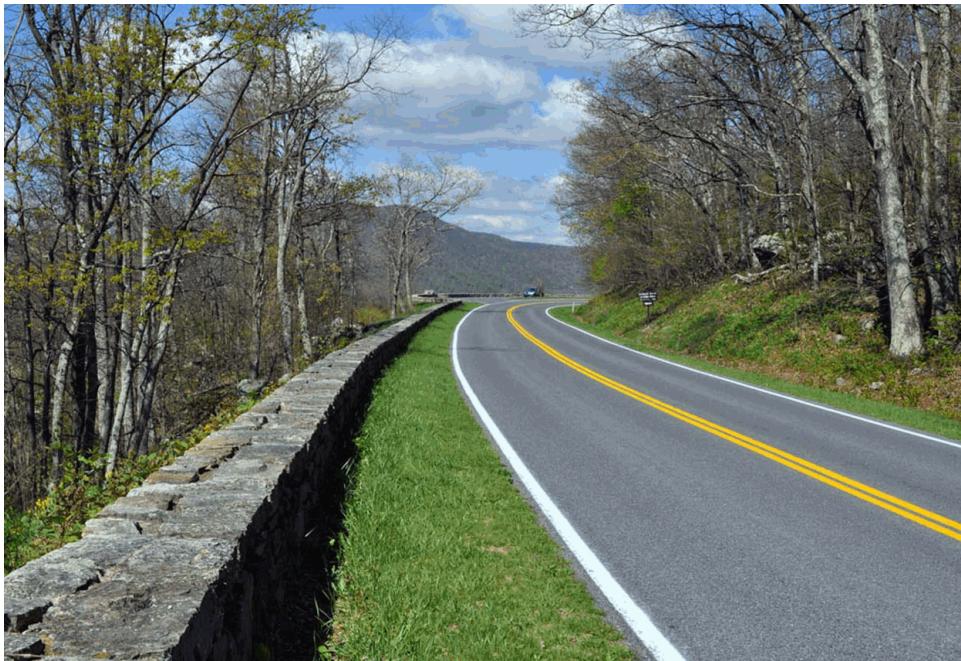


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National Park Service  
Cultural Landscapes Inventory  
2010



Skyline Drive - North District  
Shenandoah National Park

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## Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

### Inventory Summary

#### The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

#### CLI General Information:

##### Purpose and Goals of the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the national park system, is one of the most ambitious initiatives of the National Park Service (NPS) Park Cultural Landscapes Program. The CLI is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources through a public planning process and in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into a national database. In addition, for landscapes that are not currently listed on the National Register and/or do not have adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures, assists the NPS in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2006), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two GPRA goals are associated with the CLI: bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (Goal 1a7) and increasing the number of CLI records that have complete, accurate, and reliable information (Goal 1b2B).

##### Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries and archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the site's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit. Unlike cultural landscape reports, the CLI does not provide management recommendations or

treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape.

**Inventory Unit Description:**

Skyline Drive is a 105.5-mile, two-lane scenic park road entirely within the boundaries of Shenandoah National Park (NP) in Virginia. The drive is accessible from four entrances. The northernmost entrance is at Front Royal at the junction of U.S. Route 340. The Thornton Gap entrance is situated 31.5 miles south, at the junction of U.S. Route 211. Swift Run Gap is at the junction of U.S. Route 33, another thirty-four miles further south. The southernmost entrance is the Rockfish Gap entrance, 105.5 miles south of Front Royal at the junction with U.S. Route 250 and Interstate 64. The drive traces the top of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which form a natural boundary between the Shenandoah Valley, or the “Great Valley of Virginia,” to the west, and the Piedmont Plain to the east. Skyline Drive was constructed in three phases, namely North District, Central District, and South District. The North District portion of Skyline Drive extends thirty-one and a half miles from Front Royal to Thornton Gap, Mile 0.0 to Mile 31.5.

Skyline Drive—North District follows the crest of the Blue Ridge, providing park visitors the opportunity to observe the surrounding scenery from a vantage point typically ranging from 2,500 to 3,000 feet above the valley, with the highest peak at Mile 41.7 near Skyland at 3,680 feet. Along the drive are wayside stations, parking overlooks which provide scenic views and access to trails and site features, picnic grounds, campgrounds, overnight accommodations, and other services. The North District provides access to several developed areas including Dickey Ridge, Elkwallow, and Matthews Arm Campground. The asphalt pavement of the drive is approximately twenty feet wide, with three-foot shoulders where the roadbed is in cut and five-foot shoulders where the road is on fill (although the road widens to twenty-four feet on curves). Stone guardwalls are located along the drive where necessary. The original guardwalls were low (18-22 inches) and constructed of drylaid stone. Concrete core structures with stone veneer, designed to meet today’s safety standards, have replaced many of the original guardwalls and have been added along several other segments. Well established plantings of mountain laurel, rhododendrons, ferns, and azaleas exist along the road. Since the 1930s, forests have matured and changed the appearance of views from some of the North District’s twenty named overlooks. Along the drive, forests of oak, maple, and hickory have also replaced many of the fields and pastures that were present in the 1930s.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Prior to the establishment of Shenandoah NP, the area was inhabited by Native Americans and later settled by European immigrants beginning in the early 1700s and reaching its peak in the nineteenth century. Homesteads were established where families raised a variety of crops and fruit trees and kept pastures for cattle grazing. During the early part of the twentieth century, several environmental disasters occurred, diminishing the economic livelihood of many area residents. The chestnut blight brought catastrophic change to the forest ecosystem, decimating chestnut trees that once made up twenty percent of the forest. Chestnuts were a food source for animals and could also be sold for cash. The bark was used for tanning, and the wood was used in the construction of telephone poles, railroad ties, wheel rims, and tools. In addition, the region experienced a severe drought in 1930 causing crops and the apple harvest to fail.

Skyline Drive - North District  
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Limited recreational use of the mountains had begun as early as 1830 with the construction of Black Springs Hotel and the development of Stony Man Camp (later Skyland) in 1894. In 1924, the idea of establishing a national park in the region came about when the U.S. Secretary of the Interior formed the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee (SANPC), which recognized the potential of locating a scenic drive atop the Blue Ridge Mountains in northern Virginia with dramatic views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the Piedmont Plain to the east. In 1926, Congress authorized Shenandoah NP to provide a large, western-type park accessible from the urban centers of the East Coast. However, the act did not provide federal funding to acquire land for the park. Until the park was officially established in 1935, lands were acquired through private donations and funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The need to provide economic relief and jobs to the region, already suffering from the drought of 1930 as well as the Great Depression, moved forward the plan to make the Shenandoah area more accessible by building a motor road. The construction of this road, Skyline Drive, began in 1931 under the Hoover Administration with the North District as the second phase, through the coordinated efforts of the National Park Service (NPS) and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Public Roads (BPR). As part of his New Deal legislation, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to help create jobs through natural resource conservation efforts on federal, state, and municipal properties. At Shenandoah, the CCC was involved in erosion control, planting trees and shrubs, and the construction of site amenities including trails, overlooks, parking lots, and drinking fountains.

Following design and planning principles promoted by the NPS, the drive was designed to work with the natural topography while also taking advantage of panoramic views and vistas. The road was also planned to provide access to visitor amenities at regular intervals, including overlooks, picnic areas, wayside stations and four multi-use developments. Structures and buildings associated with the drive, such as guardwalls, gutters, and retaining walls, were constructed out of local materials including stone and wood. The CCC constructed landscape elements that enhanced the rustic and naturalistic setting by using stone for drinking fountains, boulders for bollards, and logs for guardrails. CCC workers also planted native trees and shrubs along the drive to revegetate cut and fill areas, screen overlooks from the road, and to create a seamless visual transition to the surrounding landscape.

After the U.S. entered World War II, further development of the park ceased until after the war. Visitation to the park plummeted as fuel shortages curbed opportunities for leisurely drives and people were encouraged to conserve resources for the war effort, forcing the closure of concession facilities. After the war, the concession facilities re-opened, but business remained slow. In the early 1950s, concrete mile markers were installed along the drive and work on guardwall construction was completed.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Mission 66 ushered in a program to update and improve facilities throughout the national park system. In the Skyline Drive–North District, projects included new signage, grade separations at Thornton Gap, and new parking areas for day hikers. Deteriorated wood guardrails were also removed. In the 1980s, many existing guardwalls were replaced with a newer

Skyline Drive - North District  
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design to meet contemporary safety standards. In 2007, large sections of the drive in the Central District were reconstructed. A capital improvement project to restore forty-nine overlooks along the entirety of the drive is currently underway.

#### SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Skyline Drive–North District is part of the Skyline Drive Historic District, which was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) on October 6, 2008. Skyline Drive, along with its adjoining overlooks, waysides, picnic areas, campgrounds, and development areas, is nationally significant under NHL criteria 1 (event) and 4 (design), which corresponds to criteria A and C, respectively, in the National Register of Historic Places.

Skyline Drive is primarily significant for its leading role in the movement to conserve and enhance the Nation's natural resources in the eastern United States for enjoyment and outdoor recreation by the American public that gained momentum in the mid-1920s and continued through the 1930s. It represents efforts by the United States Government with the cooperation of the Commonwealth of Virginia to conserve the characteristic scenic and natural resources of the Central Appalachians and Blue Ridge in the form of Shenandoah National Park. Designed and constructed between 1930 and 1942, it played an important role in the efforts of the federal government to provide economic relief in the form of employment for both skilled and unskilled labor during the Great Depression. These programs included drought relief funding beginning in 1931 and the varied makework and relief programs of the New Deal era (1933 to 1942) including the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Public Works Administration (PWA), and Works Progress Administration (WPA). These programs not only promoted economic stability but moreover reflected the social-humanitarian purposes of the New Deal, advanced the conservation of natural areas, and expanded the recreational resources of the nation (NHL 2008:4).

Designed as the backbone of Shenandoah National Park, Skyline Drive also illustrates the principles of naturalistic landscape design promoted by the National Park Service for work in state and national parks and parkways in the early 20th century. Designed and constructed in the 1930s, the drive represents an important stage in the adaptation of the principles and practices of naturalistic and rustic design that had been developed for Western park roads to the gentler topography of the Appalachians and the emerging East Coast ideas for parkway development. Distinguishing design characteristics include the graceful curvilinear alignment; the rounding, flattening, and planting of cut and fill slopes in native species to blend naturally into the surrounding topography; and the picturesque parking overlooks at frequent intervals to provide scenic valley and ridgeline vistas and to link motorists with the Appalachian Trail and other trails leading to waterfalls, outcroppings, springs, scenic views, and virgin stands of trees. Recreational areas for picnicking, camping, dining and overnight accommodations were developed according to the park's master plan at regular intervals along the drive, including Dickey Ridge, Elkswallow, Pinnacles, Skyland, Big Meadows, Lewis Mountain, and South River. The CCC played a major role in the development of these areas, as did the Virginia Sky-Line Company, which as the park's concessionaire built village-like clusters with lodges and overnight cabins and waysides with shops, lunchrooms, and gasoline stations. Several of these buildings are outstanding examples of

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National Park Service rustic architecture applied to the eastern deciduous forests and geological character of the Blue Ridge (NHL 2008:4-5).

The period of significance for the Skyline Drive Historic District is 1931-1952. Construction of the road began in 1931 and occurred in three distinct phases, and extended to 1952, which recognizes the small amount of work done to complete the guardwalls after World War II and some minor changes that were in keeping with the 1930s plans. It should be noted that major developed areas and picnic areas along the drive, including those in the North District – Piney River, Elkwallow, and Dickey Ridge – are evaluated in separate CLIs.

#### ANALYSIS/EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

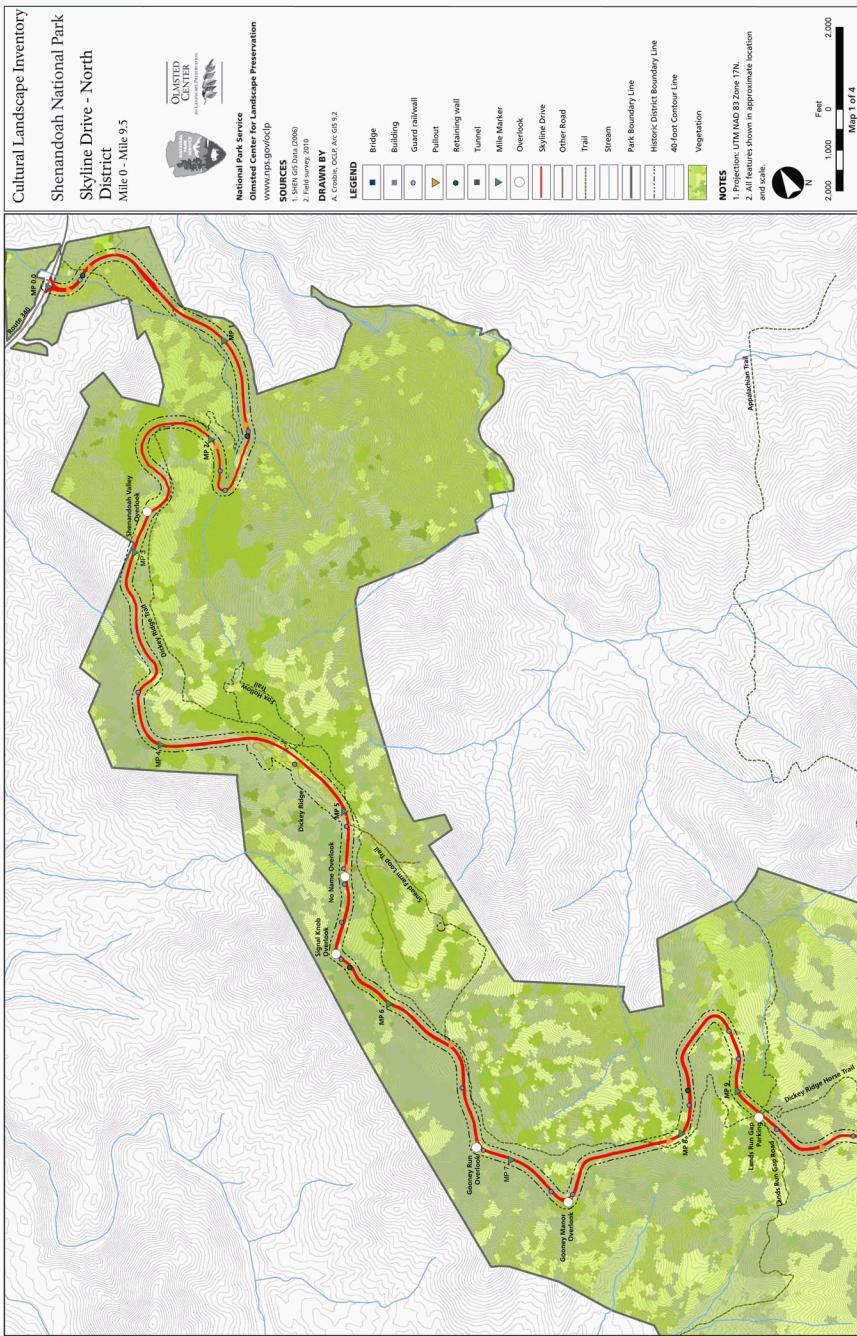
Landscape characteristics and features from the period of significance remain today along Skyline Drive and are important to its historic character and unique identity. The historic design is evident in the circulation layout, building materials, vegetation, and Rustic Design style of the remaining guardwalls, retaining walls, drainage structures, and fountains, reflecting the planning, landscape design, and architectural style that was implemented in the 1930s and 1940s by the National Park Service (NPS) and Bureau of Public Roads (BPR). The road, overlooks, and parking areas remain much as they did during the period of significance. Historic small scale features include elements such as guardrails, signage, water fountains, stone walls, tree wells, and planting islands.

Changes since 1952 on Skyline Drive–North District include the construction of additional gravel parking areas to accommodate day hikers, and removal of wooden guardrails, though some have recently been reinstalled. A new entrance station has been constructed at Front Royal and more fire roads have been added. Other changes include the removal of deteriorated chestnut cribbing, guardwalls, and failed culverts in the 1980s as part of a rehabilitation program. Many of the original stone guardwalls have been replaced with a new design that reflects current safety standards, consisting of concrete core structures with native stone veneer salvaged from the old walls. This work, along with restoration of views and vistas at overlooks, is ongoing. Interpretive and directional signage has also been replaced since the period of significance. The overall impacts of these changes on the Skyline Drive landscape have been minimal and do not detract from the historic setting.

The condition of the Skyline Drive–North District landscape at the time of this report’s completion is evaluated as “good.” The vehicular circulation system has been well maintained through repaving and some adjustments to traffic flow for safety. The associated trailheads, pedestrian pathways, and service and fire roads have also been maintained. The surviving historic small scale features, including the drinking fountains, tree wells, and boulders are in good condition. Projects aimed at improving the overlooks and managing roadside vegetation are ongoing.

