the area. Electronic versions of site bulletins will provide detailed information about specific topics.

**Implement projects currently underway to upgrade the existing interpretive slide program.** Edit existing audiovisual presentation and convert to DVD format for interim use until development of a new,

expanded program. The current program contains elements and format that are no longer appropriate for the national historic site.

**Plan a new audiovisual program concurrent with planning for a larger visitor information station or new visitor center.** A 10 – 15 minute film or high definition video with three channels or surround sound mix will explore national historic site resources and the interpretive themes established for the area. The audiovisual program will reflect the diversity and significance of site resources.

**Provide virtual access to visitors who cannot tour the historic Lindenwald mansion.** An audiovisual presentation of inaccessible areas of the historic house can be presented to visitors in accessible areas of the house or information station. An interim presentation can be prepared by park staff with a recorded tour of the historic house on audio disk and a book of pictures. Later, a video disk with audio presentation can be developed to professionally depict significant components of park resources that are difficult for most visitors to see as they travel through the park.

### ***Wayside Exhibits***

**Update current wayside exhibits as needed.** The exhibits for this area are relatively new and good quality. The following suggestions will be implemented during the next scheduled revision of wayside exhibits. An interdisciplinary team of park staff will periodically review wayside exhibits and propose appropriate revision, replacement and additions. Team proposals can suggest edits for historic accuracy based on continuing research, design improvements for compatibility with National Park Service Messaging / Identity Program guidelines, and relocation as needed to make exhibits even more effective. Waysides are a site specific medium that captions the landscape; visitors should be able to look from the wayside to see or imagine directly in front of them the scene that the exhibit describes.

**Plan and produce new wayside exhibits in response to future park development.** Develop a wayside exhibit proposal and plan to implement recommendations in this interpretive concept plan: new plaza, trail from current contact station to historic house through woods, connector trail to Kinderhook Creek, etc. Revise the new wayside exhibit plan as future developments in the park general management plan are implemented. Proposed exhibits will reflect Messaging Identity Project standards. The plan will propose exhibit locations, themes, objectives, topics, and site development. Some

exhibits might incorporate audio and three dimensional elements to encourage tactile experiences and to enhance accessibility for impaired visitors.

**Create temporary wayside exhibits to interpret short term projects.** Construction, rehabilitation, resource management, and research projects in heavily used visitor areas can be identified and interpreted with wayside exhibits. Exhibits might explain about funding, partnerships, and future plans. For example “Facility improvements brought to you by a partnership between the National Park Service and the (insert partner name). Currently work is being done to \_\_\_\_\_. Future projects include \_\_\_\_\_”. Movable exhibits can interpret temporary conditions. These exhibits can be placed temporarily at appropriate locations within the park during project activity.

### ***Special Events***

**Plan and present a series of special events.** Park staff will sponsor and/or assist with special events both on and offsite. Each event will be compatible with park purpose and themes. Suggested events include historically accurate family activities, harvest festival, farm days, polling station on election days (this is permitted according to the solicitor), and political dignitary visits. Events are a good medium to incorporate additional activities into the existing program, such as presentation of recent research concerning Van Buren’s post-presidency significance. These events can involve community residents and attract non-local visitors to the national historic site. Special events co-sponsored by the park and nearby communities and presented at the park and several locations in the region would be especially important for local audiences and would integrate the national historic site and the community of which it is a part.

### ***Guided Tours***

Guided tours of moderate length and difficulty will serve the following purposes:

- Present greater depth of information concerning park resources and stories.
- Offer opportunities for more interaction with park rangers.
- Enhance opportunities for thematic interpretation.
- Provide security for park museum objects.

**Guided house tours of Lindenwald will continue to be a core component of the park interpretive program.** These guided tours accommodate substantial numbers of people but will remain limited to

specified tour size. Size limitations sometimes dictate advanced planning by visitors to assure participation on a specific tour.

**Plan and present tours of the cultural landscape.** Tours of the Lindenwald Farm and woods and creek interpretive areas - routinely scheduled or as special events - will provide interested visitors the opportunity to see more of the park with the safety of ranger presence.

## **Education**

### **Curriculum-based Education**

Continue using existing facilities and programs and develop new ones as time and funding permits. Park managers and staff will strive to accomplish the education initiatives established by the National Park Service and the current national historic site education program. They will develop educational activities to optimize potential opportunities this site has to offer schools.

**The education program will support established New York curricula and reflect national standards.** Pre-visit activities will prepare teachers and students for an educational visit. Post-visit activities will feature topics discussed at the park to extend learning experiences throughout the school year. The park visit will include curriculum-based activities and immersion experiences with resources.

**Integration of content areas will be a prime focus for future program development.** New activities developed for the education program will reflect real-life applications. Park and school staffs must be aware of various learning styles and develop activities that respond effectively to as many styles as possible. Format of activities will provide multilevel opportunities within each activity to reach different levels of intelligence and interest found within school groups.

**Park staff will explore potential distance learning opportunities.** The park web site includes education activities reflecting national educational standards and relevancy to audiences throughout the United States. Cooperation with regional schools and national education organizations will identify current and future technologies planned to link schools to other education resources. Park education program managers will seek opportunities to implement a distance learning program in partnership with area school districts. A linked education program may enable students to interact with educators and park staff via the Internet and other distance learning venues.

**Enhance partnerships and affiliations with colleges and universities.** Park staff will continue its close association with the Center for Allied Historical Research at the University at Albany. Students participating in public history program at the University will continue to participate in park programs as interns and seasonal interpreters.

**Park staff will work with an education advisory and implementation group to assist with program development.** The park will continue its successful collaboration with the Columbia County Museum Educator's Forum (CCME). The CCME has been an effective way for interpreters from the park and from other sites in the county to develop programs in conjunction with teachers from the county's seven school districts.

**Implement training and internship programs for education partners.** One goal of the education program will be well-educated, confident teachers who are knowledgeable of park themes and who can present education activities independently. That requires a change in focus from the normal goal of a well-educated student. Teacher training sponsored by the park will include techniques to help teachers feel comfortable in conducting learning experiences in museum and outdoor environments at the park or elsewhere. One element of park-produced teacher training will focus on future teachers who are still in college. All new teachers participating in the education program will receive copies of activities developed by experienced teachers and successfully implemented in a park setting.