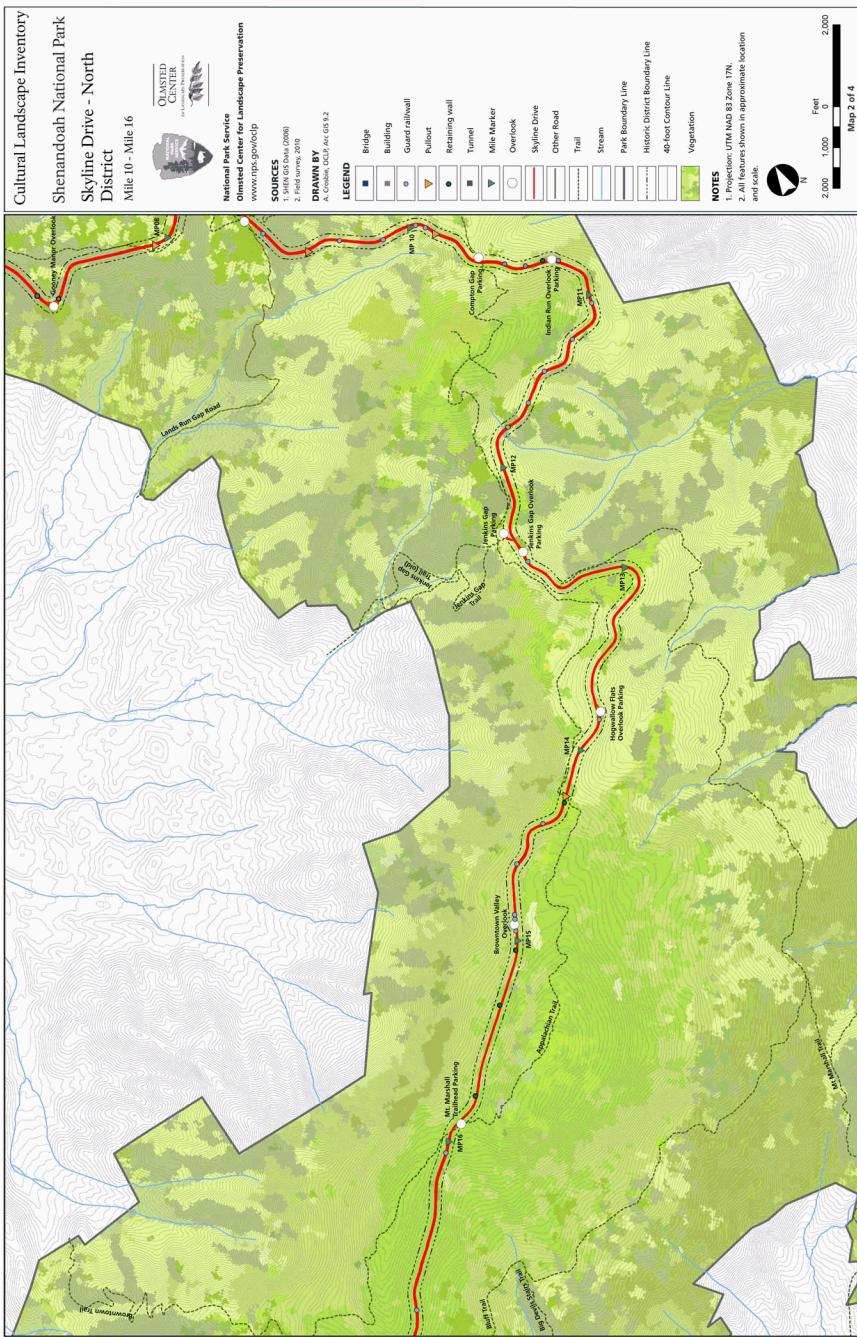
Skyline Drive - North District  
Shenandoah National Park

**Site Plan**



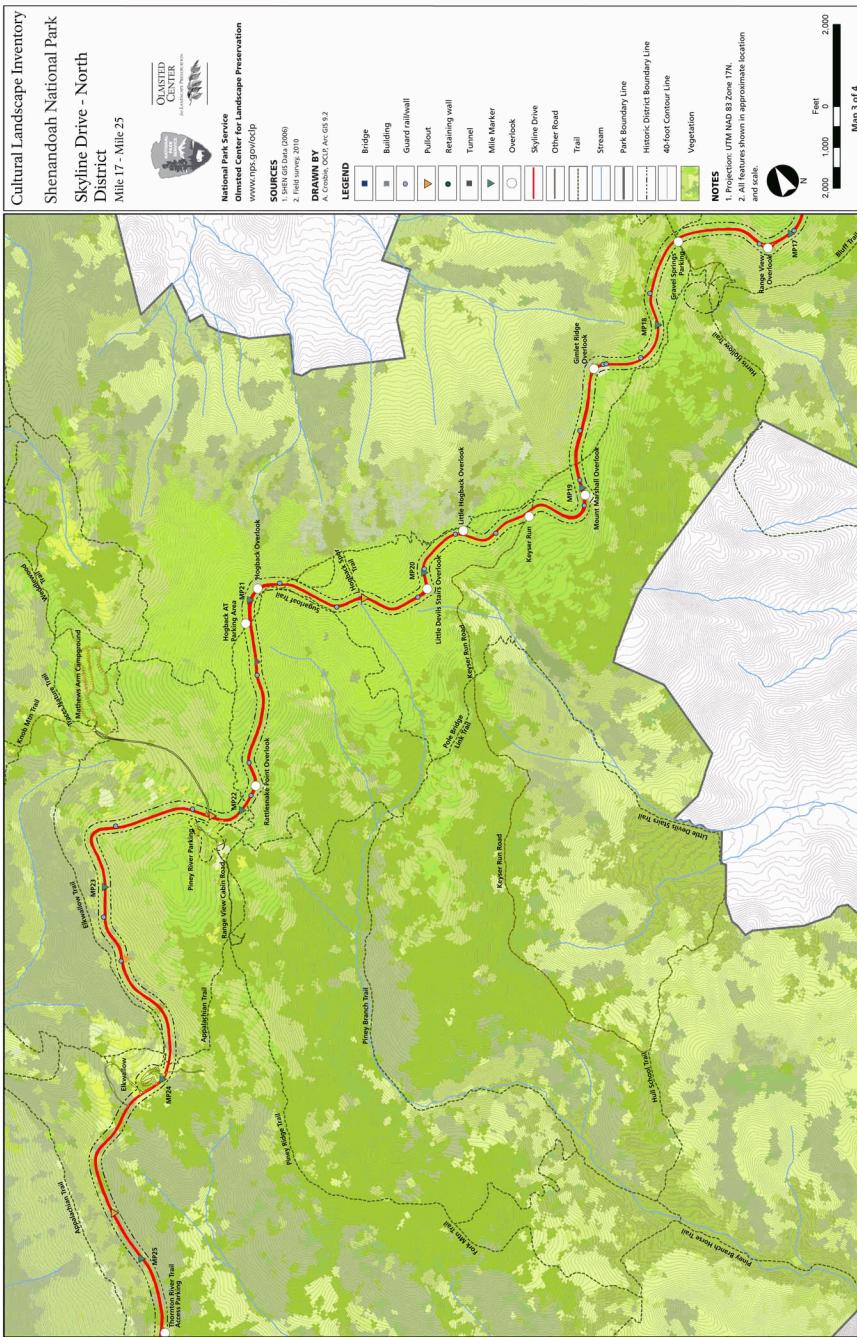
Skyline Drive-North District, Mile 0 - Mile 9.5

## Skyline Drive - North District Shenandoah National Park



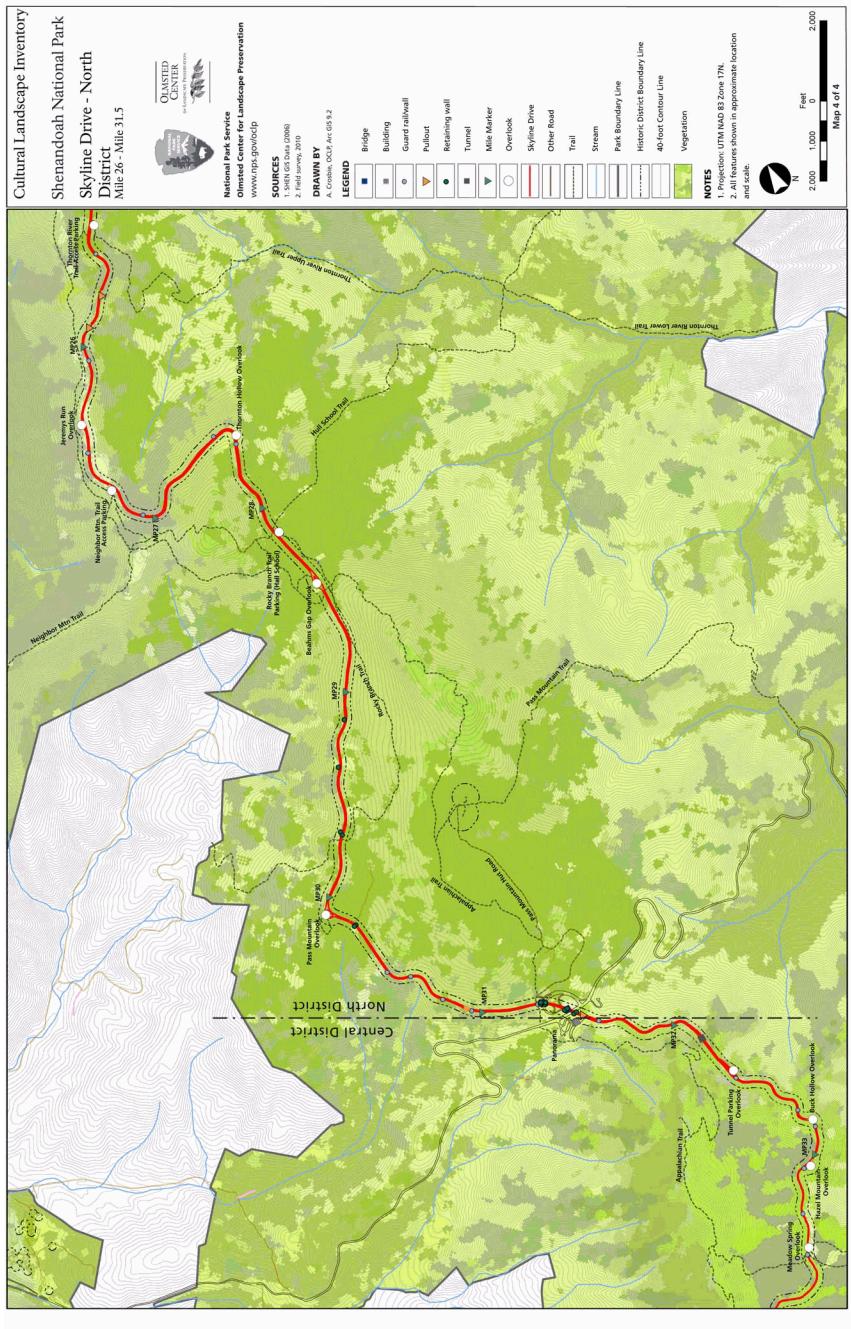
Skyline Drive-North District, Mile 10 - Mile 16

## Skyline Drive - North District Shenandoah National Park



Skyline Drive-North District, Mile 17 - Mile 25

## Skyline Drive - North District Shenandoah National Park



*Skyline Drive-North District, Mile 26 - Mile 31.5*

### **Property Level and CLI Numbers**

<b>Inventory Unit Name:</b>	Skyline Drive - North District
<b>Property Level:</b>	Component Landscape
<b>CLI Identification Number:</b>	975550
<b>Parent Landscape:</b>	300115

### **Park Information**

<b>Park Name and Alpha Code:</b>	Shenandoah National Park -SHEN
<b>Park Organization Code:</b>	4840
<b>Park Administrative Unit:</b>	Shenandoah National Park

### **CLI Hierarchy Description**

The Skyline Drive–North District is one of twelve component landscapes included within the Skyline Drive NHL. The others include Skyline Drive–Central District, Skyline Drive–South District, Dickey Ridge, Elkwallow, Lewis Mountain, Big Meadows, Piney River, Pinnacles, Skyland, Simmons Gap, and South River Picnic Grounds.

Shenandoah National Park includes four other landscapes and three component landscapes:

- Rapidan Camp landscape
- Headquarters landscape
- Mt. Vernon Iron Furnace landscape
- Appalachian Trail landscape with component landscapes: Appalachian Trail –North District, Appalachian Trail–Central District, and Appalachian Trail–South District.

## Concurrence Status

**Inventory Status:** Complete

### **Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:**

Field work for Skyline Drive–North District was completed in May 2010 by Allison Crosbie of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation (OCLP), and Student Conservation Association interns Jaclyn Johnson, Iowa State University, and Andrew Louw, College of the Atlantic. The park's Cultural Resource Manager is Ann Kain. She can be reached at 540-999-3500, x3435.

### **Concurrence Status:**

**Park Superintendent Concurrence:** Yes

**Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:** 07/29/2010

**Date of Concurrence Determination:** 10/06/2008

### **Concurrence Graphic Information:**

# CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY CONCURRENCE FORM

## Skyline Drive—North District Shenandoah National Park

Shenandoah National Park concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for Skyline Drive–North District including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

**Good:** indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

**Fair:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

**Poor:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for Skyline Drive–North District is hereby approved and accepted.

Martha C. Bogle 7/29/10  
Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park Date

*Park concurrence on the findings of this CLI was received on July 29, 2010.*

# **Geographic Information & Location Map**

**Inventory Unit Boundary Description:**

As described in both the 2008 National Historic Landmark and 1997 National Register of Historic Places documentation, the boundary of the Skyline Drive Historic District is 125 feet on either side of the drive's centerline, creating a 250-foot right-of-way. At overlooks, wayside stations, and picnic grounds the boundary extends 125 feet beyond the toe-slope of the overlooks, 125 feet beyond the edge of the paved parking areas at the waysides, and 125 feet beyond circulation roads at the picnic grounds. Boundary increases added several developed areas and picnic areas to the Historic District, including Piney River, Simmons Gap, Big Meadows, Dickey Ridge, Headquarters, Lewis Mountain, and Skyland.

The boundaries of the Skyline Drive–North District landscape adheres to the 250 feet right-of-way and expands at several overlooks. The north boundary of the Skyline Drive–North District landscape is at Front Royal Entrance Station (Mile 0.0) and the south boundary is at Thornton Gap (U.S. 211) (Milepost 31.5). The boundary does not include Piney River, Elkswallow, and Dickey Ridge, which are, or will be, addressed in separate CLIs.

**State and County:**

**State:** VA

**County:** Page County

**State:** VA

**County:** Rappahannock County

**State:** VA

**County:** Warren County

**Size (Acres):** 955.00

**Boundary UTMS:**

**Source:** USGS Map 1:24,000

**Boundary Source Narrative:** See National Register documentation for Skyline Drive Historic District, dated April 28, 1997, for UTM northing and easting coordinates from North Park Entrance to Pass Mountain Hut Road/AT Crossing.

**Type of Point:** Line

**Datum:** NAD 83

**UTM Zone:** 17

Skyline Drive - North District  
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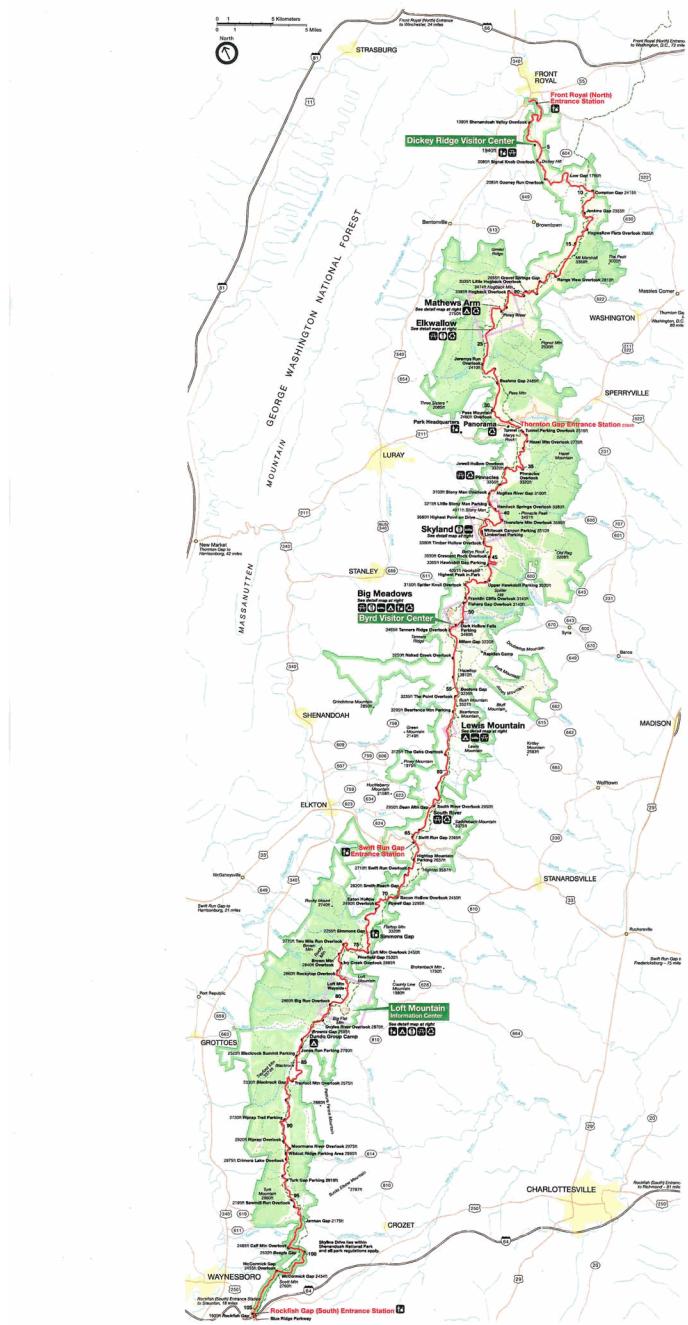
Location Map:



*Shenandoah National Park is located in Northwest Virginia (map courtesy of Great Outdoors Recreation Pages).*

## Skyline Drive - North District Shenandoah National Park

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*The North District of Skyline Drive extends from Front Royal to Thornton Gap (Shenandoah NP website, [http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/whole\\_park.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/whole_park.pdf)).*

**Regional Context:**

**Type of Context:** Cultural

**Description:**

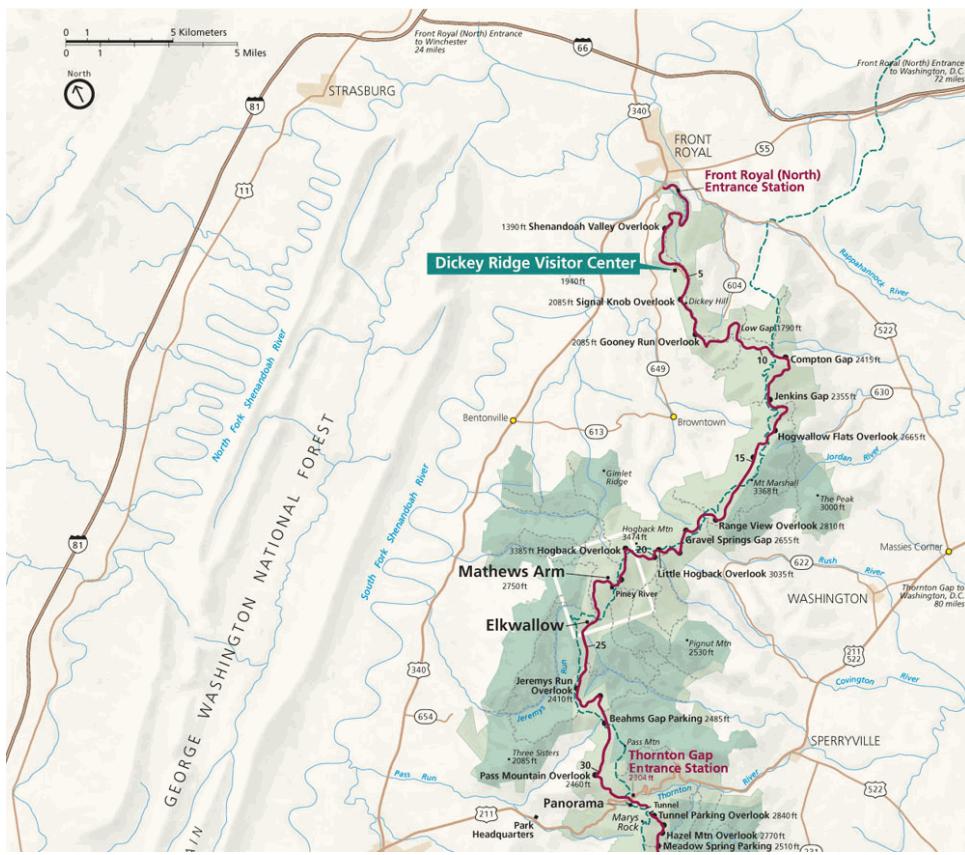
The North District is part of Shenandoah NP, where recreation is the primary cultural use. Part of the park includes many thousands of acres of federally-designated wilderness. In the surrounding region, tourism is a significant industry. Agriculture, particularly poultry production, is the main industry to the west, with convenient north-south access via Interstate 81 and Route 340. Suburban development in the Washington D.C.-Baltimore metropolitan area dominates the east, with north-south access via Route 29 and east-west access via Routes 211 and 33.