**Develop a funding strategy for implementing additional education programs.** Park interpreters will continue to work with the Columbia County Museum Educator's Forum to seek outside funding. The CCME has successfully completed for and received grants in excess of \$80,000 over the last five years. The money has come from both public and private grant-making groups.

**Establish and maintain currency.** An effective education program will require frequent curriculum refinement and constant interaction between teachers and park staff, so both can quickly learn of changes in program activities. Future program development will assure that activities are compatible with classroom need. Park education program managers will establish verbal or written teacher assessment of the program to assure adherence to current trends in education. Staff will

contact New York Department of Education to learn the state's current testing subject and schedule of additional assessments.

### **Junior Ranger**

**Review and revise the Junior Ranger program currently in formative stage.** Formalize the interim program. Review the current booklet of activities and revise as necessary to make activities specific to national historic site themes and resources. Annually review activities for accuracy and applicability to current and anticipated audiences.

**Develop park web page for Junior Ranger Program.** A web page similar to the existing education program page will make the park Junior Ranger program accessible to potential distant Web-Ranger audiences. Activities appropriate for audiences who may never visit the park will encourage worldwide audiences to learn about and support preservation of resources related to Martin Van Buren National Historic Site and the National Park Service. Link the park Junior Ranger Program to the National Park Service Junior Ranger web page.

**Develop a series of programs for children.** Designate special days for children to visit the national historic site to qualify as Junior Rangers. Each day can present activities related to a specific theme. Repeat visits by Junior Rangers will strengthen community involvement and feeling of ownership of the park that will continue with the Junior Rangers into adulthood. During each special day, children might experience specific resources such as the historic house, the working farm, or the woods and creek, or they might talk to a ranger or other park employee to learn what working for a national park entails.

### **Access**

**Existing programs and facilities will be made accessible to the extent possible within the limitations of a historic and natural environment.** Park staff and consultants will periodically review activities and facilities and recommend appropriate improvements.

**Design of new facilities and media will provide optimum access for visitors and employees.** The Architectural Barriers Act and the American's With Disabilities Act establish standards for physical access. All new interpretive media will conform to National Park Service Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media.

**Provide alternative interpretation methods for inaccessible resources.** Virtual access to areas that cannot be made physically

accessible will enable all visitors to understand and appreciate the resource. This virtual access will be presented as close as possible to the inaccessible area. For example, photographs on wayside exhibits and publications can bring distant, inaccessible sights to visitors at trailhead or parking area. Trail descriptions on any trailhead exhibits will include levels of access.

**The national historic site interpretive program will provide multilingual information to an appropriate extent based on current visitation.** Interpretive managers and accessibility specialists will decide the needed extent. A moderate approach will initially provide fundamental information in a few languages. Continuous assessment of visitation trends will determine future need for multilingual information and interpretation.

**Design, fabricate, and install an interactive video kiosk.** A kiosk displayed in an area accessible to all visitors can make less accessible areas of the historic house and farm visually available. Current technology can provide reasonable access for visitors without impacting the historic integrity of structures and landscapes. A computer kiosk might show video clips of each room in the house. The kiosk could also present visitor information that can be easily updated with current activities, special event schedules, and safety messages. Ranger-led guided tours could be videotaped and presented on the kiosk.

## **INTERPRETIVE AREAS**

### **Arrival**

#### **Visitor Experience Strategies**

Roads, parking area, and signs facilitate safe interaction between pedestrians and vehicles.

Ease of progression through the arrival area requires one decision at a time to soften the arrival experience.

A warm, comfortable arrival experience encourages emotional deceleration in preparation for a relaxed, enjoyable park visit.

Landscape and location of facilities create an intuitive transition from turmoil of highway to a rural park setting.

#### **Theme Related Topics**

Introduction to Martin Van Buren's agricultural environment

Welcome to a rural rustic National Park Service area

#### **Appropriate Media/Method**

Explore with highway officials the potential to improve way-finding to the park. The distance of the national historic site from major travel routes requires an expanded sign program to improve navigation from major highways and nearby cities. Park and transportation agency staffs will explore sign improvements along Highway 9 and 9H to provide clear, accurate, and convenient way-finding. An identifiable visual image, such as the National Park Service arrowhead, should enhance recognition from fast moving vehicles.

- Place a new, larger sign with National Park Service arrowhead emblem at the junction of Highway 9 and Highway 9H to reduce traveler confusion at that location.
- Work with transportation and planning agencies to recommend development of vehicle turn lanes into the park from north and southbound lanes.
- Clear roadside trees and shrubs at Highway 9H southbound lane immediately north of park entrance to improve sightline to the park entrance sign.

**Architectural elements, site planning and landscape design at the national historic site will contribute to a positive arrival experience.**

All elements of site design in the arrival area will focus visitor attention toward the information station. Information signs in the arrival area will clearly direct visitors toward the station as their first destination for introductory information about what they should do next.

**Architectural features of the information station will attract visitors to that building as the primary destination.** A sign at the entrance to the building or letters high on the building stating “VISITOR CENTER” or “INFORMATION STATION” and display of the United States flag will attract visitor attention. The sign or letter identifier must be large enough for easy viewing from the Old Post Road and the visitor parking area.

**Redesign parking area to simplify arrival experience.** Park staff and consultants will consider the following actions: relocate access from Highway 9H into the parking area so arriving visitor windshield view is not into cultural area; reconfigure parking area with irregular shape that is more compatible with the rural experience. These and similar actions will reduce or eliminate the following concerns for visitor experience. The present location causes arriving visitors to divide attention between parking destination and interpretive destinations. Location of the parking area, roads into parking and into the historic area, and distraction of many information and interpretation signs distract visitor attention and create confusion as to their preferred route upon getting out of their vehicle. Location of the current entrance impacts view of primary cultural resources and contributes to unsafe turning and stopping of vehicles.

**Develop a landscape plan for the arrival area.** Trees for shade in the parking lot will also shield the parking area from the cultural area. Shrubs / trees will baffle noise from tremendous traffic on Highway 9H, especially during rush hours. An earth berm between the parking lot and Highway 9H will provide safety for people in the park and abate sound from the highway. Lilacs and arbor vitae are proposed for planting on the berm; crab apple and pines are appropriate for landscaping north of the headquarters / information station building.

**Develop a uniform visual identity for signs and interpretive devices.** The visual identity of directional signs and wayside exhibits should project a uniformity that reinforces the visual character of a rural national historic site. Visitors should be left with no doubt as to the preferred route from one interpretation site to another. Upon arrival at each interpretive feature, the visitor should sense a uniform visual

communication that relates to what he or she experienced when they first turned off the highway into this special place.

**Create a new way-finding sign plan for the arrival area.**

- Remove sign identifying “Martin Van Buren National Historic Site” and “PARK HEADQUARTERS” currently located on the left side of entrance road at Old Post Road. Produce and install a new sign on Old Post Road to be viewed as visitors stop before turning left onto Old Post Road. The new sign should simply state “PARKING” “VISITOR CENTER” with larger letters and include an arrow pointing left.
- Place a directional sign where visitors exit the parking area to walk to the information station. A simple sign stating “Visitor Information Station” or “Visitor Center” with a directional arrow can guide visitors from the parking area. This can relieve confusion created by physical and psychological barriers imposed by multiple apparent destinations without clear routes to those destinations.
- Remove existing sign at intersection of Old Post Road and walkway to visitor contact station that includes arrowhead and states “Martin Van Buren National Historic Site” and “Park Headquarters”. Produce and install a new sign at that location that simply states “VISITOR CENTER” in larger letters with an arrow pointing right. Position the new sign parallel to the walk and perpendicular to Old Post Road.
- Remove two signs (“MARTIN VAN BUREN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / PARKING”; “ROAD CLOSED”) on single post at entrance to parking lot. Install a single sign at that location that states “PARKING” with a left arrow.

**Design, produce and install a barrier gate on Old Post Road.**

Remove temporary barricades on Old Post Road entrance to cultural area and replace with visually pleasing gate of design compatible with the historic character of the cultural area.

**Discontinue driving administrative vehicles on lawn at Information Station / Headquarters.** Rehabilitate impacted lawn area between Old Post Road and the building; consider a new route through the woods from the current maintenance facility to the headquarters building until maintenance buildings are relocated out of the cultural area.

## **Visitor Center**

### **Visitor Experience Strategies**

All visitors are personally welcomed to the National Park Service area by a uniformed park ranger.

A comfortable social experience continues emotional deceleration and provides opportunity for visitors to take care of basic Maslow needs to prepare for a relaxed, enjoyable visit to park resources.

Visitors will have opportunity to receive sufficient information about park stories and orientation to park resources to facilitate an efficient, thorough park experience.

### **Theme Related Topics**

Introduction to all three interpretive themes

### **Appropriate Media/Method**

Future general management planning for the park will consider development of a new visitor center building. A structure of modest size and design will provide initial orientation to the park and interpretation of park themes. It will present Martin Van Buren's house as a historic icon within a setting sculpted by natural processes and human forces to create a cultural landscape. The visitor center will provide concise, basic information that lets visitors move into the park quickly if they have limited time for their visit. It will also offer opportunity to obtain detailed information and interpretation for visitors who have more time to spend in a visitor center.

The following guidelines are recommended for a park visitor center to optimize visitor experiences.

### **EXTERIOR SPACES**

The visitor center will be sited to offer ease of access. The preferred site will be near the primary highway. Highway signs will tell travelers about the visitor center, identify its name, and show the distance from that sign location to the facility if the center is not visible from the road. The building will be clearly identified as a National Park Service facility. Design of the structure must present an attractive appearance. The design of roads, parking areas, and sidewalks will make navigation to the visitor center building intuitive and easy for visitors to follow.

**The visitor center will be sited to provide the best view of park resources as possible.** A preferred site criterion is to offer a view to the primary park resources without intruding upon those resources. Location adjacent to parcels of land with high potential for development will be avoided. If such location is unavoidable, care will be taken to ensure that design of the visitor center does not require that the adjacent land stay in its present state. For example, visitor center windows or viewing decks will not be designed to face onto privately owned land that may be developed in the future.

**Parking areas will be adequate to accommodate staff and public automobiles, recreational vehicles and commercial buses.** Parking and circulation space will include a staging area for educational groups.

**Outdoor information exhibits between the parking area and the visitor center entrance will provide basic self-service orientation.** Basic information in this area is especially important for visitors who arrive when the visitor center building is closed or those who choose not to go inside the center.

**If the visitor center is in a new structure, architecture of the building will reflect the natural and cultural environment of park resources and be sensitive to sustainable practices.** Architectural style will be compatible with the historic time period represented at the national historic site, aesthetically pleasing within the surrounding landscape, and easily distinguished from historic structures. The facility will reflect in design, finishes, colors, and media treatments the major themes identified in park resources. Structural design will facilitate visitor movement through the Arrival and Transition interpretive areas.

**Develop a landscaped plaza adjacent to the visitor center.** A landscaped plaza adjacent to the visitor contact station will create a feeling of being away from the congestion of the entry highway and enhance the transitional experience between the visitor center and the cultural area. The model for this experience consists of the visitor center, “experience pods” in the plaza, and connecting paths. Visitors and staff can easily move between interior and outdoor spaces. A roofed open-sided structure in one section of the plaza will provide a sheltered area to accommodate a variety of functions and activities. Landscape elements will create outdoor rooms with seating that provides opportunities for visitors to choose to be in the sun or shade. The plaza will be suitable for assembling groups for interpretive activities such as demonstrations, as staging area for guided historic

house tours, as transition for visitors between the arrival and cultural areas, or for spaces simply to relax.

## **INTERIOR SPACES**

**An introductory space near the visitor center entrance will welcome visitors to this National Park Service area.** An exhibit will identify Martin Van Buren National Historic Site and the National Park Service. Media, architecture, signs and possibly sculptural elements will introduce the missions of the site and the managing organization.