**Type of Context:** Physiographic

**Description:**

Skyline Drive is a two-lane, two-way asphalt paved road located within Shenandoah National Park and extends over 105 miles from Front Royal to Waynesboro. The North District portion of Skyline Drive extends over thirty miles from Front Royal to Thornton Gap, Mile 0.0 to Mile 31.5. The gently curving scenic drive winds along the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains, providing panoramic views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the Piedmont to the east.

## Skyline Drive - North District Shenandoah National Park



*Map showing the physiographic context of the North District (Shenandoah NP website, [http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/whole\\_park.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/whole_park.pdf)).*

**Type of Context:** Political

## Description:

Skyline Drive is located within eight counties in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The drive is located within Shenandoah NP, authorized on May 22, 1926, and fully established on December 16, 1935.

**Management Unit:** North District

## **Management Information**

## **General Management Information**

**Management Category:** Must be Preserved and Maintained

**Management Category Date:** 07/29/2010

### **Management Category Explanatory Narrative:**

Skyline Drive falls within the management category “Must Be Preserved and Maintained” because it is nationally significant as defined by National Historic Landmark criteria. The drive is the focus of the Skyline Drive Historic District, which was designated as a National Historic Landmark on October 6, 2008.

### **NPS Legal Interest:**

**Type of Interest:** Fee Simple

### **Public Access:**

**Type of Access:** Other Restrictions

### **Explanatory Narrative:**

Shenandoah NP is always open, but portions of Skyline Drive are periodically closed during the winter, during inclement weather, and at night during deer hunting season.

## **Adjacent Lands Information**

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?** Yes

### **Adjacent Lands Description:**

The North District portion of Skyline Drive is located within Shenandoah National Park (NP) and is surrounded by the vast, forested landscape of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Adjacent lands play an important part in the visitor experience of Skyline Drive. The road's alignments, overlooks, and developed areas were sited to take advantage of views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the Piedmont to the east. Further development of industry, housing, and roadways could negatively impact these historic views. The secondary effects of development – increased air pollution from industry and commercial vehicles – also impact the ability to enjoy views that draw visitors to the site.

## National Register Information

### Existing NRIS Information:

<b>Name in National Register:</b>	Skyline Drive Historic District
<b>NRIS Number:</b>	97000375
<b>Primary Certification Date:</b>	10/06/2008
<b>Name in National Register:</b>	Skyline Drive Historic District (Boundary Increase)
<b>NRIS Number:</b>	97001112
<b>Primary Certification Date:</b>	09/19/1997
<b>Name in National Register:</b>	Skyline Drive Historic District (Boundary Increase)
<b>NRIS Number:</b>	03001251
<b>Primary Certification Date:</b>	12/05/2003
 <b>Significance Criteria:</b>	A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
<b>Significance Criteria:</b>	C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values
 <b>Period of Significance:</b>	
<b>Time Period:</b>	AD 1931 - 1952
<b>Historic Context Theme:</b>	Expressing Cultural Values
<b>Subtheme:</b>	Landscape Architecture
<b>Facet:</b>	The 1930's: Era Of Public Works
<b>Time Period:</b>	AD 1931 - 1952
<b>Historic Context Theme:</b>	Transforming the Environment
<b>Subtheme:</b>	Conservation of Natural Resources
<b>Facet:</b>	The Great Depression And Conservation
<b>Time Period:</b>	AD 1931 - 1952
<b>Historic Context Theme:</b>	Developing the American Economy
<b>Subtheme:</b>	Transportation by Land and Air
<b>Facet:</b>	Carriage Roads, Touring Roads and Parkways

**Area of Significance:**

<b>Area of Significance Category:</b>	Architecture
<b>Area of Significance Category:</b>	Entertainment - Recreation
<b>Area of Significance Category:</b>	Landscape Architecture
<b>Area of Significance Category:</b>	Politics - Government
<b>Area of Significance Category:</b>	Social History
<b>Area of Significance Category:</b>	Transportation
<b>Area of Significance Category:</b>	Conservation
<b>Area of Significance Category:</b>	Community Planning and Development
<b>Area of Significance Category:</b>	Engineering

**Statement of Significance:**

Shenandoah NP was one of the first and largest national parks established in the eastern United States, and raised national and regional awareness of the importance of the government's role in preserving large portions of the environment for public recreation and enjoyment. From the park's early history, a key feature has been Skyline Drive, designed and constructed primarily from 1930 to 1942, which traces the mountaintop ridges and offers panoramic views of the Piedmont to the east and the Shenandoah Valley to the west. As stated in the National Historic Landmark (NHL) documentation, Skyline Drive, with its adjoining overlooks, waysides, picnic areas, campgrounds, and developed areas, is nationally significant under NHL criteria 1 and 4:

"Because of the pivotal role that the Skyline Drive Historic District played in the history of the national park system and the evolution of park road design, federal policies in conservation and recreation, and the employment of relief measures of the New Deal, Skyline Drive is nationally significant under the NHL theme Transforming the Environment. For its exemplary expression of the principles and

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practices of National Park Service road design, landscape naturalization, and rustic architectural design and as a showcase of the landscape conservation work of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the park road and its associated features are also nationally important under the theme Expressing Cultural Values (planning, landscape architecture, and architecture).”

The period of significance for the Skyline Drive Historic District is 1931-1952. Construction of the road began in 1931 and occurred in three distinct phases, and extended to 1952, which recognizes the small amount of work done to complete the guardwalls after World War II and some minor changes that were in keeping with the 1930s plans.

The significance of the Skyline Drive Historic District under NHL criteria 1 (event) and 4 (design) corresponds to National Register criteria A and C, respectively. The following summary of significance for the entirety of the district is extracted directly from the October 2008 NHL documentation:

“Skyline Drive is primarily significant under Criterion 1 for its association with the efforts of the United States Government and the Commonwealth of Virginia to conserve the characteristic scenic and natural resources of Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains in the southern Appalachians in the form of Shenandoah National Park. The drive was intended to be the premier feature of the park—and the primary organizing framework for the park’s development. As in the western parks, major and minor development areas were located in reference to the road system, but at Shenandoah it became the backbone of the proposed park and an important link in what was envisioned in 1931 as a continuous park-to-park highway that passed through the Southern Appalachians and extended from the nation’s capital to Mammoth Cave in Kentucky (NHL 2008:52).

"It is also significant for its pivotal role in the movement that gained momentum in the mid-1920s and continued through the 1930s to conserve and enhance the Nation's natural resources in the eastern United States for enjoyment and outdoor recreation by the American public. It represents the increasing popularity of recreational motoring in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s and the evolving design of national park facilities to attract and accommodate increasing numbers of visitors who were visiting the parks by automobile (NHL 2008:52).

"It is furthermore associated with efforts of the federal government to provide economic relief in the form of employment for both skilled and unskilled labor during the Great Depression. These included a special allocation in 1931 for drought relief funds for road construction in national parks, and the extensive economic relief programs of the New Deal era (1933 to 1942) which included the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Public Works Administration (PWA), and Works Progress Administration (WPA), and Emergency Relief (FERA). These programs not only promoted economic stability but moreover reflected the social-humanitarian purposes of the New Deal by advancing the conservation of natural areas and expanding the recreational resources of the nation, while creating employment for thousands of skilled and unskilled workers. The drive, furthermore, demonstrated a new form of outdoor recreation that combined recreational motoring with the conservation of the nation's finest scenery and natural resources. The leadership of the National Park Service in conserving natural resources and designing facilities for outdoor recreation by the mid-1930s extended to an increasing

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number of national parks and monuments, state parks, recreational demonstration areas, and national parkways. During the 1930s, because of its proximity to Washington D.C., and its embodiment of the goals and purposes of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal program, Skyline Drive became a showcase for the work of the CCC and public works agencies in the eastern United States. Designed as the backbone of Shenandoah National Park, Skyline Drive under Criterion 4 illustrates the principles of naturalistic landscape design adopted and advanced by the National Park Service in the early 20th century. The design of the drive and component structures such as Mary's Rock Tunnel represent the high engineering standards that resulted from the National Park Service's 1926 interbureau agreement with the Bureau of Public Roads, as well as the naturalistic principles and practices of landscape design through which the road was constructed to lay lightly on the land and harmonize with the natural setting. Designed and constructed in the 1930s, Skyline Drive represents an important stage in the adaptation of the principles and practices developed for western park roads to the gentler topography of the Southern Appalachians and the assimilation of emerging eastern ideas for park and parkway development. Distinguishing design characteristics include the graceful curvilinear alignment; the rounding and flattening of cut and fill slopes; the planting of native trees and shrubs to blend the road naturally with the surrounding topography and enhance the drive's scenic beauty; and picturesque parking overlooks at frequent intervals that presented a sequence of scenic vistas and provided access to the Appalachian Trail and spur trails leading to waterfalls, springs, scenic viewpoints, and virgin stands of trees (NHL 2008:52-53).

"Skyline Drive is distinctive for its linearity and the intention of its designers to display a continuous and everchanging panorama of valley and mountain from a park road carefully orchestrated with winding curves and numerous scenic overlooks. Begun in 1931 it was one of several road projects by the Bureau of Public Roads and the National Park Service that Chief Landscape Architect Thomas Vint identified as outstanding and among the first to fully implement the design improvements formulated by the Landscape Division in the late 1920s (NHL 2008:53).

"Skyline Drive is credited with laying the conceptual foundation (and overlook prototypes) for the subsequent design of the more ambitious and advanced Blue Ridge Parkway. In keeping with the road's purpose as a recreational motorway within a day's drive of many eastern cities, recreational areas were planned at regular intervals along the drive to provide facilities for picnicking, camping, and other visitor services associated with automobile travel. Collectively the drive and its associated areas form an exemplary, outstanding, and cohesive park landscape that illustrates the state-of-the art design methods of park road construction in the 1930s as well as the landscape conservation practices of the CCC, such as clearing roadside debris, naturalizing road banks with native plantings, and constructing pedestrian paths and dry-laid stone walls at scenic overlooks (NHL 2008:53).

"The cohesive character of both landscape features and park structures in the Skyline Drive Historic District contribute to the district's national importance under Criterion 4. The district contains a full complement of CCC built structures, most rendered in native stone or timber (often chestnut)--in the form of guardrails, culvert headwalls, retaining walls, comfort stations, equipment sheds, and even water fountains. These fall into the three categories outlined in the NPS-published Park and Recreation Structures (1938): basic services and administration, recreational and cultural facilities, and overnight

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and organized camp facilities. Rustic and picturesque in character, the park structures built by both the CCC and the concessionaire was unified by a common vocabulary of materials, hand-wrought finishes, and architectural designs, that blends with the Eastern deciduous forest and rock outcroppings and ledges that make up much of the park's natural setting. Log framing abounds throughout, much of it having been drawn from the dead and decaying chestnut forests (casualties of the chestnut blight) and fashioned into useable form at the sawmills set up by the CCC. Log, slab, and shingles were commonly used as siding on most park buildings, with the exception of stonework that appeared on such buildings as the recently restored comfort station at Stony Man Overlook and lodge at Big Meadows. Also distinctive at Shenandoah is the roofing made from concrete shingles (connected with reinforcing rods) that were made by the CCC enrollees. Such a material was desirable because it provided an inexpensive, lightweight, and durable alternative to slate and quickly assumed a weathered appearance, like nearby boulders, by attracting mosses and lichens. The concessionaire used similar materials that were manufactured by a company in Richmond, Virginia, for the construction of Big Meadows Lodge; during the lodge's recent rehabilitation, damaged shingles were replaced with the same material ordered from the same company (this material is also used by Colonial Williamsburg) (NHL 2008:53).

"In addition, the district contains several outstanding examples of NPS, CCC, and concessionaire-built architecture. Commonly called "parkitecture," they include the Big Meadows Lodge, Dickey Ridge Lodge, and Pinnacles Picnic Pavilion--are among the finest examples found today in the parks of the eastern United States. They compare favorably in design and integrity with western examples, such as the lodges at Zion, Bryce, and Grand Canyon national parks, which were designated National Historic Landmarks in 1988 under the Architecture in the Parks NHL Theme Study (NHL 2008:54)."

### **State Register Information**

<b>Identification Number:</b>	069-0234
<b>Date Listed:</b>	12/04/1996
<b>Name:</b>	Skyline Drive Historic District (Multiple Counties)

#### **Explanatory Narrative:**

Skyline Drive – North District is located within the Skyline Drive Historic District.

### **Chronology & Physical History**

#### **Cultural Landscape Type and Use**

**Cultural Landscape Type:** Designed

#### **Current and Historic Use/Function:**

**Primary Historic Function:** Outdoor Recreation

**Primary Current Use:** Outdoor Recreation

Other Use/Function	Other Type of Use or Function
Concession	Both Current And Historic
Leisure-Passive (Park)	Both Current And Historic
Comfort Station (Latrine)	Both Current And Historic
NPS Class III Special Purpose Road	Both Current And Historic
Parking Area	Both Current And Historic
Hiking Trail	Both Current And Historic
View	Both Current And Historic
NPS Class V Administrative Access Road	Both Current And Historic
NPS Class I Principal Road	Both Current And Historic
NPS Class VI Restrictive Road	Both Current And Historic

**Current and Historic Names:**

Name	Type of Name
Skyline Drive	Both Current And Historic

**Ethnographic Study Conducted:** No Survey Conducted

**Ethnographic Significance Description:**

It is very likely that portions of Skyline Drive are located in areas used by Native Americans, including the Monacan and Manahoac, for over ten thousand years. In general, the inhabitants of the region were hunters and gatherers who used the mountains for seasonal camps.

**Chronology:**

Year	Event	Annotation
1600 - 900 BC	Established	First human habitation in Blue Ridge Mountains takes place about 11,000 years ago as seasonal encampments.
AD 1000	Established	Native American use of the mountains is mainly for game hunting (Resource Management Plan 1998: 23). The Monacan and Manahoac tribes inhabit the area (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
AD 1669	Explored	Dr. John Lederer, from Germany, is the first European to record exploration in this area of Blue Ridge Mountains, describing a forest full of game and a large open area believed to be Big Meadows (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).

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AD 1700 - 1799	Settled	Immigrants from Tidewater area come to Piedmont region and from Pennsylvania to Shenandoah Valley, leading to the disappearance or departure of Native Americans from the area (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
AD 1716	Explored	Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, leads a party across the Blue Ridge to try to extend the boundaries of Virginia and promote trading to the west (Historic Resources Study 1997:7).
AD 1750 - 1830	Settled	Settlers move from lower elevations into mountain hollows, where they pursue farming, grazing, timbering, and hunting game (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
AD 1830 - 1839	Established	Recreational use of the mountains begin with the opening of Black Rock Springs Hotel south of Skyline Drive (Historic Resources Study 1997:41).
AD 1861 - 1865	Established	During the Civil War, Confederate troops use Signal Knob on the north end of Massanutton Mountain as a signal station (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,57).
AD 1894	Built	George Freeman Pollock establishes Stony Man Camp, later named Skyland (Lambert 1979:i).
AD 1924	Established	The Secretary of the Interior assembles Southern Appalachian National Park Committee (SANPC) to study the issues regarding establishing a national park (SHEN website, Historical Overview).
AD 1925	Established	February 21, Congress passes legislation allocating \$20,000 for survey and evaluation of Shenandoah and other parks (SHEN website, Historical Overview).
AD 1926	Established	Congress first authorizes Shenandoah National Park (NP) on May 22, but without funds for land purchases.
AD 1928	Built	The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) begins building the Appalachian Trail from Thornton Gap to Skyland.
AD 1929 - 1930	Built	PATC continues building Appalachian Trail from Skyland to Swift Run Gap.

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AD 1931	Built	Contractors hired by the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) begin building Skyline Drive. PATC begins moving some of the AT from Thornton Gap to Skyland.
	Designed	March 25, map of “Proposed Shenandoah National Park” is issued by the Department of the Interior showing the North District (Engle 2006:34).
	Built	July 18 marks the official groundbreaking of Skyline Drive at Thornton Gap, heading south to Swift Run Gap (NHL 2008:8).
AD 1931 - 1939	Built	Signs are constructed along the drive, including control signs, informational signs such as interpretive kiosks, and overlook signs. The signs are rustic in design and mostly made from chestnut logs (NHL 2008:31).
AD 1931 - 1932	Built	Temporary boulders and logs are installed along the more precipitous edges of the drive (Engle 2006:93).
AD 1932	Established	A special advance opening of the drive, from Lee Highway (Route 211) to Skyland is held between October 22 and November 30, during which 30,837 persons in 7,891 cars use the unpaved road (Historic Resources Study 1997:46).
AD 1933	Established	In December, President Franklin Roosevelt establishes the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and six CCC camps are set up in Shenandoah, (National Register 9/1997:Section 8,50).
AD 1933 - 1934	Built	The CCC constructs 9.65 miles of wood guardrails on Skyline Drive (HRS 1997:69).
AD 1934	Established	Construction contracts for the North District for grading, drainage, and stone surfacing are advertised (National Register 4/1997:Section 7, 26).
	Established	On June 16, Waugh Brothers is awarded a contract to construct Section 2-A consisting of 9.76 miles of road from Front Royal to Compton Gap. (National Register 4/1997:Section 7,26-27).