**Visitors will first enter a lobby for information and directions to other parts of the building and park.** Information related to travel, accessibility, visiting options, and park features will be offered in a variety of media formats, including an information desk with personal services. Orientation exhibits will identify where visitors are located in relation to other park sites. Information exhibits will describe park-wide experience opportunities from which visitors can choose to meet their individual needs. Sufficient circulation space will be provided for users to move among functional areas without congestion. Comfortable seating will be available for mobility impaired visitors and those wanting a casual experience.

**A museum exhibit space will be located adjacent to the lobby, but designed to prevent sound spill from that noisy space.** The space will be sufficiently sized to accommodate permanent exhibits interpreting all park themes, changing exhibits, and a space for children hands-on activities. The exhibit space will have at least a ten foot high ceiling and no windows to eliminate fluctuations of light produced by the sun.

Exhibits in the visitor center will introduce all interpretive themes but focus on themes that are not presented in detail in the historic Lindenwald mansion. This approach will tend to balance thematic interpretation throughout the park.

Exhibit units will have a clear organizational principle, but shall not require visitors to follow a set sequence.

Develop a museum exhibit proposal, design and production plan for the center. The plan will detail exhibit descriptions, exhibit room layout and selection of media, artifacts, objects, and content. Integrated themes will provide a context for learning experiences throughout the park. The exhibits will also integrate media to provide a good balance of

interactive tactile and graphic elements interspersed with short audio and video.

**A theater and/or multi-purpose room will provide space for viewing audiovisuals and participating in special activities designed for staff and community audiences.**

If designed as a theater, the space will be dedicated to audiovisual and formal presentations. A sloped floor and formal, comfortable seating will enhance viewing quality. Space for a small stage, either fixed or moveable, will be provided at the front of the theater. A projection system shall accept current technology software and storage media including public address and video, motion picture, and computer generated projection. Storage space will accommodate backup equipment and supplies. Controls will allow operation of audiovisual equipment from the information desk, projection booth if installed, and from the front of the theater.

If the space is designed as a multipurpose room it will be furnished with movable seating, work tables and audiovisual capabilities. This space can accommodate temporary exhibits, education activities, meetings, training, interpretive programs, and public activities such as community polling place that cannot be presented outside. Design for multi-purpose use can include movable walls to adapt floor space for a variety of activities.

**A sales area will support and expand interpretive opportunities.** This space will be located out of the main circulation path but easily seen from the lobby and capable of being operated from the lobby information desk. A cash register at a sales desk, a storage area for inventory, security safe and work space must be located convenient to the sales area. Space dedicated to display and circulation will be large enough to encourage people to browse.

**Facility designers must plan public and staff restroom size and location to adequately serve the anticipated users.** Features near public rest rooms shall include water fountains and public telephones. Staff restrooms will include space for changing and storing clothing during cultural demonstrations and other functions.

**Office space must be adequate to accommodate the number of staff required to operate the visitor center.** If the center is combined with a park administrative facility additional space will be required for

administrative staff. Office spaces for interpretation and administration must be close enough to facilitate interaction between spaces but not so close that each activity interferes with efficient operation of the other. Support space will be available for mailroom, copier, fax, office supplies, computer, scanner, printer, break room, and interpretive program preparation.

**Maintenance and storage will occupy two rooms or locking areas.** A janitorial wet section should be separated from a dry maintenance storage area.

### **ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS**

This interpretive concept plan proposes three potential locations for a new visitor center to be evaluated during the next general management planning process.

- Current location of information station with a re-designed parking area.
- Site of proposed orchard southwest of current information station location.
- South of historic Lindenwald mansion in proposed expanded boundary area.

In each alternative, the parking area will be well removed from Highway 9H so visitor experience progression is from highway to parking to visitor center and then to historic house and cultural area.

### **INTERIM RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following interim recommendations will improve visitor experience at the existing information station until a new visitor center is constructed.

**Clearly identify information station building.** A United States flag and National Park Service arrowhead emblem will be located on the building front near entrance to the information area. The words “VISITOR CENTER” or “INFORMATION STATION” displayed in letter size large enough for easy reading by arriving visitors in their automobiles on Old Post Road will occupy a prominent location on the building.

**Adapt visitor information station interior to enhance visitor experience.** Redesign and relocate fixtures to accommodate an audiovisual projection and small group assembly area in the southwest corner of the room to accommodate 8-10 visitors. Integrating audiovisual elements in the information station will provide layers of

information to visitors using a variety of formats that accommodate different learning styles.

**Install new walk between front of existing information station and south side of headquarters complex.** This path will lead visitors from the information station to a new plaza proposed in Transition Area description.

## ***Transition Area***

### ***Visitor Experience Strategies***

Within a few minutes visitors travel 200 yards and 200 years.

Travel through the transition area from information station to Lindenwald mansion builds excitement and anticipation.

Travel through the transition area from cultural area to parking lot along Old Post Road offers time for contemplation and realization of satisfaction with park experiences.

### ***Theme Related Topics***

Entrance to transition area at information station: Invitation to explore resources related to primary interpretive themes.

Entrance to transition on Old Post Road at south gate house: Thank you for exploring resources related to primary interpretive themes.

### ***Appropriate Media/Method***

Little formal interpretation or interpretive media will be planned for the transition area. This area will encourage visitors to explore independently for anticipation, excitement, and contemplation.

**Plan, design and install a landscaped plaza at entrance to the transition area.** A plaza adjacent to the existing information station or new visitor center if developed will create a transitional experience between developed and natural and historical environments.

Experience pods in the plaza will provide “outdoor rooms” with decks, walks or short trails, seating zones and casual use areas. Pods will be suitable for assembling groups of varying sizes for interpretive activities and special events, for staging areas, linkage between visitor center and nearby historic house and cultural area, or for spaces simply to relax. An open-sided shelter and landscaping can create opportunities for visitors to choose to be in the sun or in the shade.

**Plan produce and install a wayside exhibit in the landscaped plaza described above.** The wayside exhibit will invite visitors to walk 200 yards and 200 years of history.

## **Historic House**

### **Visitor Experience Strategies**

Visitors can participate in interpretation and education activities associated with historic social, farming, and political functions at Lindenwald in all seasons to understand the broad influence of Martin Van Buren on modern American life.