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	Established	Sammons-Robertson Company is contracted to construct 10.4 miles of Section 2-B on June 16 (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,27).
	Established	Albert Brothers is awarded the contract for the 10.325 mile long Section 2-C on July 18, (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,27).
AD 1935	Built	Section 2-A is completed in late summer (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,27).
	Built	Clearing grubbing operations are started on Section 2-B in July and graded in October (National Register 4/1997:Section 7,27).
	Built	Clearing and grade finishing operations are completed on Section 2-C by September (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,27).
	Built	In June, Corson and Gruman Company is awarded the contract to place a road-mix bituminous surface course from Front Royal to Thornton Gap.
AD 1935 - 1942	Built	The CCC helps with the Skyline Drive construction and reconstruction of portions of the Appalachian Trail.
AD 1936	Reconstructed	CCC completes relocation and reconstruction of portions of the AT in the North District from Chester to ThorntonGap (AT-North District CLI 2007:32).
	Established	Franklin Roosevelt dedicates Shenandoah National Park on July 3.
	Built	By 1936, twenty overlooks are constucted in the North District of Skyline Drive.
	Established	On October 1, the North District is opened for traffic (NHL 2008:19).
AD 1939	Abandoned	On June 26, the House of Representatives passes House Joint Resolution 338, which closes all roads to the ridge within the bounds of Shenandoah National Park with the exception of U.S. Route 211 at Thornton Gap (Lee Highway), and U.S. Route 33 (Spotswood Trail) at Swift Run Gap (National Register 1996: Section 7,8).

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AD 1938	Built	Dickey Ridge Lodge in the North District is open to the public.
AD 1939	Built	Guardwalls in the Central and North Districts are completed prior to the dedication of the park (NHL 2008:25).
AD 1940	Built	The NPS builds a station at the North Entrance of Skyline Drive, of frame construction with cut stone facing (NHL 2008:29).
AD 1950	Rehabilitated	Skyline Drive from Front Royal to Thornton Gap is systematically repaved and sealed (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,51).
AD 1951	Built	Mileposts are installed along Skyline Drive (National Register 4/1997: Section 8,91).
AD 1952	Built	Overlooks are completed in the South District, marking the completion of Skyline Drive (NHL documentation 2008:6).
AD 1960 - 1966	Built	Mission 66 funds are used to construct a new entrance station at Front Royal.
AD 1983	Rehabilitated	The Federal Highway Administration begins a program to rehabilitate Skyline Drive. Base and drainage structures are replaced along the same vertical and horizontal road alignment and stone guardrails are also replaced (NHL 2008:31).
	Removed	Chestnut cribbing built in the 1930s is removed under the drive's 1983 rehabilitation program (HAER 1996:7-18).
AD 1992	Rehabilitated	During the summer, the North District is repaved (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,51).
AD 1992 - 1993	Built	The interchange at the Thornton Gap entrance is rebuilt for better traffic flow.
AD 1993	Built	Paved road widenings are added in the North District to allow motorists to pull off to read maps, etc. (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,63).
AD 2007	Rehabilitated	The NPS prepares environmental assessment for the rehabilitation of forty-nine overlooks along Skyline Drive.

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### **Physical History:**

#### 9000 BC TO 17TH CENTURY: NATIVE AMERICAN USE

This area of the Blue Ridge Mountains was known and used by Paleo-Indians for many centuries, with the first human habitation taking place about 11,000 years ago, sometime after the last ice age. The Paleo-Indians were hunters and gatherers who used the mountains for seasonal camps. With the development of farming in the valleys by 1000 AD, Native American use of the mountains focused on game hunting (Resource Management Plan 1998:23). The Monacan tribe settled in most of the Piedmont region and portions of the Blue Ridge Mountains while the Manahoac tribe inhabited the area east of the Blue Ridge Mountains and along the Rappahannock River (<http://indians.vipnet.org/tribes/monacan.cfm>).

#### 1669 TO 1923: EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

Dr. John Lederer, a German immigrant, was the first European to record exploration of this region of the Blue Ridge Mountains in 1669, describing the woods as wild and full of game. In 1716, Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, led an expedition across the Blue Ridge Mountains to encourage settlement and to extend the boundaries of the colony. The crossing place was probably Swift Run Gap or the Big Meadows area (Lambert 1989:32-33). The land Spotswood claimed was soon obtained by investors, but disputed ownership claims led to court cases that went unresolved well into the early nineteenth century (Historic Resources Study 1997:7-8).

Most of the first European settlers in the area were English immigrants, followed by a large number of Germans and Scotch-Irish by the mid-eighteenth century (Historic Resources Study 1997:9). Settlers moved from the Tidewater area to the Piedmont region, and from Pennsylvania to the Shenandoah Valley. Even before European settlement started here, local Native Americans were dying of introduced diseases, and by 1800 they had disappeared completely or moved away (Lambert 1989:21-22; Resource Management Plan 1998:23). As the better farming land was taken, new settlers moved into the mountain hollows where they developed a subsistence life reliant on hunting, farming, grazing, and timbering that led to extensive clearing of the land (Resource Management Plan 1998:23 cited in Skyland CLI).

In 1830, the first recreational use of the area occurred in what is now the South District of the park. A resort called Black Rock Springs Hotel touted seven mineral springs with curative powers. The resort became a popular regional tourist destination and maintained operation until 1909 when a fire destroyed most of the buildings (Historic Resources Study 1997:41-42). Industrial use also developed in some areas, such as the Mt. Vernon Iron Furnace and the Stony Man Mountain Tract, where copper was mined and charcoal produced for smelting occurred from 1845 to 1850 (Engle 1994:1).

By the mid-1850s, large farms developed in the region, typically cultivating tobacco for a few years, followed by corn crops and then left fallow to recover. Smaller scale farms also existed in the area and were mainly subsistence farms including small gardens with corn, rye and other vegetables, and small orchards. During the American Civil War, the Blue Ridge Mountains

witnessed only limited battle action, but they contained mountain gaps and roads that permitted passage of both Union and Confederate troops between the Shenandoah Valley and the Piedmont (NHL 2008:7). In the North District, Confederate troops used Signal Knob on the north end of Massanutton Mountain as a signal station (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,57).

After the Civil War, land uses included cattle grazing, and lumbering that provided material for rebuilding after the Civil War and for railroad expansion. Tanneries were another important industry, utilizing chestnut bark for the source of tannin in the leather making process (Historic Resources Study 1997:13-15). The chestnut blight that began in the United States around 1904 put an end to local reliance on the chestnut tree which at one time made up twenty percent of the Appalachian forest (<http://www.virginiaplaces.org/natural/chestnut.html>). Stands of dead chestnut trees covered areas of the future roadway during the early twentieth century.

In 1894, George Freeman Pollock built a popular resort in what is now the Central District, initially called Stony Man Camp and later renamed Skyland. It was a destination and summer residence for the middle and upper middle classes mostly from Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Philadelphia. Pollock was known as a showman who held theatrical events, such as bonfires, Indian “pow-wows,” and medieval jousts for guest entertainment (Lambert 1979:i and Uhler <http://www.shenandoah.national-park.com/info.htm>). Pollock strongly supported the establishment of a national park in the area and would play a key role in this effort (Historic Resources Study 1997:44).

#### 1924-1952: PARK DEVELOPMENT

##### Shenandoah National Park:

In 1924, Hubert Work, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, assembled a five-member Southern Appalachian National Park Committee (SANPC) to study the issues regarding establishing a national park in the region. Authorized by Congress, the Committee distributed a questionnaire to gain public input into suggested sites for a new national park (SHEN website, Historical Overview). Pollock filled out the questionnaire with the aid of several colleagues to promote the establishment of a park near Skyland. Pollock personally met with the members of the SANPC, and his enthusiasm and persuasive manner convinced the committee of the merits of his proposal (Historic Resource Study 1997:46).

In February 1925, Congress passed legislation allocating \$20,000 for survey and evaluation of proposed parks, including Shenandoah. It also stipulated that the Commonwealth of Virginia purchase the land and present it to the federal government for such a purpose (SHEN website, Historical Overview). It would take ten more years for the park lands to be acquired. Obstacles involved lawsuits resulting from land condemnation for the park, resettlement requirements for former residents, and funding (Historic Resources Study 1997:45). In April 1926, Virginia Governor Harry F. Byrd established the Commission on Conservation and Development, headed by William Carson, to take over management of funds collected for the park’s creation. On May 22, Congress authorized Shenandoah National Park (NP), but without funds for land purchases. Continued land owner resistance caused conflicts and court challenges, delaying the clearance of deeds (NHL Documentation 2008:6 and SHEN website, Historical Overview).

In 1927, Pollock helped organize the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) in Washington D.C. in order to develop and maintain the Appalachian Trail in the mid-Atlantic Region. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy had been formed two years earlier by Benton MacKaye, a forester for the U.S. Division of Forestry (a forerunner of the Forest Service), with the aim of establishing a continuous recreational route along the mountain crests of eastern United States. One of Pollock's underlying goals in forming the PATC was to further promote the establishment of Shenandoah NP (NHL 2008:30). Members of the PATC constructed a trail on weekend visits during the next four years, with some of the trail traversing property that was later developed for Skyline Drive.

By 1929, William Carson successfully promoted the merits of the Blue Ridge Mountains to President Herbert Hoover, who went on to build a fishing camp and retreat on a 164-acre site along the Upper Rapidan River on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge, near the future Central District of the drive. After losing his bid for re-election, Hoover donated Rapidan Camp to the federal government and the site later became part of Shenandoah NP.

Construction of Skyline Drive:

In 1930, a severe drought hit the Piedmont region of Virginia, drastically reducing the agricultural livelihood of many farmers and farm workers (SHEN website, Skyline Drive History). Coinciding with the drought disaster were the effects of the Great Depression caused by the stock market crash of October 1929. As the economy remained bleak, it became more imperative to bring jobs to the area. Virginia's William Carson promoted a plan to both create jobs and make the Shenandoah area more accessible by building a road. As described in the report of the SANPC dated June 30, 1931: "the greatest single feature, however, is a possible skyline drive along the mountaintop, following a continuous ridge and looking down westerly on the Shenandoah Valley...and commanding a view [to the east] of the Piedmont Plain...Few scenic drives in the world could surpass it (Engle 1999:15)." That same year, President Hoover authorized drought relief funds to finance the work of building Skyline Drive, provided that much of the labor be accomplished by locals using traditional hand tools and farm implements (HAER 1996:1).

The National Park Service (NPS) prepared a map showing the proposed route of the new roadway and it was sent to Hoover for review (Figure 1). The designers selected the location of the road and developed numerous overlooks based on scenic vistas of the ridge and the valley. The road was envisioned as a scenic drive on the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. It was to be the backbone of a national park and become an essential link in the park-to-park highway envisioned in the eastern United States to connect the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains parks. The restoration of woodlands from former clearings, fields, and pasture to a natural mixed hardwood forest also figured prominently in the design of the road (National Register 4/1997: Section 8,112). The President agreed with what was proposed, but did suggest that a proposed park entrance road be located further away from Rapidan Camp (Engle 2006:31-32). The suggested spur road to Rapidan Camp was abandoned and the drive was expanded southward to Swift Run Gap.

Construction of the major roads in national parks at this time was carried out cooperatively by an interbureau agreement between the NPS and the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), which combined the expertise of BPR's civil engineers with NPS standards for protection of natural scenery in parks. NPS staff selected the route of Skyline Drive and located the scenic overlooks and recreational waysides. BPR personnel oversaw the surveying, awarding of contracts, and actual construction. BPR crews surveyed the route with a transit and established stations at 100-foot intervals, marking them with a stake or flag. Stations were used to locate overlooks, culverts, beginning and ending of curves and spirals, and other engineering features. Road builders were required to fit the roadway into the surveyed route, and the grade was not to exceed eight percent or the curves to have radii less than 200 feet.

Following the completion of flagging the 100-foot right-of-way, the roadbed was graded concurrently with the construction of drainage structures. Culverts, tile underdrains, and gutters were constructed prior to fills and following cuts (NHL 2008:16). It was necessary to build structures to either carry surface water from one side of the drive to the other, such as a culvert, or structures that diverted surface run-off into a culvert using drop inlets (Figure 2). Six culvert inlet subtypes were built. The headwall type is one of the two parent types and has two subtypes, the straight headwall and ell (or "L") headwall. The other, and more prevalent type, is the drop inlet type with four subtypes: double, parallel walls with inlets on both ends; headwall with semicircular back wall, with inlets on either or both ends; metal grate inlet; and straight-lipped cap (composed of concrete) inlet with gutter pan. Excluding the metal grate and straight-lipped cap types, all systems were constructed of coursed, mortared stone. The drop basins of the grate and cap types were also built of coursed, mortared stone. The headwall types carried streams and small watercourses beneath the drive and exited on the downhill side. Generally, culvert outlets consisted of the masonry straight headwall type. Pipes typically used between the walls and drop basins/inlets were corrugated metal pipes, ranging from eighteen inches, twenty-four inches, to thirty-six inches in diameter. Walls varied in length, width, and depth depending on the size of the pipes and the hydraulic flows of the surrounding drainage area; they generally measured seven to ten feet in length, twenty to twenty-two inches in width, and eighteen to twenty-four inches in height. Rock-paved gutters and underdrains supplemented the drainage system.

Cut and fill operations were thoughtfully planned and executed to balance each other in order to maintain a naturalistic landscape setting (Figure 3). Generally, side-hill cuts were employed, where a bench or shelf was cut into the side of the mountain. Controlled blasting with explosives was used to remove bedrock in the right-of-way. In some areas, chestnut log cribbing was used to support the fill (NHL 2008:15). Fills were also used extensively at overlooks to provide an adequate base to construct parking areas and guardwalls. After grading operations, the roadway was prepared for paving. Typically, the traffic bound base course was laid first, consisting of a macadam surface, with crushed stone from one inch to 1 ½ inches, placed and compacted to a thickness of six inches. A second course of smaller crushed rock, one inch and smaller, was laid and compacted by vehicular traffic. The macadamized roadbed was then treated with a bituminous road mix that formed an asphalt surfacing. The parking lots for the overlooks were similarly paved.

Construction of the road occurred in three phases starting with Central District, then North District followed by South District (NHL 2008:8). Project One was Central District, from Thornton Gap to Swift Run Gap. Central District was constructed first because this section was located between U.S. Route 211 (at Thornton Gap) and the recently completed U.S. Route 33 (at Swift Run Gap), which would provide immediate access to the drive. Project Two, or the second section phase of the construction, comprised the North District, from Front Royal to Thornton Gap. Project Three comprised the South District, from Swift Run Gap to Jarman Gap (NHL 2008:6,16).

Skyline Drive–North District:

The North District was constructed as projects 2-A-B-C. Section 2-A-1 ran from Front Royal to Compton Gap. Section 2-B-1 extended from Compton Gap to Hogback Mountain, and Section 2-C-1 ran from Hogback Mountain to Thornton Gap. The northern section was less rugged than other areas of the drive, which allowed for sufficient time for survey work and incorporation of NPS design conventions into the final design (NHL 2008:18). The road width in this area was increased from thirty to thirty-four feet, allowing a twenty-foot pavement and a five-foot shoulder between the road and the guardwall (NHL 2008:18, citing Benson in “The Skyline Drive”).

As the survey work was underway, construction drawings were also being prepared. After their completion, construction contract bids for grading, drainage, and stone surfacing were advertised in the summer of 1934. The Waugh Brothers were awarded the contract to construct Section 2-A, comprising 9.76 miles of roadway. Construction began in the summer and was completed by late July or early August 1935. Sammons-Robertson Company was contracted to construct the 10.4-mile stretch of Section 2-B in June 1934. Clearing and grubbing operations began in July, and the section was graded in October 1935. The contract for 2-C was awarded to Albert Brothers for Section 2-C, consisting of 10.32 miles, in July 1934. Clearing operations began in mid-August, and the grading was completed in September 1935. In addition, the Corson and Gruman Company was awarded the contract in 1935 to place a road-mix bituminous surface course from Front Royal to Thornton Gap. Work on the asphalt surfacing for the whole district began mid-summer in 1935 and completed the following summer in 1936 (NHL 2008:19).

Slopes along the drive were stabilized by drylaid rubble retaining walls or hand laid rock embankments (Figure 4). Typically, hand laid rock embankments were dry laid, and most toe walls were set in mortar (Engle 2006:71). After a slope face was thoroughly compacted and adequate footing prepared at the base, stone rubble taken from adjacent roadway excavations was hand-placed without mortar up the embankment. These hand-laid rock embankments reduced excavation quantities, minimized unsightly landscape scars, and protected newly planted vegetation (HAER 1996:7-18). In the North District, workers constructed an embankment at Mile 1.5 which extended 186 feet and tapered into the hillsides (LCS Documentation 1997). In addition, a hand-laid rock embankment was also constructed at the north end of Indian Run Overlook at Mile 10.8 and continued northward for .2 miles (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,58). Another embankment was built at the southern end of Hogback

Overlook at Mile 21 and extended for approximately .1 mile.

Both the NPS and BPR saw the need for guardrails and guardwalls along the drive, but the design and materials were debated, such as the use of masonry or wood from dead chestnut trees that were prevalent at the park. Initially, temporary boulders and logs were installed along precipitous edges (Engle 2006:93). Typical guardwalls constructed in the North District consisted of dry-laid stone, quarried from within the park, with the top course set in mortar and deeply raked (NHL 2008:12). The walls had vertical faces on both sides. The construction of the guardwalls followed methods familiar to the region's farmers and conveyed a strong association with the park's cultural origins (NHL 2008:12). After much of the Central District was completed, discussions arose among the NPS landscape architects and the architects within the Eastern Division of Plans and Design as to the appropriate locations of stone and wood guardwalls in order to provide variety and harmony with the surroundings. It was decided that log rails would more readily blend in with the landscape along the drive adjacent to open fields, providing more open views (Figure 5). Stone guardwalls were deemed more suitable along steeper locations (Figure 6) (Engle, <http://www.nps.gov/archive/shen/3b2a1.htm>).

#### The New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps:

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated as President of the United States. In March, one of his first presidential acts was to freeze all federal funding. Not until he visited the area in April did he release funding, and construction of Skyline Drive resumed (National Register 4/1997:Section 7,7). As part of his New Deal legislation, Roosevelt initially established the Public Works Administration (PWA) as the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works under the authority of the National Industrial Recovery Act, and later became a part of the Federal Works Agency. The PWA was involved with a comprehensive program for federal and nonfederal public works projects. The program's objectives were to reduce unemployment, increase consumers' purchasing power, improve standards of labor, and conserve natural resources. The organization supplied funding and hired inspectors to ensure that projects were being constructed according to plans and specifications. At Skyline Drive, the PWA provided skilled labor for the construction of guardwalls, retaining walls, and terraced areas for the North and South Districts of the drive.