Visitors will have opportunities to gain a sense of some of the daily and annual social and political activities of the people who have lived here.

Visitors will have opportunities to see structures and artifacts that represent various periods of occupancy at Lindenwald and understand the past and current efforts of owners to maintain these resources.

### **Theme Related Topics**

Domestic activities at Lindenwald

Lindenwald as a reflection of Martin Van Buren's political activities and his continuing political legacy

### **Appropriate Media/Method**

**Re-evaluate and revise Furnishing Plan as needed.** Assess validity of existing plan following completion of new park planning and research (interpretive planning foundation, interpretive concept plan, general management plan, historic research, etc). Revisions will be made as needed to ensure that furnished spaces reflect the most important interpretive stories and the most current, accurate research. Example: Henry Clay materials in the guest room can relate the house to important people who visited during Van Buren's occupancy; this will link physical resources to historic events and heritage values.

**Guided tours of the historic Lindenwald mansion will continue to be a core component of the park interpretive operation.** Personal service tours by small groups will be the primary interpretive method in the historic house.

- People waiting for tours will assemble outside the house for welcome and orientation by an interpreter before entering. The primary assembly points for house tours will be designated: immediately outside the entrance to the historic house during fair weather; at the proposed plaza shelter adjacent to the information station or visitor center during foul weather.

- Exterior orientation might include a welcome, a brief history of the house and occupancy, and a brief assessment of the house as a reflection of Martin Van Buren as home owner, parent, politician and farmer. When the plaza is designated as the orientation site, the tour guide can add narration about Lindenwald Farm while traversing the transition and cultural area to reach the house.
- After orientation the tour guide will proceed into the hall without talking, letting people soak up the house environment.
- The first interior stop on the tour will occur in the Nursery. Here the guide may introduce their theme, provide orientation to the house and tour and introduce appropriate topics related to the house. The room will also accommodate exhibits and audiovisuals that provide virtual access to areas of the house difficult or impossible to visit.
- The tour will proceed through the house in linear fashion with interpretation of each space entered.

**Improve media to enhance accessibility.** Media will provide virtual access to areas of the house people cannot visit or can only visit with exertion that prohibits some people from tour participation. These areas include the third floor and parts of the cellar for all visitors and areas restricted by stairs for many people. Benches in the nursery, formal parlor, and at top of stairs will accommodate people who need to rest during tours. Park staff will make available to tour participants photos of parts of the house that are inaccessible or accessible with difficulty. These can be mounted on easels in un-furnished spaces (nursery orientation area) or mounted on boards and shown by guides.

**Plan an alternative house tour for special events.** When a large number of visitors participate in special events, the guided tour interpretation method sometimes cannot accommodate all visitors who want to participate. An alternative tour concept is needed to offer participation to as many people as possible without unacceptable impact to resources. Alternatives that can be considered include:

- A “step inside” experience at doorways, possibly with physical or electronic barriers.
- A “walk through” experience with stationed security staff.

Either alternative can be accomplished with orientation and conclusion talks presented outside.

## **Cultural Area**

### **Visitor Experience Strategies**

Visitors will be able to see and walk through landscaped grounds that reflect to the greatest extent possible the historic character of Lindenwald restored, rehabilitated, preserved, and interpreted.

The cultural area provides an independent, self-paced, casual experience that augments the Lindenwald experience for people who participate in a historic house tour.

The cultural area offers an alternative Lindenwald experience for visitors who cannot or choose to not tour the historic house.

### **Theme Related Topics**

The Lindenwald farm and mansion reflects the social and economic issues influencing Martin Van Buren's life.

### **Appropriate Media/Method**

**Remove intrusive facilities.** Some facilities (maintenance building, curatorial storage building, etc) are located in the cultural area and create a significant impact on visitor experience. The interpretive concept plan recommends removal of all intrusive facilities as soon as feasible. This plan proposes that the next general management plan produced for the park will consider recommendations to remove these facilities or to design replacement development that reflects the character of structures historically occupying the locations currently occupied by non-historic structures.

**Implement Cultural Landscape Treatment Plan and other landscape changes needed for long-term visitor experience enhancement.** Landscape improvements surrounding the historic Lindenwald mansion will help visitors sense the time period represented by the house. High quality natural and cultural landscapes will exude a remarkable sense of place reflecting the care Martin Van Buren took in maintaining his home and farm. Specific actions recommended include:

- Restore Upper Pond
- Restore South Pasture
- Remove road to Roxbury Farm
- Restore surface of Old Post Road and carriage paths to 1840-50 appearance
- Remove overhead power lines

**Implement interim landscape improvements until feasible to complete previous recommendation.**

- Remove standing trees, eliminate brush, and clear blow-down tree laps in south pasture.
- Clean debris and cut trees in and around Upper Pond/south pasture area.
- Plant trees and shrubs on Old Post Road near the south gate house. Landscape foliage in this area will block southern access to Old Post Road from Highway 9 and create a vegetative screen between the cultural area and modern highway traffic.
- Limit the parking of vehicles behind Lindenwald mansion.
- Generally be more sensitive to operational intrusions to the historic setting.

**Plan and establish an interpretive demonstration (farm) space.** An activity space south or southwest of the historic Lindenwald mansion will provide views to the historic house and grounds and to the Lindenwald farm interpretive area. A small sampling of historic orchards, gardens, animals, and crops that may have historically occupied this space will create an attractive experience area for many visitors. The south gate house adjacent to this area can provide a sheltered space for demonstrations during inclement weather.

**Develop and present personal service interpretation and education activities in the demonstration area.** Appropriate activities include frequent informal roving, scheduled guided walks, occasional special events, hands-on education activities, and costumed or living history demonstrations.

**Seek funding to provide adequate staff to serve existing and future visitation.** A minimum of four seasonal employees are needed to adequately operate existing facilities and provide minimum interpretive activities for current level of visitation. Two more positions are needed to provide optimum level of service and protect resources. Additional employees will be required when a new visitor center is developed at the park, the number to be determined during planning for the new facility.