Roosevelt also established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), created to help relieve high unemployment and carry out a broad program of natural resource conservation on federal, state, and municipal lands. Six CCC camps were set up in Shenandoah. The CCC laborers undertook a wide range of projects including erosion control, removal of dead chestnut trees, planting trees and shrubs, the construction of trails, shelters, and picnic areas with drinking fountains, tables, and fireplaces (SHEN website, Historical Overview). The CCC also established a nursery to propagate native vegetation for use in stabilizing cut and fill slopes and blending them into their surroundings as well as reducing soil erosion. The nursery stock included Virginia creeper, trumpet creeper, bittersweet, arrow-wood viburnum, rhododendrons, dogwoods, and sumac as well as pitch pine, red spruce, fir, and walnut trees (Engle, "Wilderness by Design?," SHEN website). The CCC planted thousands of trees along the drive, which in time created "green tunnels" in the summer by forming natural arbors over the road. The resulting densely shaded areas provided a dramatic visual contrast to the open

highland vistas at other points on the drive (Figure 7) (HAER 1996:13-18). In addition to planting newly cultivated plants, existing native trees and shrubs were salvaged from road clearing sites and transplanted to other areas along the drive (Figure 8). Mature trees were also preserved through the construction of tree wells, typically built of dry rubble masonry (Figure 9). The CCC was also responsible for the construction of guardwalls and retaining walls only in the Central District, as the PWA took over these projects in the North and South Districts (National Register 4/1997:Section 8,100).

A number of scenic overlooks were constructed in the North District, which offered visitors the opportunity to stop and enjoy the views without the distraction of driving (Figure 10). In the rush to build the roadway, the Thornton Gap to Swift Run Gap section of Skyline Drive had been built without consideration of overlooks and parking areas; these were designed after the fact, based on established visitor use patterns (Engle 2006:89). For the remaining roadway work, views and vistas were incorporated into the analysis and design prior to construction. Overlooks varied from simple road widenings with parallel parking, to more defined areas with walls, sidewalks, and curbing, and were screened from the road with planting islands. In general, only parking overlooks on Skyline Drive required construction drawings (Figures 11-12). Overlooks in the North District were designed by NPS landscape architects from Eastern Division of the Branch of Plans and Design and built under the construction contracts for the drive (NHL 2008:13). Typically, landscape architects prepared the drawings, including featured design details, and supervised the construction (NHL 2008:26-27). Overlooks in the North District tended to reflect more simple and utilitarian designs, such as No Name Overlook at Mile 5.3, which consisted of a straight forward road widening with a guardwall. More elaborate overlooks featured planted islands to separate parking from the viewing area, as well as drinking fountains and seating areas, and connecting paths to hiking trails. Range View Overlook at Mile 17.1 consisted of pull-in parking screened from the road by a planted island and offered a view extending fourteen miles down the Blue Ridge past Pignut Mountain (HAER 1996:12-18). Other overlooks were constructed around natural features, such as Hogback Overlook at Mile 21, the longest overlook on the drive, which wrapped around a rugged rock outcropping. The resulting design was an expansive, arc-shaped road that provided a sweeping view over the Shenandoah Valley, from west to east (HAER 1996:12-18). As the drive gained widespread popularity during its initial opening, overlooks and parking areas were designed to be expandable. As the surge of visitation leveled off, the size of these spaces decreased (Engle 2006:91). In addition to No Name, Hogback, and Range View, seventeen other overlooks were constructed in the North District, including: Shenandoah Valley Overlook, Signal Knob Overlook, Gooney Run Overlook, Gooney Manor Overlook, Indian Run Overlook, Jenkins Gap Overlook, Hogwallow Flats Overlook, Browntown Overlook, Gimlet Ridge Overlook, Mount Marshall Overlook, Little Hogback Overlook, Little Devil Stairs Overlook, Rattlesnake Point Overlook, Jeremys Run Overlook, Thornton Hollow Overlook, Beahms Gap Overlook, and Pass Mountain Overlook.

In 1936, the NPS realized that stone gutters needed to be constructed to replace earth ditches located adjacent to the uphill side of the drive to catch the overland flow of rainfall (Engle 2006:99). Some ditches that were in areas with adjacent springs, or downhill of swales, were deeply eroded and threatened to destabilize the roadway. Resident NPS Landscape Architect

Harvey Benson designed a two and a half-foot wide stone gutter with a circular center. The BPR revised his design with a narrower gutter width and a more sloping center. The resulting design was naturalistic, so as not to appear overly engineered. The CCC built the gutters in the North District based on the revised detail (Figure 13). The stones were set on a bed of crushed stone and gravel and only mortared in place. On October 1, 1936, the North District was opened for traffic (Figure 14).

As construction of Skyline Drive continued, it became apparent that portions of the recently constructed Appalachian Trail (AT) conflicted with the proposed road alignment and would have to be relocated. By relocating the trail lower down the mountain slopes, hikers were able to enjoy panoramic views of the region (Schmeckebier 1937:79). In the North District, the CCC relocated and reconstructed portions of the AT from Chester to Thornton Gap (AT-North District CLI 2007:32). By 1940, ninety-six miles of the Appalachian Trail in Shenandoah NP were rerouted and ultimately crossed Skyline Drive fifteen times, including south of Hogback Overlook, Mile 21.9 at Rattlesnake Point, Mile 24 at Elkswallow, and Mile 28.5 at Beahms Gap.

The NPS also built a permanent station at the North Entrance in 1940, replacing a temporary structure installed in the early 1930s. The new building consisted of wood frame construction with cut stone facing and featured a gabled roof spanning two inbound lanes, supported at the ends by stone faced columns, and a small octagonal office (NHL 2008:29).

#### World War II and Post-War Development:

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States entered World War II, ending most development in the park until after the war. As the country directed all its manpower toward the war effort, the CCC camps were closed by the end of March 1942 (Engle 1999:30). The park's workforce at this time shrank to 1/20th of its size (Lambert 2001:263). Some former CCC foremen and technicians remained at the park for a short time to help close down operations. Visitation at the park drastically declined with most resources, including fuel, directed to the war effort. By 1942, when construction stopped because of the war, approximately 1,113 culverts had been constructed along the route from Front Royal to Rockfish Gap.

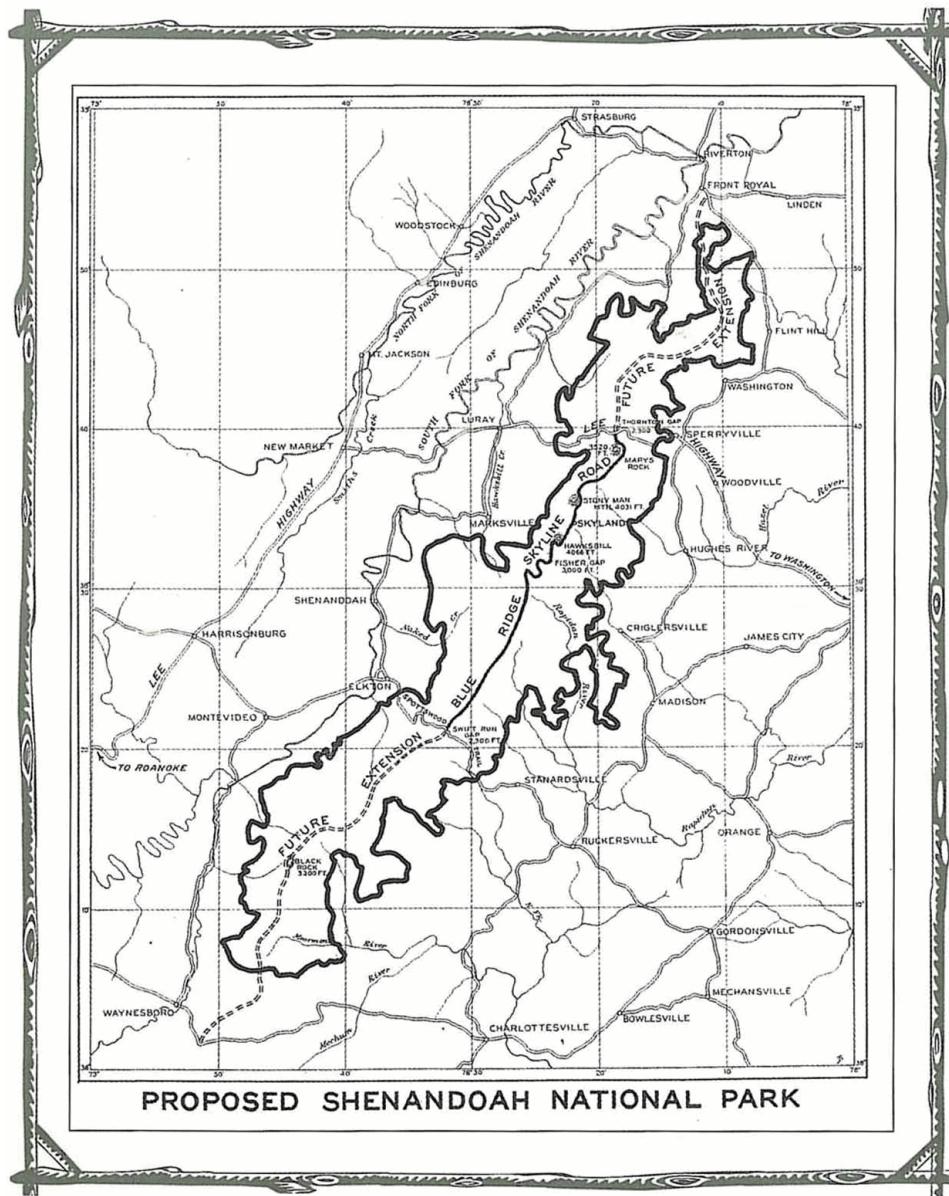
By August of 1942, the Civilian Public Service (CPS) established a camp for conscientious objectors in Shenandoah NP, at former CCC camp NP-10. The CPS provided work for men unwilling to serve in the military based on religious upbringing or belief. At Shenandoah, the CPS took over fire and erosion control projects previously done by the CCC, continued the revegetation efforts, installed utilities, and built trails, roads, and park structures. They were also assigned to raze pre-park structures. CPS workers did not receive wages and were financially supported by their churches or families.

Other activity in the park during the war involved the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who established a training camp and constructed roads and bridges, and assembled water lines and machine gun nests in the park in preparation for the Italian campaign. Other federal agencies made use of the park for a variety of other purposes ranging from class work in geodetic control activities to mapping. In April 1944, for instance, over 3,000 men entered the park for a

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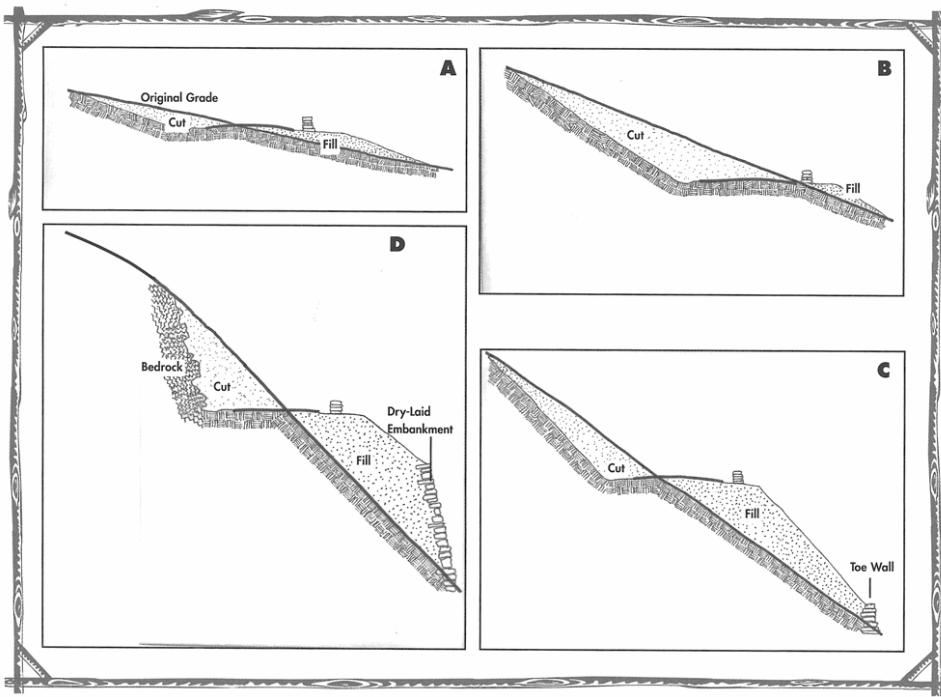
variety of defense-related training, using an abandoned CCC Camp facility (Lambert 1979:296 cited in Historic Resource Study 1997:115). By 1952, the construction of guardwalls along the drive were completed along with the installation of concrete mile markers.



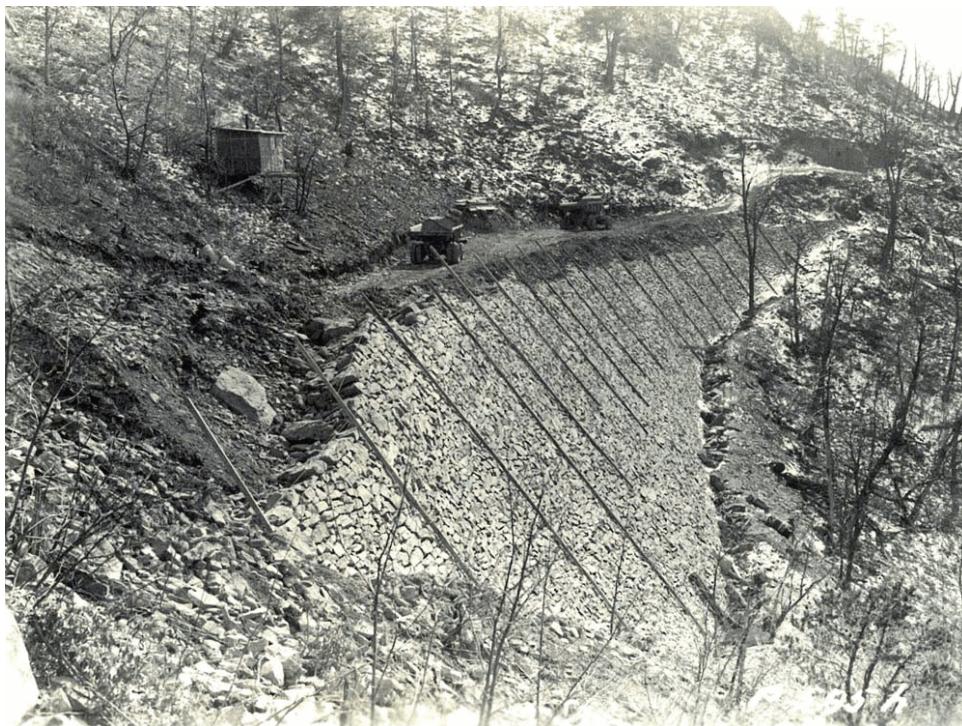
*Figure 1. Map of proposed Shenandoah National Park issued by the Department of the Interior in 1931. The plan illustrates the proposed North District portion of Skyline Drive from Front Royal to Thornton Gap as a dotted line (Engle 2006:34).*



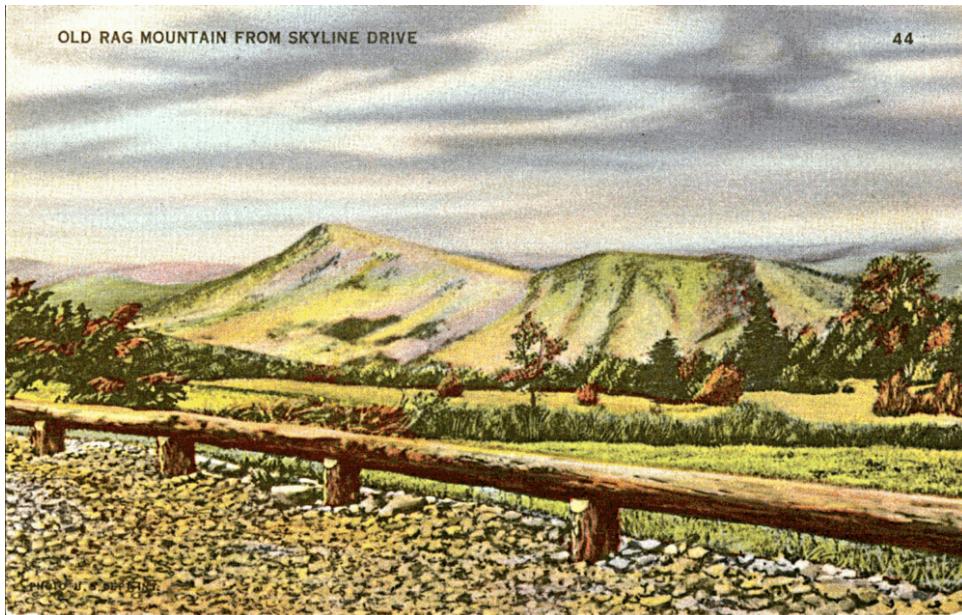
*Figure 2. View of drop inlet constructed at uphill cut slope along Skyline Drive in the early 1930s (Engle 2006:102).*



*Figure 3. Illustrations of four cut and fill solutions developed for different gradients at Shenandoah National Park (Engle, 2006:68).*



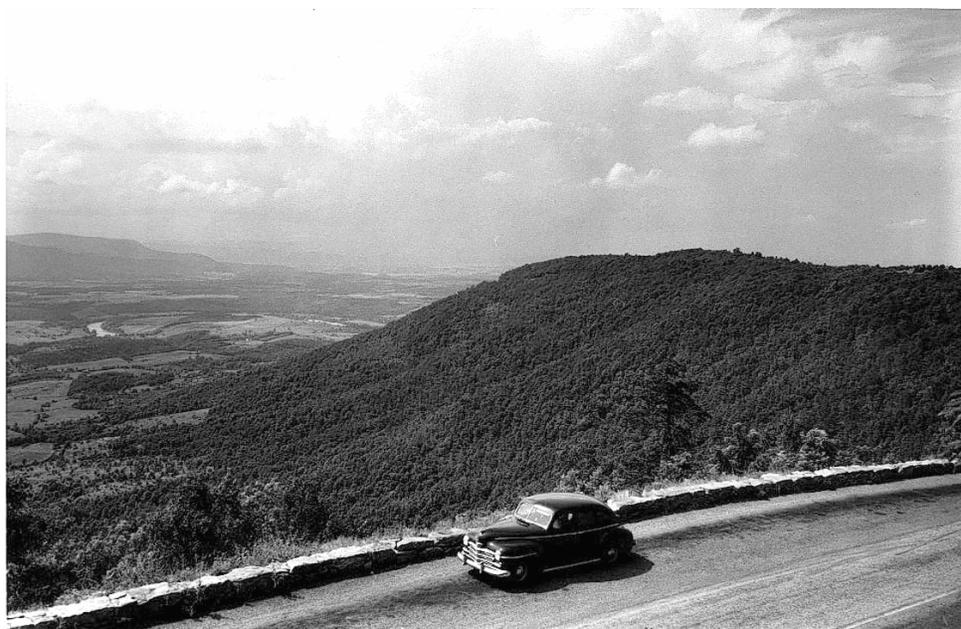
*Figure 4. View of typical hand-laid rock embankment along Skyline Drive, date unknown (Engle, 2006:69).*



*Figure 5. Postcard from the 1930s showing log rail along Skyline Drive (SHEN website, image 20060807105359).*

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*Figure 6. View of stone guardrail installed along a steep section of Skyline Drive, early 1930s (SHEN website, image 20061013091504).*



*Figure 7. View of Skyline Drive showing the changing character of the drive from open to more closed in by adjacent vegetation (SHEN website, image 20061013101144).*



Figure 8. View of the CCC transplanting an existing pine tree to a more developed area on Skyline Drive, early 1930s (SHEN website, image 2006113013225).

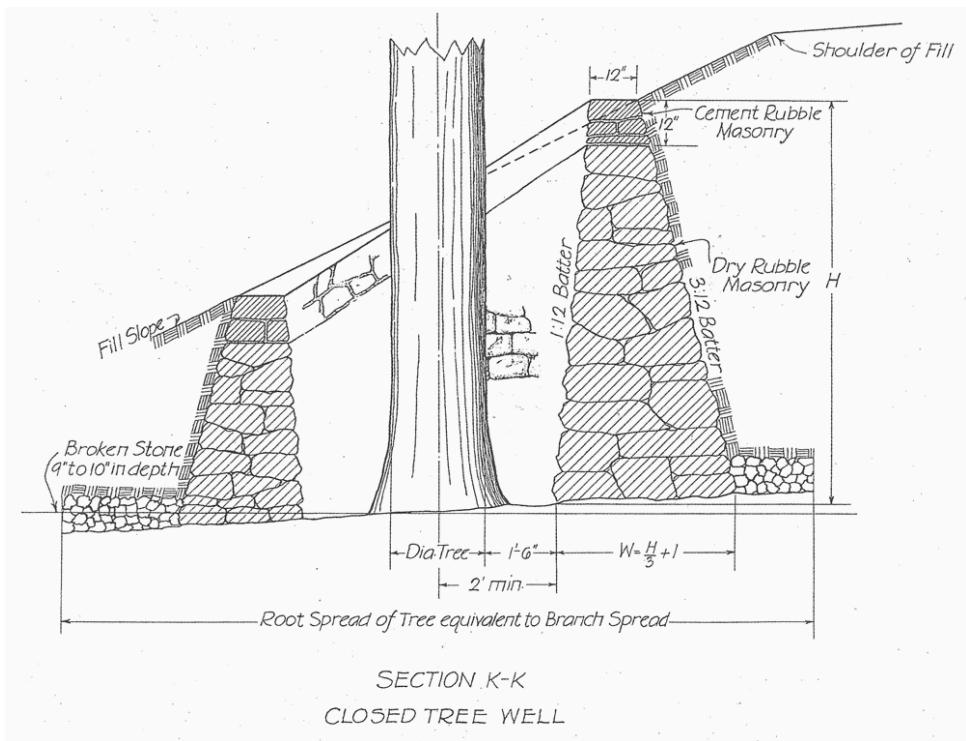


Figure 9. Architectural detail for stone tree wells for preserving existing trees along Skyline Drive (Engle 2006:112).

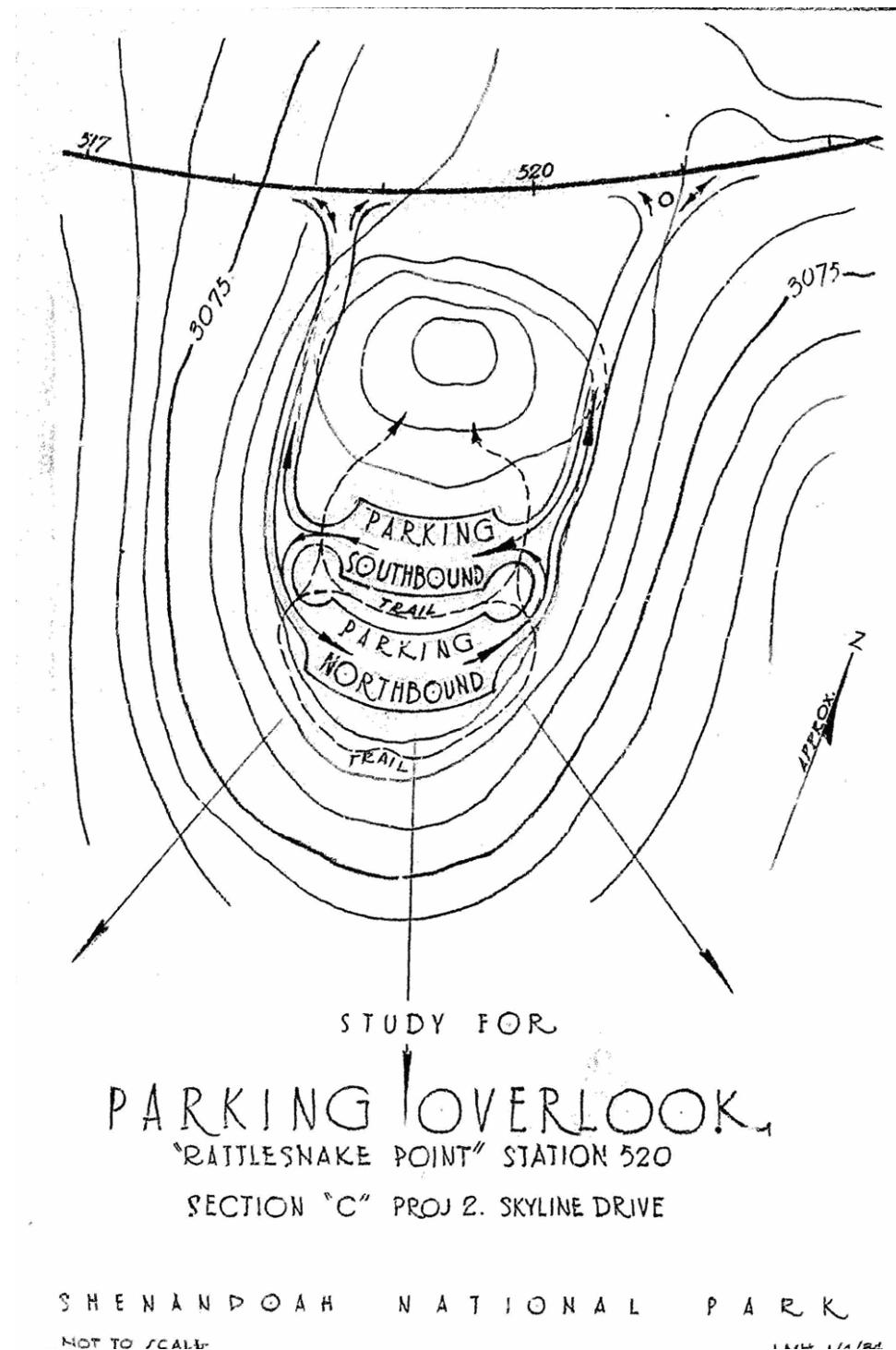


Figure 10. Plan of Rattlesnake Overlook in the North District, 1934 (Denver Service Center, 134-1027-id176378).

## Skyline Drive - North District Shenandoah National Park

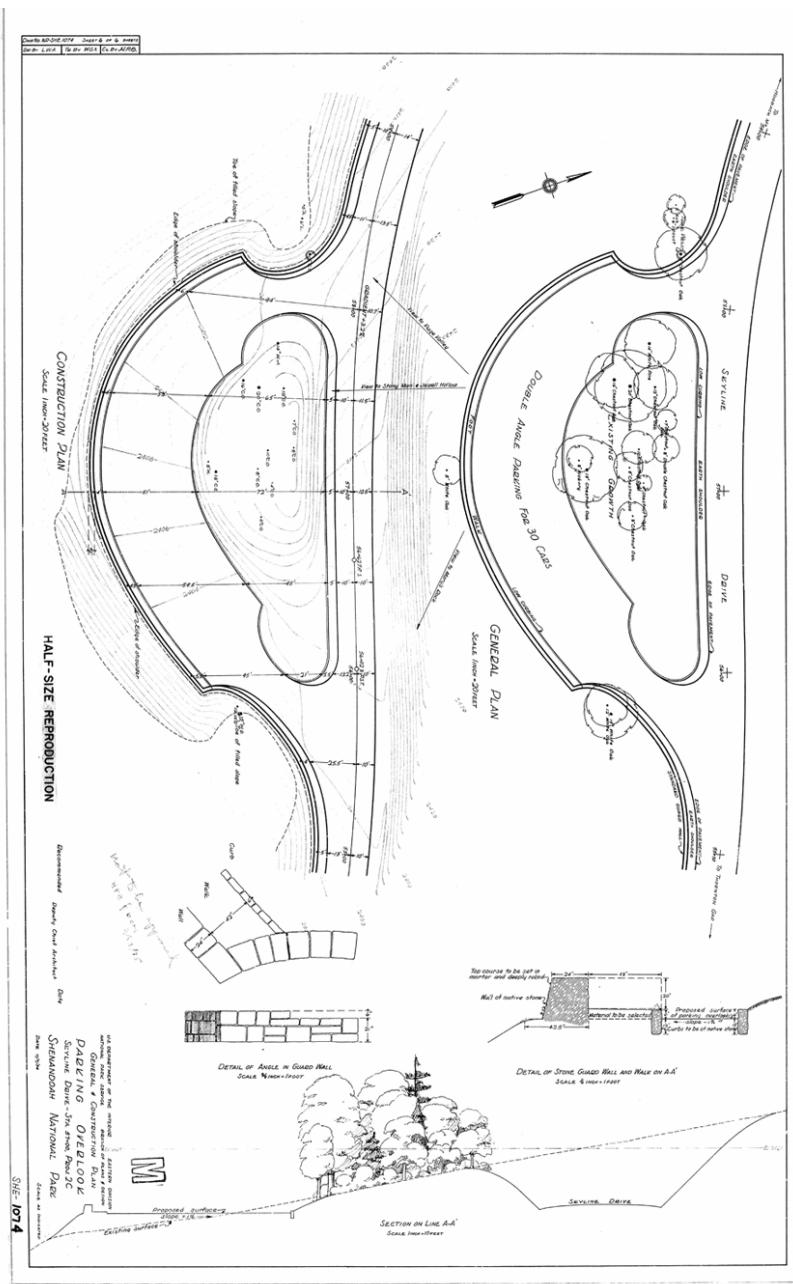


Figure 11. Plan for parking overlook in the North District in 1934, including the incorporation of existing vegetation and the use of a tree well (Denver Service Center, 134-1074-id76379).

Skyline Drive - North District  
Shenandoah National Park

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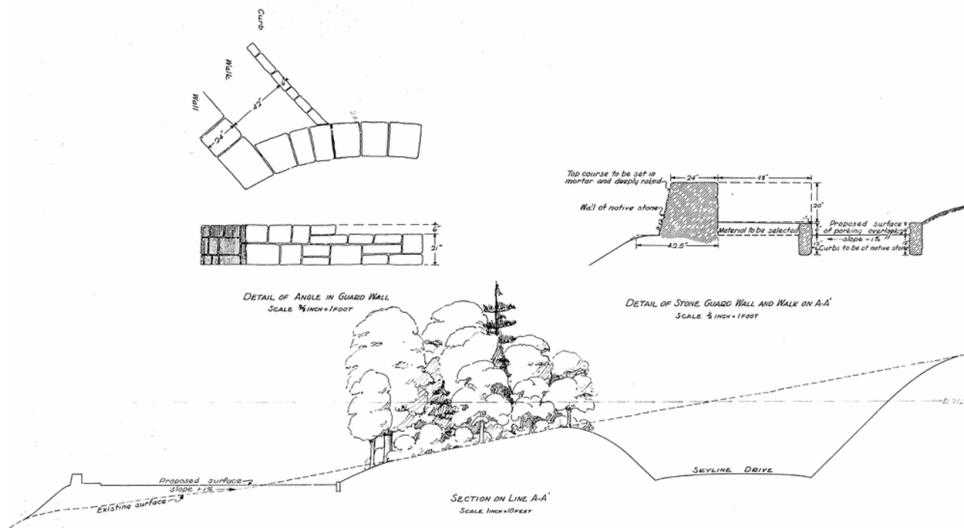


Figure 12. Detail and section of parking overlook and stone guardwall in the North District, 1934 (Denver Service Center, 134-1074-id76379).



Figure 13. CCC workers installing stone gutters in the Central District of Skyline Drive, circa 1937 (Engle 2006:101).



*Figure 14. View of North Entrance to Skyline Drive, 1930s. Note the wood entrance station with shingled roof and park signage to the left (SHEN website image 20060707075101).*

#### 1953 – PRESENT: LATER DEVELOPMENT

In the mid-1950s, the NPS was planning “Mission-66,” an ambitious ten-year development program designed to upgrade the national parks to modern standards to accommodate increased visitation after World War II. The goal was to develop and adequately staff NPS facilities by 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the agency (Lambert 1979:314). The NPS gained Congressional funding for the work in 1956. New facilities were designed in a contemporary modern style, contrasting with the rustic aesthetic that had been employed at Shenandoah and other national parks. Overall, the impact of Mission 66 on Skyline Drive was minimal. New entrance stations were also constructed at the Front Royal, Thornton Gap, and Swift Run Gap locations in the 1960s and 1970s. Interchanges with grade separations that had been proposed in the late 1930s were constructed in the 1960s to facilitate the movement of traffic in and out of the park at Thornton and Swift Run Gaps (NHL 2008:84). Several gravel parking areas were also built along Skyline Drive in the 1950s to accommodate day hikers and backpackers. In addition, the wooden guardrails were removed, but some have recently been replaced.

In 1983, the Federal Highway Administration initiated a program to rehabilitate Skyline Drive (NHL 2008:31). Base and drainage structures were replaced along the same vertical and horizontal road alignment and stone guardrails were also replaced (NHL 2008:31). Chestnut cribbing built in the 1930s was also removed under the rehabilitation program (HAER

1996:7-18). In addition, the work also included the replacement of unsafe original guardwalls and failed culverts. The Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP) replaced guardwalls with new structures constructed of a concrete core faced with native stone cut from the boulders that made up the historic walls and laid in a repeating pattern of random stonemasonry. They were designed to blend into the rustic surroundings while adhering to current standards for highway safety.

In the early 1990s, several new trailhead parking areas were constructed along with paved road widenings in the North District. These new road widenings provided motorists opportunities to safely pull off the drive to read maps, etc. (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,63). In 1997, the park initiated a five-year program to restore the vistas along the drive by removing or pruning vegetation (HAER 1996:Changing Nature). In addition, as a cost saving measure, the water supply for the drinking fountains at the overlooks was turned off, and most of the spigots were removed.

In 2007, the NPS prepared an environmental assessment for the potential rehabilitation of forty-nine overlooks along the drive. Proposed improvements to the overlooks intended to address the deterioration of historic stone guardwalls, retaining walls, and parking areas as well as the non-historic modifications that had occurred including the removal of wood guardrails and gravel walkways. The environmental assessment identified Alternative B, rehabilitation with preservation and rehabilitation of historic features, as the environmentally preferred alternative. Some wood guardrails have been reinstalled and the park is currently in the process of restoring the overlooks, including Pass Mountain Overlook, Gooney Manor Overlook, Little Hogback Overlook, and Jeremy's Run Overlook.

## Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

### **Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:**

Significant landscape characteristics identified for Skyline Drive–North District include natural systems, land use, topography, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, and small-scale features. Many of these characteristics have associated with them features that contribute to the site's overall historic significance and identity, as well as features that do not contribute or are undetermined.

The physical integrity of Skyline Drive–North District is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1931-1952) with current conditions. Many of the drive's historic characteristics and features are unchanged. The historic design is evident in the circulation layout, building materials, vegetation, and Rustic Design style of the remaining guardwalls, retaining walls, drainage structures, and fountains, reflecting the planning, landscape design, and architectural style that was implemented in the 1930s and 1940s by the National Park Service (NPS) and Bureau of Public Roads (BPR). The road, overlooks, and parking areas remain much as they did during the period of significance. Historic small scale features include elements such as guardrails, signage, water fountains, stone walls, tree wells, and planting islands.

Changes since the 1952 on Skyline Drive–North District include the construction of additional gravel parking areas to accommodate day hikers, and removal of wooden guardrails, though some have recently been reinstalled. A new entrance station has been constructed at Front Royal and more fire roads have been added. Other changes include the removal of deteriorated chestnut cribbing, guardwalls, and failed culverts in the 1980s as part of a rehabilitation program. Many of the original stone guardwalls have been replaced with a new design that reflects current safety standards, consisting of concrete core structures with native stone veneer salvaged from the old walls. This work, along with restoration of views and vistas at overlooks, is ongoing. Interpretive and directional signage has also been replaced since the period of significance. The overall impacts of these changes on the Skyline Drive landscape have been minimal and do not detract from the historic setting.

### INTEGRITY

#### Location:

The location of Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park (NP) remains unchanged overall. The overlooks constructed during the period of significance are extant. A grade separation was constructed at Thornton Gap and a new overlook was added. These alterations do not diminish the overall integrity of location. The drive continues to make the park's diverse landscapes and scenic views and vistas, as well as recreation opportunities, accessible to the public.