**Evaluate the feasibility of converting the Farm Cottage to function as employee housing.** Lack of affordable housing for temporary employees is a significant issue for the park (See **ISSUES –Facilities**). The farm cottage west of the historic Lindenwald mansion should be

considered for adaptive use as residential quarters for temporary employees if the building is acquired by the National Park Service in the future.

**Retain existing wayside exhibits and update as needed.** Wayside exhibits in the cultural interpretive area will be limited to the smallest number possible. The few required will be concealed or unobtrusively placed to interpret without detracting from the area's historic ambiance. Revisions to improve accuracy of content accuracy and quality of design will be determined by annual evaluations. For example, adding a map to the wayside loop trail will improve that exhibit. Exhibits will be relocated as needed to make them even more effective.

**Develop a site bulletin publication to interpret the cultural area.** This publication with detail map of the cultural area will serve as interim area guide until proposed revision of park primary brochure is completed. The map can show and interpret significant features to assure that all visitors know about and can find in a logical and interpretive sequence all important sites and interpretive opportunities – wayside exhibits, gate house, old post road. The map can encourage people to follow a sequential, thematic route beginning at the visitor information station, through the proposed plaza and transition trail through the woods to the historic house, then through the cultural area (hops, fields, pasture, pond, and gate house) and return to the parking area via the Old Post Road transition area.

**Eliminate park vehicle travel on historic roads in park.** As soon as feasible, all travel by modern vehicles through interpretive areas other than Arrival will be re-routed to avoid negatively impacting visitor experience.

## ***Lindenwald Farm***

### ***Visitor Experience Strategies***

The rural, farming character of historic Lindenwald will be retained to the greatest extent possible to enhance visitor experience.

Visitors will have opportunities to see the scenic beauty of the area and to appreciate the regional and national pastoral heritage.

Visitors can sense and appreciate the size, expanse, and complexity of the historic Lindenwald farming operation.

Visitors can see and learn about the continuum and evolution of agriculture at Lindenwald and in the surrounding region.

### ***Theme Related Topics***

Personal interests of Martin Van Buren

Van Buren's role as an agricultural "innovator" and the effect of the mass economy on agriculture

Economic issues influencing Van Buren's life.

### ***Appropriate Media/Method***

Plan, develop and present a cooperative interpretation program in the Lindenwald farm interpretive area that involves National Park Service and other landowners. Park boundaries do not create islands. Visitors may experience transitions, but they do not see boundaries. The national park staff will continue to place the park in a regional thematic context that promotes community-based partnerships for preserving and interpreting the regional farming heritage. National park and private/public partnerships can be a catalyst to community cooperation that preserves the farming heritage and provides opportunities for local residents and area visitors to appreciate the values of this beautiful area. Park staff will seek cooperation of nearby landowners to identify resources that depict evolution of farming in the Hudson River Valley. Cooperation can also include training in interpretation techniques and sharing information about resources, regulations, and stewardship.

**Plan and develop a new trail in the Lindenwald farm interpretive area.** A trail through the active farming area will provide safe passage for visitors and opportunities to enhance interpretation of the

continuum of farming. The trail can link the farm area to the cultural and woods and creek areas to offer a complete Lindenwald experience. A loop trail can include passage through the riparian area along Kinderhook Creek and the bottomland meadow.

**Carefully placed standard cantilevered wayside exhibits at the trail head and small trailside exhibits along the trail will enhance visitor experience.** Orientation exhibits at any trail access points will present a detailed orientation map; a “You Are Here” approach will help visitors understand the relationship, complexity and solidarity of features along the trail. The orientation exhibit will identify trail route, length, difficulty, estimated time, safety considerations and photographs of natural or cultural features that can be seen from the trail.

**Plan and present a limited personal service program in the Lindenwald farm interpretive area.** Scheduled guided tours can feature visits to several farming plots and interpretation of alternative management practices that demonstrate the effects of various activities. National park and other landowners can also plan and present special events to interpret historic and current activities at the farm.

## ***Woods and Creek***

### ***Visitor Experience Strategies***

Natural history of the woods and creek interpretive area will dominate visitor experience.

Visitors can stroll through a natural area reflecting minimal development.

Visitors can gain a sense of discovery as they independently explore the woods and creek environment.

### ***Theme Related Topics***

Historic uses – recreation (hunting, fishing), livestock (watering / shelter)

Modern uses – Compare / contrast to historic uses

### ***Appropriate Media/Method***

Future interpretation in the woods and creek area will emphasize the natural history of the area and how the natural resources influenced human activities. Activities will encourage visitors to observe the integrity of the current natural and cultural scene that reflects the same environment enjoyed by Martin Van Buren, Henry Clay and other personalities who previously looked at these same scenes. Interpretive activities will link the riparian environment with its plant and animal diversity to the agriculture illustrated in the Lindenwald farm interpretive area.

**Plan and develop a new trail in the woods and creek interpretive area.** This trail can link to two other trail proposals currently being considered: the proposed Kinderhook Trail along Kinderhook Creek and the loop trail described in the Lindenwald farm section of this interpretive concept plan. Carefully placed standard cantilevered wayside exhibits at trail intersections will inform visitors of all trail walking opportunities in the area.

### **Develop a recreation program for periodic presentation.**

Appropriate recreation activities that can be linked to historic uses include Nordic skiing in winter, fly-fishing in summer, bird and other wildlife watching, canoeing, and walking. For example, during the time the park is not frequently used in the winter, the National Park Service will encourage outdoor activities by designating trails suitable for

snowshoe or cross country skiing. An accessible trail might be groomed during the winter for an easy, “beginner” experience for cross country skiing and snowshoeing. Longer routes, either on designated trails or cross-country, can be identified for more adventurous and experienced visitors to explore the national historic site.

## **Park Operations Area**

### **Visitor Experience Strategies**

Visitors to this area will be able to understand the missions of National Park Service and Martin Van Buren National Historic Site.

Visitors to this area can obtain basic information and orientation concerning the park resources and visitor experience opportunities.

### **Theme Related Topics**

Introduction to all park themes and agency and site missions

### **Appropriate Media/Method**

With development of additional visitor use facilities (improved visitor contact station or new visitor center) the need for information and orientation functions at the park headquarters offices will diminish. Until significant improvements and full-time staffing of the visitor contact station or new visitor center, the headquarters operations area will continue to be a significant source of information for visitors.