#### Design:

The combination of elements that characterize the built features associated with Skyline Drive is recognized as the Rustic Design style. This design theme was applied by BPR engineers and NPS landscape architects and implemented by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers. The

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winding and gently curving roadway highlighted panoramic views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the Piedmont to the east. The road was aligned to conform with the topography whenever possible and blended into the landscape with plantings of adjacent trees, shrubs, and groundcover. Associated structures, including drainage culverts and guardwalls, were constructed of native stone in order to harmonize with their surroundings. Some historic features, such as the log guardrails, have been removed, and many stone guardwalls were rebuilt with updated contemporary designs that meet established safety standards. Although these alterations have changed the character in some areas of the drive, the overall design intent from the period of significance remains.

**Setting:**

Skyline Drive and its associated features were carefully integrated with the surrounding landscape through the planting of native vegetation, the placement of overlooks to take advantage of views and provide access to trails, and the use of native stone and wood in the construction of structures and small scale features. The overall integrity of setting is intact.

**Materials:**

Consistent with the tenets of the Rustic Design style promoted by the NPS, features such as guardwalls, railings, retaining walls, signage, and fountains were built of local materials, including stone and wood. The drive itself was paved with a base underlayer consisting of local stones salvaged from cut areas. Stone was also quarried at three sites within the park which was crushed and used for paving. Steep embankments along the drive were also stabilized using dry-rubble construction with local materials. The CCC cultivated native vegetation, including mountain laurel, rhododendrons, dogwoods, spruce, pine, and walnut trees, and installed massings of plants along the drive and in islands to separate overlooks from the road. Although some features have been removed and replaced with more contemporary materials, many of the original materials used during the period of significance are evident today.

**Workmanship:**

Workmanship refers to the physical evidence of the construction techniques utilized for Skyline Drive and its associated features. Distinguishing characteristics include the curvilinear road alignment, the flattening of cut and fill slopes, the planting of native trees and shrubs to blend the road with the surrounding topography, and the picturesque parking overlooks. The stone guardwalls, retaining walls, drainage structures, fountains, and other small scale features constructed at the overlooks reflect the typical methods utilized to harmonize with the surrounding environment, using native stone and chestnut wood.

**Feeling:**

Skyline Drive continues to serve as the main roadway through Shenandoah National Park, providing views and vistas through a series of overlooks as well as providing access to trails and off-road amenities and attractions. The design, materials, workmanship, and setting of Skyline Drive continue to convey a feeling of a historic drive in a national park.

**Association:**

The overall road alignment, circulation, drainage features, and small scale features are still present to directly link the site to the creation of Shenandoah National Park and the work of the BPR, the NPS, and the CCC during the period of significance.

The following section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding to the List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1931-1952), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource.

#### **Landscape Characteristic:**

##### **Natural Systems and Features**

###### **Historic and Existing Conditions:**

Skyline Drive traverses a landscape formed by several different geological forces. The land is supported by a granite base that was uplifted by hydrostatic rebound, and the overlaying strata were eventually eroded to expose the granite in jagged hills with deep valleys (NHL 2008:9). Three major rock formations underpin Skyline Drive, including Catoctin formations containing metamorphosed lava or greenstone that form peaks and upper plateaus. The Chilhowee Group comprises metamorphosed sedimentary rocks of sandstone, shale, and conglomerates that form many of the sharp peaks and ridges along the western side of the Blue Ridge and dominate the park's lower elevations (HAER 1996:2).

There are several outcroppings that were integrated into the design of overlooks along the drive, including two in the North District. At Mile 21, Hogback Overlook was constructed to provide a viewing area and access to a nearby rock outcropping of granodiorite of the Pedlar formation, an igneous rock formation similar to granite. Across the road from Indian Run Overlook at Mile 10.8 is an outcropping of the oldest lava flow of the Catoctin formation which displays a range of colors from gray, tan, and rusty rose to gray-green shades (Figure 15).

A century of tree cutting for lumber, tanbark, and firewood considerably reduced the previously dense mountain forest. Although a few patches of old-growth forest existed when Shenandoah NP was established in 1926, as much as a third of the parkland along Skyline Drive, was pasture. Wildfires ravaged the park during its early years up to 1941. Historic panoramic photographs and detailed vegetation maps produced for the park's fire control program and master plans frequently revealed mountainsides dotted with small, open farmsteads and grazing lands, burned-over areas, or vast skeleton forests of dead American chestnut trees, the region's most dominant tree (HAER 1996:18). Today, Skyline Drive – North District is within a mature second-growth forest ecosystem that extends throughout much of the park.

#### **Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Outcropping at Hogback Overlook

Feature Identification Number: 145121

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Outcropping Across from Indian Run Overlook

Feature Identification Number: 145123

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



Figure 15. View of rock outcropping across from Indian Run Overlook at Mile 10.8 (OCLP, 2010).

**Land Use**

Historic Condition (through 1952):

When the park and drive were first developed, the land showed the effects of generations of farming, grazing, and lumbering. In addition, hundreds of structures associated with the residents of the park stood as reminders of their owners' former presence.

The area had a long history of use and occupation, first by native peoples and later by Europeans. Although the first written documentation of Europeans in the area dates to 1669, a century later settlement in the mountains was minimal and major growth in the area occurred only in the nineteenth century. In terms of land use, after 1830 many lower, more fertile, areas of the park land were used to graze cattle. The unofficial "tenants" of these areas, in addition to caring for the cattle, had homesteads and raised a variety of crops and fruit trees. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century, an assortment of small local industries occurred in the area, including gristmills and tanneries. In addition, larger tanneries and industrial activities such as lumbering and mining operated within the park area in the nineteenth century. By the turn of the century, the detrimental environmental effects of the industrial activities, the loss to nearby

towns of services and industries upon which residents relied, and growing population combined to strain life on the ridge (Historic Resources Study).

Early recreational use in the area began in 1830 with the development of Black Springs Hotel and in 1894 with the construction of Stony Man Camp. In 1924, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior assembled the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee (SANPC) to study the issues regarding establishing a national park in the region. Authorized by Congress, the Committee distributed a questionnaire to gain public input into suggested sites for a new national park. In 1926, Congress authorized Shenandoah National Park to provide a large, western-type park accessible from the urban centers of the East Coast, but without funds. The following year, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) in Washington D.C. was established in order to develop and maintain the Appalachian Trail in the mid-Atlantic Region. The developed portions of the park centered on the 105.5-mile Skyline Drive, including campgrounds, picnic facilities, visitor centers, tourist-related facilities (lodges/motels, restaurants, stores, gasoline stations, etc.), and facilities related to the park operation (offices, residences, utility buildings, etc.).

#### Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Skyline Drive is the main thoroughfare through Shenandoah NP and continues to fulfill its original recreational intent. The drive provides a scenic and gently curving route to visitor amenities such as overlooks, trails, wayside stations, comfort stations, picnic spaces, and camping areas.

### Vegetation

#### Historic Condition (through 1952):

By the time construction of Skyline Drive commenced in the early 1930s, large stands of dead chestnut trees covered the landscape due to the chestnut blight that arrived in the United States in 1904. The landscape at this time consisted of open fields and early second growth forest with pockets of mature forest. Revegetation was a major component of the development of the entire Skyline Drive roadside with native trees, shrubs, and vines. Nurseries were established within the park for propagating, and trees and shrubs were also salvaged from construction areas to be transplanted elsewhere in the park. Planted trees included hemlock, oak, black locust, black walnut, dogwood, red spruce, and various species of pine and fir. Shrubs included strawberry bush, mountain laurel, arrowwood viburnum, Canada yew, rhododendron, and azalea. Vines, such as Virginia creeper, wild grape, American bittersweet, and clematis, were rooted in rock cuts and along guardwalls. Roadside embankments and overlooks were planted with mountain laurel and other smaller planting stock. Early travelers on Skyline Drive enjoyed a multitude of panoramic views framed by pastures and fields, and some forested areas.

Planting islands at overlooks consisted of native species in naturalistic compositions so that they blended with the surrounding natural vegetation. Some were elaborately planted with masses variously composed of maples, oaks, pines, mountain laurel, azaleas, and other native species, often incorporated with rock outcroppings, cut-stone curbing, and other features. Other planting islands were treated with varying degrees of simplicity with the most minimal consisting of specimen trees with wildflowers and grass. In more open locations, roadside banks were

lined with strips of sod lifted from meadows and pastures in areas slated for development (Engle 2006:109).

**Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

Today, nearly ninety-five percent of the park is forested, with large portions officially designated as wilderness. This mature second growth forest is the result of seven decades of regeneration, designed reforestry, beautification, and fire control. As the park's vegetation matured, views from Skyline Drive and overlooks changed, with intimate woodland scenes replacing some of the distant vistas.

Along Skyline Drive today, the road shoulders are grass covered and the grass, depending on the district, is mowed three to six times a year (Figure 16). This gives the shoulders a natural appearance without allowing the grass to grow high enough to obstruct the sightlines of tourists using the drive. The slopes between the shoulders and the tree line are mowed on a yearly basis. The yearlong interval between cuts allows wildflowers and herbaceous plants to grow while prohibiting the establishment of pioneer trees and shrubs. Well established bays of mountain laurel, rhododendron, azalea, and a few fern bays occur along the road; most of these were planted by the CCC under the direction of the NPS landscape architects. The planting islands at the overlooks in the North District vary from simple turf cover to trees set in turf (Figure 17).

Items noted in the table below and listed with an \* are entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Planting Islands at Overlooks \*

Feature Identification Number: 145125

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Roadside Tree, Shrub, and Groundcover Plantings

Feature Identification Number: 145127

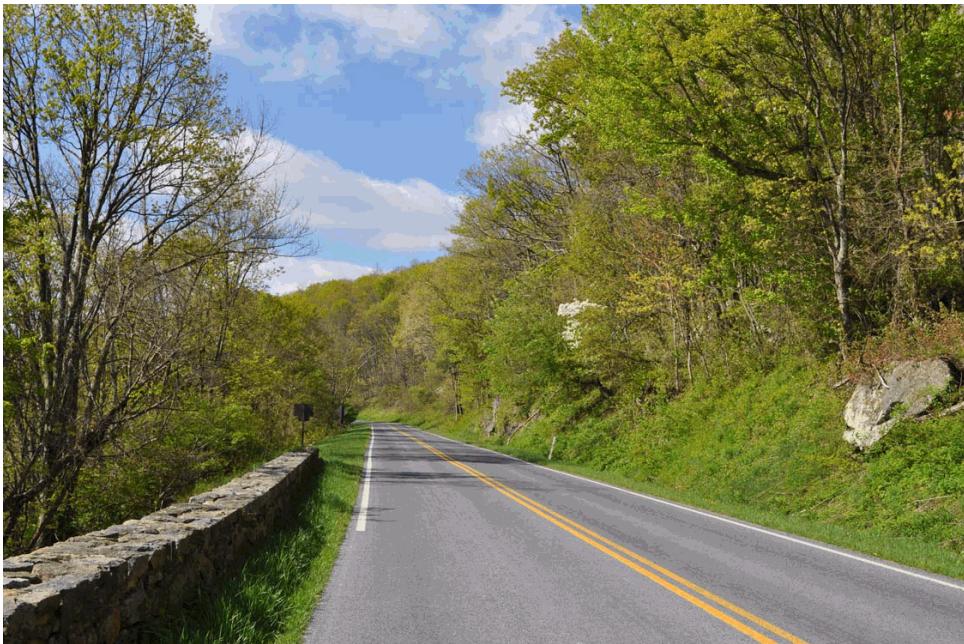
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Turf Along Roadside

Feature Identification Number: 145129

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 16. View of Skyline Drive near Thornton Hollow Overlook. The road shoulders are maintained with turf cover (OCLP, 2010).*



*Figure 17. View of planting island at Browntown Valley Overlook, consisting of grass, a row of maple trees, and a boulder fountain (OCLP, 2010).*

### **Topography**

Historic Condition (through 1952):

The topography played a central role in the development of Skyline Drive and Shenandoah NP.

Elevations in the North District ranged from 2,415 feet at Compton Gap, 2,355 feet at Jenkins Gap, to 3,385 feet at Hogback Overlook. From the earliest planning stages, the drive was sited to work with the natural topography and take advantage of views. Motorists would be able to take in views of the Shenandoah Valley and the Piedmont, as well as drive through more intimate landscape settings. Efforts were made to blend the road into the natural environment while protecting existing features such as rock outcroppings and native vegetation. Grades were modified to integrate the drive as harmoniously as possible in order to create a seamless connection to the surrounding landscape while accommodating areas for viewing and access to off-road amenities. When cutting and filling, side slopes were rounded or flattened to reduce visual impact. In some instances, more complex methods were undertaken to align the road including controlled blasting. In addition, the NPS established standards for minimum radius of curves and maximum grades in order to provide motorists with a gently curvilinear scenic drive.

#### Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Since the period of significance, several modifications were introduced to the topography at Skyline Drive. Interchanges with grade separations were constructed to facilitate the movement of traffic in and out of the park at Thornton and Swift Run Gaps. Overall, however, the topography of Skyline Drive – North District has not been significantly altered since 1952.

### Circulation

#### Historic Condition (through 1952):

##### Skyline Drive

As one of the first mountain road building projects undertaken by the NPS, Skyline Drive was built as a paved, two-lane scenic ridge road that specifically offered motoring tourists adjacent overlooks, wayside stations, and picnic areas (HAER 1996:1). The drive was designed as a limited access road intended for non-commercial recreational traffic. Skyline Drive was closely fitted to the natural topography of the land and every effort was made to minimize the destruction of the landscape.

Typically, the roadway section was thirty feet wide, including a twenty-foot road surface with five-foot shoulders in fill and three-foot shoulders and two-foot ditches in cut, although variations occurred, specifically in the North District where the road was widened to thirty-four feet with twenty feet of pavement and a five-foot shoulder between the road and the guardwall. Road curves spiraled, providing a wide radius easily negotiated by automobiles. The road surface consisted of a two-layer, crushed stone base covered with a bituminous road-mix asphalt surface. Rounded, flattened, and planted slopes of native trees and shrubs blended the road with the surrounding topography and enhanced the naturalistic character of the landscape (McClelland CRM No. 1 1998:13). The Department of Agriculture Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) oversaw the surveying, awarding of contracts, and actual construction of the drive. The North District portion of the drive was the second phase of construction and extended from Front Royal to Thornton Gap, totalling over thirty miles, from Mile 0.0 to Mile 31.5.

#### Overlooks and Parking Areas

The NPS constructed roughly twenty overlooks in the North District in 1935 and 1936, sited at

certain vantage points to offer visitors panoramic views as well as access to trails and points of interest. The location of parking overlooks was coordinated with access to the Appalachian Trail and spur recreational trails to springs, waterfalls, overlooks, and other scenic features. The overlooks became extensions of the road itself, situated and designed to lead motorists off the main roadway with the expectation of yet another view of the scenery (Figure 18). At the same time, overlooks provided interpretive signs, fountains with water piped in from nearby springs, and occasionally a comfort station. Overlooks varied in detail, including simple paved road widenings with limited longitudinal parking. Road widenings were typically only drive-through overlooks with possibly guardwalls and interpretive signs. More elaborate overlooks were designed with head-in parking areas separated from the road with curbed planting islands, and sometimes contained guardwalls and sidewalks and water fountains. Some overlooks provided access to trails and other amenities. Walkways at the overlooks were generally paved with gravel, but the use of asphalt was introduced in the 1940s.

#### Trails and Fire Roads

In the North District, the Appalachian Trail (AT) stretched twenty-four miles from Possums Rest Overlook accessed from Skyline Drive at Milepost 10.4 at the north end of the park near Front Royal, to Thornton Gap at 31.3 at Route 211. The AT crossed the drive in the North District several times. As the construction of Skyline Drive continued, conflicts arose between the location of the road and the Trail, resulting in the rerouting of portions of the Trail in the North District. In 1936, the CCC completed the relocation and reconstruction of portions of the AT in the North District from Chester to Thornton Gap.

Other circulation features associated with the North District included a number of fire roads, mostly gravel paved and 8.5 to twelve feet in width such as Compton Gap Fire Road, Gravel Springs Fire Road, and Keyser Run Fire Road. Some fire roads were originally mountain roads that were closed to public vehicular traffic, such as Snead Fire Road (National Register 4/1997: Section 7,49). Hull School Trail at Mile 28.1 was originally a road leading to a former school.

#### Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Since Skyline Drive's completion in 1939, there have been few physical changes to the alignment and location of the road. One of the most substantial changes has been the redesign of the intersection of Route 211 and Skyline Drive at Thornton Gap. The road alignment in the North District follows that constructed in the 1930s, and the recreational waysides developed in the 1930s remain intact. Several new parking areas, a new overlook, and fire roads have been constructed since the period of significance. These additions do not contribute to the historic significance of the Skyline Drive–North District.