**Personal contact with a park employee will be available at or near the entrance to the park headquarters building.** Staff will be available at all times the facility is open to promptly greet visitors and respond to requests for information.

**Distribute basic park publications at the headquarters building in the park operations area.** A readily available supply of basic publications – park brochure, rules and regulations, site bulletins – will be given to visitors and business people upon request. When the headquarters building is closed but visitors have access to the exterior, a brochure box will make the primary park brochure available. A brochure rack in the entryway of the headquarters building will assist employees responding to off-season visitor contacts.

**Plan, produce and install an exhibit panel outside the headquarters offices.** An orientation exhibit and bulletin case outside the building for after-hours visitors will supplement personal services provided at an entry desk. The after-hours brochure dispenser described above can be attached to the bulletin case or exhibit panel.

# **PROJECT SUMMARY / SCHEDULE**

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The following information summarizes proposals presented in this Interpretive Concept Plan and establishes priorities. The park staff will develop necessary funding requests to begin the federal funding process. They will also initiate contacts with potential partnership organizations to implement projects well suited to alternative funding.

## **PROJECT**

**FY06   FY07   FY08   FY09   FY10   FUTURE**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>FY06</b>	<b>FY07</b>	<b>FY08</b>	<b>FY09</b>	<b>FY10</b>	<b>FUTURE</b>
<b>OUTREACH</b>						
Integrate park and community (pg 18)	X					
Update Internet web site (pg 18, 21)	X					
Expand personal service activities (pg18)	X					
Plan and develop traveling trunks (pg 18)	X					
Target specific stakeholders (pg 19)	X					
<b>PARK WIDE</b>						
Plan activities for specific interpretive experience areas (pg 21)	X					
Develop a variety of information media (pg 21)	X					
Improve information station media (pg 22)	X					
Create staffing plan (pg 23)		X				
Create housing plan (pg 23)			X			
Develop training program (pg23)	X					
Continue to improve personal services (pg 23)	X					
Develop costumed interpretation activities (pg 24)			X			
Routinely evaluate personal services (pg 24)	X					
Revise park brochure (pg24)	X					
Expand park web site (pg 24)	X					
Upgrade existing slide program (pg 25)	X					
Plan a new audiovisual program (pg 25)			X			
Provide virtual Lindenwald mansion tour (pg25)	X					

**PROJECT**

**FY06 FY07 FY08 FY09 FY10 FUTURE**

<b>PARK WIDE Continued</b>						
Update wayside exhibits (pg 25)						X
Plan / produce new wayside exhibits as needed (pg 26)	X					
Create temporary project-based wayside exhibits (pg 26)		X				
Plan / present special events (pg 26)	X					
Continue guided tours – Lindenwald mansion (pg 27)	X					
Plan / present cultural area tours (pg 27)	X					
Expand curriculum-based education program (pg 27 – 29) :	X					
Enhance current activities / facilities	X					
Support state / national standards	X					
Integrate content areas	x					
Explore distance learning opportunity			X			
Enhance academic partnerships	X					
Work with education advisory group	X					
Implement partner training program			X			
Develop funding strategy	X					
Maintain program currency	X					
Develop / present expanded Junior Ranger program (pg 29):	X					
Review / revise formative program	X					
Develop Junior Ranger web page	X					
Develop children activities	X					
Evaluate existing programs for accessibility (pg 30)	X					
Design new facilities / media for optimum access (pg 30)				X		
Create alternative interpretation for inaccessible resources (pg 30)		X				
Provide multilingual information (pg 30)				X		
Design / fabricate / install interactive video kiosk (pg 30)				X		
<b>INTERPRETIVE AREAS</b>						
Arrival (pg 31 – 33):	X					
Improve way-finding to park			X			
Improve site design to enhance arrival			X			
Adapt information station architectural features		X				
Redesign parking area				X		
Develop visual identity – signs and interpretive devices		X				

**PROJECT**

**FY06 FY07 FY08 FY09 FY10 FUTURE**

INTERPRETIVE AREAS Continued						
Arrival Continued (pg 31 - 33):						
Develop landscape plan	X					
Create new way-finding sign plan			X			
Install gate - Old Post Road	X					
Discontinue driving on lawn	X					
Visitor / Information Center (pg 34 - 39)						
Plan for new visitor center					X	
Develop landscaped plaza					X	
Clearly identify information station	X					
Adapt information center to accommodate audiovisual area		X				
Install path between information Station and plaza		X				
Transition Area (pg 40):						
Plan / design / install landscaped plaza		X				
Plan / produce / install wayside exhibit in plaza						X
Historic House (pg 41 - 41):						
Re-evaluate / revise Lindenwald mansion furnishing plan	X					
Continue guided tours	X					
Improve media to enhance accessibility	X					
Plan special events house tour	X					
Cultural Area (pg 43 - 45):						
Remove intrusive facilities					X	
Implement plans to enhance long Term visitor experience		X				
Implement interim landscape improvements		X				
Plan / establish space for interpretive demonstrations					X	
Develop / present cultural demonstration activities				X		
Seek funds to increase staff				X		
Evaluate farm cottage for employee housing				X		
Update existing wayside exhibits						X
Develop site bulletin for area						
Discontinue vehicle travel on historic roads		X				

**PROJECT****FY06 FY07 FY08 FY09 FY10 FUTURE**

<b>INTERPRETIVE AREAS Continued</b>						
Lindenwald Farm (pg 46 - 47):						
Plan, develop, present cooperative interpretation program		X				
Plan, develop loop trail		X				
Plan, produce, install wayside exhibits		X				
Plan, present personal services		X				
Woods and Creek (pg 48 - 49)						
Plan, develop new trail					X	
Develop recreation program					X	
Park Operations (pg 50):						
Plan, produce, install wayside exhibit panel outside HQ			X			
Distribute park brochure	X					
Provide personal contact at HQ	X					

# ***APPENDIX***

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## ***PLANNING TEAM AND CONSULTANTS***

### ***Martin Van Buren National Historic Site***

Daniel J. Dattilio	Superintendent
James A. McKay	Chief Ranger
Patricia West McKay	Curator
Dawn Sackawitch	Park Ranger

### ***Harpers Ferry Center***

Keith Morgan	Park Ranger – Planner
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### ***Park Partners***

Friends of Lindenwald

## ***VISITOR CENTER PLANNING GUIDELINES***

### ***Parking Lots***

- Spaces for cars, busses, and special vehicles.
- Wheelchair accessible.
- Good relationship (distance, grade) of lot to visitor center building.
- Visibility of visitor center building from parking spaces.
- Accommodation of mass transportation vehicle's path through parking lot.
- Shelter from weather for visitors waiting for mass transportation vehicles.

### ***Access To and From Visitor Center***

- Ease of grade for visitors using wheel chairs.
- Retaining rails where needed.
- Good separation of landscape plantings from visitor pathways so plants do not create impedence when they mature.
- Make location of building's entrance obvious so as not to confuse visitors.
- Power assisted doors to facilitate both visitors and employees that are using wheel chairs.
- Prominently marked exit doors from building.
- Outside paving texture of a nature so as not to be a hindrance to easy rolling of wheel chairs, yet not so smooth as to be slippery when wet or icy.
- Arrival tread devices just inside front door designed to remove shoe borne debris from outdoors.
- Indoor carpets of a color and visual texture so as to match outdoor dirt and debris.

### ***Reception***

- If possible locate prominently signed rest rooms just outside of front entrance. This will greatly reduce the number of arriving visitors who ask for restrooms, going back out the front door, using facilities, and then entering the front door a second time. Additionally it will totally eliminate one more question that the front desk attendant has to answer. Restrooms outside the visitor center can be left open for after hour visitors. Malfunctioning restrooms that are outside the visitor center can not disrupt inside activities with foul smells or overflowing sewage water. Repair of restrooms is less disrupting when the facilities are outside. Employee restrooms

should be provided inside the building. This will assist employee surveillance of building.

- Locate reception desk so it is obvious to incoming visitors and an active agent in the control of visitors coming and going. Locate employee office adjoining front desk so if necessary one person can function as receptionist and accomplish other work when visitation is low. The door to this office should open near the front desk but have a baffle wall within the support office that hides office clutter from view by visitors. If possible provide a viewing slit (6 inches high x 2ft long) so employees seated behind the wall can see into the lobby area. The reception desk should have a high (stand up) section and a lower height for wheelchair confined visitors. The cash register (if only one) should be placed at the lower level so it is accessible to a wheel chaired employee. The end of the desk that accommodates the wheel chair should be cantilevered so as not to restrict the movement of the wheel chair person's legs when maneuvering around the end. Provide lighting, power and audiovisual controls to this desk to allow operation of the entire visitor use area by one employee. Provide two pin-up surface areas in close proximity to this desk, one behind the desk so only the employee can alter it and one perpendicular to both the visitor and the employee so both can touch. This technique often serves more than the one person to which the employee is speaking.

### ***Lobby***

- Besides the reception desk, the lobby is to be the decision point for the visitor. To best facilitate flow to the various attractions offered within the visitor center, the lobby should function as the hub from which one leaves and returns after the choice of each attraction. The probable attractions are audiovisual room, exhibit room, bookstore, trip planning area, adjacent self-guided walks, and of course exit from the building.

### ***Audiovisual Room***

- This space should be close to the lobby and constructed to dampen sound spill from its program and not be affected by the noise or light from the lobby. Architectural equipment such as heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) should not be located above or next to this space. There should be no windows in the theater. Emergency exits should be placed at the opposite end of the room from the door through which the visitor entered. All exits should have a lighted sign on a back-up power system. There should

be an acoustic study executed to dampen the reverberating sound in the space. If the room is to be used for multiple uses it should have a level floor with moveable seating that is capable of stacking and storing. A separate dedicated room should be built for the storage of these chairs. If the room is to be maximized for a theater the floor should be sloped with fixed seating. This puts more restraints on location of seating for disabled visitors. Additionally this definitely sets the number of seats and requires answering questions of how many visitors are expected at one time, how crowds will be divided, and various other considerations. Electrical and audio-visual needs at the front of the theater where someone might want to give a program should be taken into consideration. Additionally there should be a count-down clock placed conspicuously outside the theater for visitors to know when the next show will begin. Public address systems are a less desirable alternative.

### ***Exhibit Room***

- This room should be adjacent to the lobby with some separation to prevent sound spill from that noisy space. There should be no windows in the exhibit room. This eliminates competing with the wide fluctuations of light produced by the sun. The space should have at least a ten foot high ceiling into which is set a power grid-8 foot on center, beginning 4 feet out from the wall. Each of these power sources should be capable of handling 10-75 watt bulbs. The perimeter of the room should have under carpet wiring receptacles (18" off floor) concealed in the walls at a distance of eight feet apart. These power sources should each lead back to its own dedicated breaker at the main switch in the building. The floor should be smooth concrete or other material over which will be laid, carpet tiles which are not glued down. To power exhibits in the center of the room flat wiring will pass under these carpet tiles from receptacles around the edge of the room. With this capability built into the room that is to be populated with exhibits, future limitations are greatly reduced. The space must be designed in such a way to permit a secure, protective environment for temporary exhibits and museum objects. Additionally, the architects, armed with this knowledge, can determine what kind of electrical loads are required and the effects it will have on the HVAC systems. Besides lights dedicated to exhibits, there should be a separate set of lights powered by a different circuit for illumination when cleaning up the place. These lights are to be used for maintenance and not left on when exhibit lighting is on. Breaker boxes controlling all these lights should be secured in a place away from the public.

- It is good practice to have architects lay in proposed exhibit spaces 3/4 inch thick, 4ft x 8ft. (vertical) plywood sheets on all the wall studs starting one foot off the floor before sheathing the room with gypsum wall board. This provides a strong surface to which exhibit panels can be attached. When the space is reconfigured and new exhibits are hung, the old holes in the gypsum walls are spackled, sanded and repainted and the supporting plywood is as strong as ever.



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has the responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.