Items noted in the table below and listed with an \* are entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

#### **Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Skyline Drive \*(NA)

Feature Identification Number: 145131

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Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82968  
LCS Structure Name: Skyline Drive  
LCS Structure Number: MI0-105  
  
Feature: Appalachian Trail Crossings \*(NA)  
Feature Identification Number: 145133  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
  
Feature: Old Skyline Drive Trace \*(0.0)  
Feature Identification Number: 145135  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82989  
LCS Structure Name: Old Skyline Drive Trace  
LCS Structure Number: MI 00  
  
Feature: Paved Road Widening \*(1.4)  
Feature Identification Number: 145137  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82884  
LCS Structure Name: Milepost 1.4 Paved Road Widening  
LCS Structure Number: MI001.4  
  
Feature: Parking Area \*(2.0)  
Feature Identification Number: 145139  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82886  
LCS Structure Name: Milepost 2 Parking Area  
LCS Structure Number: MI002.0  
  
Feature: Dickey Ridge Trail Crossing \*(2.2)  
Feature Identification Number: 145141  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82888

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LCS Structure Name: Milepost 2.2 Dickey Ridge Trail Crossing  
LCS Structure Number: MI002.2

Feature: Shenandoah Valley Overlook \*(2.8)  
Feature Identification Number: 145143  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82890  
LCS Structure Name: Shenandoah Valley Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI002.7

Feature: Snead Fire Road \*(5.1)  
Feature Identification Number: 145145  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82901  
LCS Structure Name: Snead Farm Road  
LCS Structure Number: MI005.1

Feature: No Name Overlook \*(5.3)  
Feature Identification Number: 145147  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82902  
LCS Structure Name: No Name Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI005.3

Feature: Signal Knob Overlook \*(5.7)  
Feature Identification Number: 145149  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82903  
LCS Structure Name: Signal Knob Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI005.7

Feature: Gooney Run Overlook \*(6.8)  
Feature Identification Number: 145171  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

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IDLCS Number: 82904  
LCS Structure Name: Gooney Run Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI006.8  
  
Feature: Gooney Manor Overlook \*(7.3)  
Feature Identification Number: 145199  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82905  
LCS Structure Name: Gooney Manor Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI007.3  
  
Feature: Dickey Ridge Trail Crossing \*(7.9)  
Feature Identification Number: 145183  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82888  
LCS Structure Name: Milepost 2.2 Dickey Ridge Trail Crossing  
LCS Structure Number: MI002.2  
  
Feature: Lands Run Gap Fire Road \*(9.2)  
Feature Identification Number: 145159  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82906  
LCS Structure Name: Lands Run Gap Fire Road  
LCS Structure Number: MI009.2  
  
Feature: Compton Gap Fire Road \*(10.4)  
Feature Identification Number: 145161  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82907  
LCS Structure Name: Compton Gap Fire Road  
LCS Structure Number: MI010.4  
  
Feature: Indian Run Overlook \*(10.8)  
Feature Identification Number: 145163

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Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82908  
LCS Structure Name: Indian Run Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI010.8

Feature: Jenkins Gap Overlook \*(12.4)  
Feature Identification Number: 145165

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82909  
LCS Structure Name: Jenkins Gap Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI012.4

Feature: Mount Marshall Trail \*(12.5)  
Feature Identification Number: 145167

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82910  
LCS Structure Name: Mount Marshall Trail  
LCS Structure Number: MI012.5

Feature: Hogwallow Flats Overlook \*(13.9)  
Feature Identification Number: 145169

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82911  
LCS Structure Name: Hogwallow Flats Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI013.9

Feature: Browntown Valley Overlook \*(14.9)  
Feature Identification Number: 145203

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82912  
LCS Structure Name: Browntown Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI014.9

Feature: Range View Overlook \*(17.1)

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Feature Identification Number: 145205  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82914

Feature: Gravel Springs Fire Road \*(17.5)  
Feature Identification Number: 145207  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82915

Feature: Gimlet Ridge Overlook \*(18.4)  
Feature Identification Number: 145209  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81870

Feature: Mount Marshall Overlook \*(19.0)  
Feature Identification Number: 145211  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81871

Feature: Keyser Run Fire Road \*(19.4)  
Feature Identification Number: 145217  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81872

Feature: Little Hogback Overlook \*(19.7)  
Feature Identification Number: 145219  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81873

Feature: Little Devil Stairs Overlook \*(20.1)  
Feature Identification Number: 145221  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81874

Feature: Hogback Overlook \*(21.0)  
Feature Identification Number: 145223

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Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81875  
  
Feature: Rattlesnake Point Overlook \*(21.9)  
Feature Identification Number: 145225  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81877  
  
Feature: Jeremy's Run Overlook \*(26.4)  
Feature Identification Number: 145227  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81917  
  
Feature: Thornton Hollow Overlook \*(27.6)  
Feature Identification Number: 145233  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81918  
  
Feature: Hull School Trail (East) \*(28.1)  
Feature Identification Number: 145235  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81919  
  
Feature: Beahms Gap Parking Area \*(28.5)  
Feature Identification Number: 145237  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81920  
  
Feature: Pass Mountain Overlook \*(30.1)  
Feature Identification Number: 145239  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81921  
  
Feature: Pass Mountain Hut Access Road (East) \*(31.4)  
Feature Identification Number: 145245

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Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81923  
  
Feature: North Park Entrance Interchange( 0.0)  
Feature Identification Number: 145247  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing  
  
Feature: Gravel Parking Area (0.1)  
Feature Identification Number: 145249  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing  
  
Feature: Road (0.2)  
Feature Identification Number: 145251  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing  
  
Feature: Road (east) (0.3)  
Feature Identification Number: 145253  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing  
  
Feature: Possums Rest Overlook (0.2)  
Feature Identification Number: 145285  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing  
  
Feature: Paved Parking Area (9.2)  
Feature Identification Number: 145287  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing  
  
Feature: Unpaved Parking Pullout (9.5)  
Feature Identification Number: 145289  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing  
  
Feature: Fire Road (9.6)  
Feature Identification Number: 145291  
  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing  
  
Feature: Compton Gap Parking Area (10.4)  
Feature Identification Number: 145293

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Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Jenkins Gap Parking Area (12.3)

Feature Identification Number: 145295

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Paved Parking Area (15.8)

Feature Identification Number: 145297

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Gravel Springs Parking Area (17.5)

Feature Identification Number: 145299

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Keyser Run Parking Area (19.4)

Feature Identification Number: 145301

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Hogback Fire Road (West) (20.8)

Feature Identification Number: 145319

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Parking Area (21.1)

Feature Identification Number: 145305

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Fire Road (24.5)

Feature Identification Number: 145307

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Thornton River Trail (East) Parking Area (25.4)

Feature Identification Number: 145309

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Thornton River Trail (West) (25.5)

Feature Identification Number: 145311

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

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Feature: Paved Road Widening (25.7)

Feature Identification Number: 145313

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Paved Road Widening (25.9)

Feature Identification Number: 145325

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Parking Area (26.7)

Feature Identification Number: 145327

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Byrds Nest Shelter #4 Road (West) (28.1)

Feature Identification Number: 145329

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Parking Area (28.3)

Feature Identification Number: 145331

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Fire Road (30.2)

Feature Identification Number: 145333

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Paved Road Widening (30.9)

Feature Identification Number: 145335

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



Figure 18. View of Skyline Drive from Rattlesnake Point Overlook (OCLP, 2010).

### **Buildings and Structures**

Historic Condition (through 1952):

#### Guardwalls

Stone guardwalls were constructed along Skyline Drive, mostly along curves, straight sections with drop-offs, and at parking widenings and overlooks. In the North District, the guardwalls consisted of locally quarried stone dry-laid in courses with the top course set in mortar and deeply raked. These walls had vertical faces on both sides. The drylaid walls were mostly constructed after each section had been opened to traffic, and apparently the guardwalls in the North District were completed prior to the dedication of the drive in 1939.

#### Retaining Walls and Embankments

Retaining walls, also called embankments, were constructed along the drive to reduce erosion, and support fill areas with hand-laid dry rock embankments. Workers first thoroughly compacted the embankment slope and then excavated a footing as specified by the engineer. Laborers hand-laid the rock in place according to the specifications set forth by the Landscape Division. They were to be durable and not less than one-cubic foot in volume. The walls were laid so that the stones were bedded, bonded, and tied in place, with the spalls or stone waste used only for the back filling of voids. Embankments were constructed at Mile 1.5, at the north end of Indian Run Overlook at Mile 10.8, and at Hogback Overlook at Mile 21 (Figure 19).

#### Entrance Station

The NPS constructed a temporary station at the north entrance to Skyline Drive in the early 1930s, consisting of a small square building of log construction, with wood shingled hip roofs. A permanent structure was later built in 1940 of wood frame construction with cut stone facing

and featured a gabled roof spanning two inbound lanes, supported at the ends by stone faced columns, and a small octagonal office.

#### Culvert and Gutter System

A series of drainage structures were integrated with the road construction to either carry surface water from one side of the drive to the other, such as with a culvert, or structures that diverted surface run-off into a culvert using drop inlets (Figure 20). Without these structures, the subgrade and crushed stone roadbed would have been undermined by run-off from adjacent farmsteads and deforested areas. By 1942, when construction stopped because of World War II, approximately 1,113 culverts had been constructed along the route from Front Royal to Rockfish Gap.

Although two types of culverts were installed along the drive, six discernible culvert inlet subtypes were built. The headwall type is one of the two parent types and had two subtypes, the straight headwall and ell (or "L") headwall. The other, and more prevalent type, was the drop inlet type with four subtypes: double, parallel walls with inlets on both ends; headwall with semicircular back wall, with inlets on either or both ends; metal grate inlet; and straight-lipped cap (composed of concrete) inlet with gutter pan. Excluding the metal grate and straight-lipped cap types, all systems were constructed of coursed, mortared stone. Even the drop basins of the grate and cap types were built of coursed, mortared stone. The headwall types carried streams and small watercourses beneath the drive and exited on the downhill side. Generally, culvert outlets consisted of the masonry straight headwall type. Pipe typically used between the walls and drop basins/inlets was corrugated metal pipe, eighteen inches, twenty-four inches, or thirty-six inches in diameter. Walls varied in length, width, and depth depending on the size of the pipes and the hydraulic flows of the surrounding drainage area; they generally measured seven to ten feet in length, twenty to twenty-two inches in width, and eighteen to twenty-four inches in height. In addition to culverts, in areas which were swampy or evidenced seepage, tile underdrains were installed. These underdrains acted much like French drains in that they carried the ground water away from the roadbed. Laid in trenches dug parallel to the roadway, the underdrains were loosely placed terra cotta pipes backfilled with gravel and then earth, draining into drop inlets. Augmenting the underdrains were the addition of rock paved gutters that served to carry away surface water. These gutters were originally constructed as ditches but were later paved with rocks when erosion threatened the stability of the roadway. The gutters were laid above the tile underdrains and drained into the drop inlets. Rock paved gutters were constructed under the auspices of the BPR.

#### Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Since the period of significance, alterations and additions have been made to buildings and structures associated with Skyline Drive. During Mission 66, funding was made available to build new entrance stations. The NPS Eastern Division Branch of Plans and Designs constructed a new entrance station at Front Royal, completed in 1961 along with a new grade separation. The new entrance station consisted of a single-story steel structure with a low pitched roof covered with asphalt.

Beginning in 1983, a major rehabilitation of Skyline Drive was initiated by the Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP). The work included the replacement of unsafe original guardwalls and failed culverts with a new design consisting of a concrete core faced with native stone cut from the boulders that made up the historic walls and laid in a repeating pattern of random stonemasonry (Figure 21). The new design intended to blend into the rustic surroundings while adhering to current standards for highway safety.

In the early 1990s, the park initiated a comprehensive program to replace and eliminate the rock paved gutters along the length of the drive. Culverts were being replaced because they failed due to the weight of the overlying roadbed, rust, pipe separation due to fill settlement, or had become obstructed due to poor hydraulic gradients, or eroded material had filled and covered the headwalls. Because the right-of-way is now very heavily wooded and the surface run-off is greatly reduced, a number of culverts have been eliminated or moved.

The replacement headwalls and gutters are all constructed of stone, and the drop inlets are of concrete. The major construction difference between the original and replacement headwalls is that the new construction has much wider mortar joints. The major difference between the original and replacement drop inlets is in the concrete slab cover. The original design featured a recessed lip, while the new design uses a non-recessed lip. The replacement gutters also feature a wider mortar joint. Original construction culverts, headwalls, drop inlets, and rock paved gutters retain their integrity and contribute to the significance of the drive. Rehabilitated culverts, headwalls, drop inlets, and rock paved gutters, while sympathetic in design, do not contribute to the historic significance of the drive.

Items noted in the table below and listed with an \* are entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Skyline Drive Original Guardwalls \*(0-105)

Feature Identification Number: 145371

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 83188

Feature: Skyline Drive Culvert Headwalls Type 1 \*

Feature Identification Number: 145373

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 83067

Feature: Skyline Drive Culvert Headwalls Type 2 \*

Feature Identification Number: 145375

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Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82889

Feature: Skyline Drive Drop Inlet Type 1 \*

Feature Identification Number: 145377

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 83068

Feature: Skyline Drive Drop Inlet Type 2 \*

Feature Identification Number: 145379

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 81808

Feature: Skyline Drive Drop Inlet Type 3 \*

Feature Identification Number: 145381

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82965

Feature: Skyline Drive Drop Inlet Type 4 \*

Feature Identification Number: 145383

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82891

Feature: Skyline Drive Gutters \*

Feature Identification Number: 145923

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82972

Feature: Hand-laid Rock Embankment \*(1.5)

Feature Identification Number: 147683

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82885

LCS Structure Name: Milepost 1.5 Rock Embankment

LCS Structure Number: MI001.5

Feature: Skyline Drive Stone Wall (2.1A)

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Feature Identification Number: 147685  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82992  
LCS Structure Name: Skyline Drive Stone Wall  
LCS Structure Number: MI002.1A

Feature: Hand-laid Rock Embankment (Indian Run Overlook) \*(10.8)  
Feature Identification Number: 147687  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 82908  
LCS Structure Name: Indian Run Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI010.8

Feature: Hand-laid Rock Embankment (Hogback Overlook) \*(21.0)  
Feature Identification Number: 147689  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 81875  
LCS Structure Name: Hogback Overlook  
LCS Structure Number: MI021.0

Feature: Replacement Guardwalls (0-105)  
Feature Identification Number: 147691  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: North Entrance Station (0.5)  
Feature Identification Number: 147693  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**

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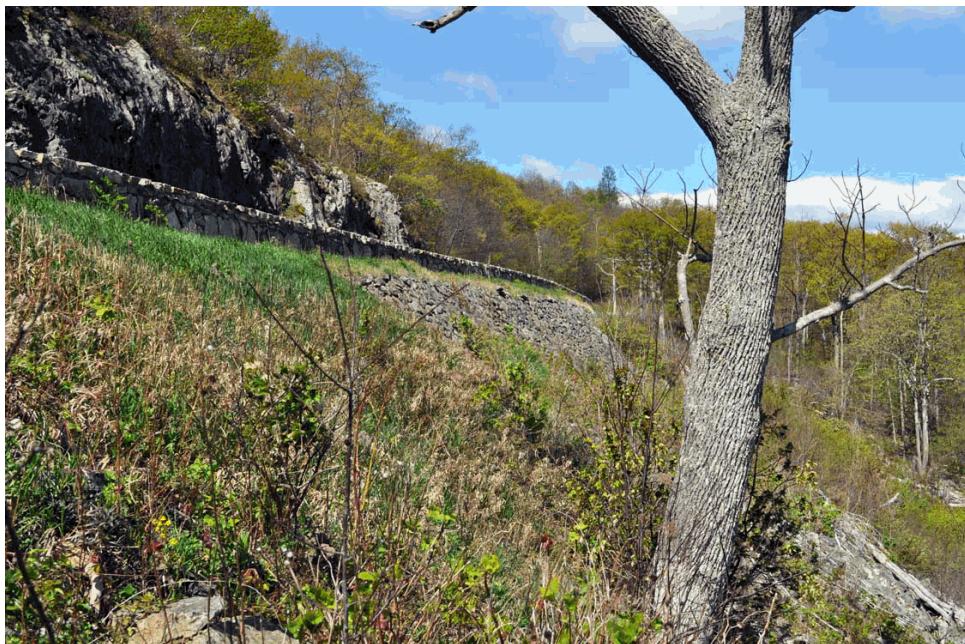


Figure 19. View of stone embankment at Indian Run Overlook (OCLP, 2010).



Figure 20. View of typical drop inlet along Skyline Drive near Mile 27 (OCLP, 2010).



Figure 21. View of new guardwall construction along Skyline Drive (OCLP, 2010).

### Views and Vistas

#### Historic Condition (through 1952):

Atop the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the 105.5-mile drive was designed to offer panoramic views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the Piedmont to the east. On Skyline Drive each overlook or road widening was carefully orchestrated in sequence and designed to present park visitors with a seemingly unending panorama of places, such as the distant Massanutten Mountain across the Shenandoah Valley or Piedmont Plain stretching toward the eastern horizon, as well as more intimate views into the forested hillside, deep hollows, and meandering streams below.

#### Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Vegetation has changed the appearance of the views from some of the overlooks as mature forest growth has replaced the young second growth forest of the 1930s. A mature forest, with bays of laurel, azalea, rhododendron, and ferns, has replaced many fields and pastures. Some of the broad sweeping panoramic views have been replaced by framed views by the growth of vegetation in the foreground and middle ground of the overlook vistas. In the 1950s, as vegetation was renewed, some drive-by vistas were cleared along the drive to open up views not visible from an overlook or road widening. A recent effort in the park has cleared many of the slopes supporting the overlooks, once again revealing views of the hollows, valleys and mountain peaks (Figures 22-23). In 1997, the park initiated a five-year program to restore the vistas along the drive by removing or pruning vegetation (HAER 1996:Changing Nature).

Items noted in the table below and listed with an \* are entered on the National Register of

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Historic Places.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Views to the Piedmont Plain

Feature Identification Number: 145357

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Views to Shenandoah Valley

Feature Identification Number: 145359

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Views and Vistas from Overlooks \*(0-105)

Feature Identification Number: 145361

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



Figure 22. View of Shenandoah Valley from Gooney Run Overlook (OCLP, 2010).



*Figure 23. View west toward the Piedmont from Thornton Hollow Overlook on Skyline Drive (OCLP, 2010).*

### **Small Scale Features**

Historic Condition (through 1952):

Small scale features built throughout Shenandoah NP reflected the NPS intent to design elements that were sensitive to regional vernacular design vocabularies and romanticized early American craft. Signs, log guardrails, water fountains, and other structures displayed handmade craftsmanship, and the use of local materials, including wood and stone, further corresponded to local building traditions.

#### **Water Fountains**

Initially, water fountains were constructed from turned chestnut logs with holes bored through for piping water, and a basin on top. However, the log fountains could not withstand the mountain climate and deteriorated. The NPS then developed three types of historic water fountains that were constructed by the CCC. First was the single boulder fitted with a bubbler and basin, which were installed at Brownstown Valley and Pass Mountain overlooks. The second type was randomly coursed stonemasonry constructions that were incorporated in guardwalls. The third type consisted of coursed, stacked rock constructions based on a design dating to 1940.

#### **Log Guardrails**

Log guardrails were installed by the CCC in the early 1930s along sections of the drive to prevent cars from parking on the grass or other undesirable areas. The guardrails were constructed mostly from salvaged wood from dead stands of chestnut trees, also referred to as ghost trees, that were prevalent throughout the area. Vertical log posts were set in the ground

and the horizontal rails attached to posts.

#### Signage and Mile Post Markers

The first signs installed along Skyline Drive included traffic control, stop signs, and informational and entrance signs at overlooks and other amenities. The signs were typically made of chestnut logs by the CCC in the prevailing rustic style. Also, in the early 1950s, concrete mile markers were installed along the length of the drive.

#### Tree Wells

Efforts were made by the NPS to preserve and protect mature native trees during the construction of Skyline Drive. Several tree wells were constructed in the North District, consisting of drylaid masonry retaining walls with batter and a layer of crushed stone on the existing grade downhill from the proposed fill slope within the root zone in order to aerate the tree roots after the fill was installed.

#### Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Since the period of significance, several small scale features have been eliminated or replaced. For instance, under Mission 66, wooden signs constructed by the CCC were replaced with more contemporary structures and graphics that were part of a new park-wide standard. In the 1950s, log guardrails were removed due to rot that resulted from contact with the ground, rendering them unsafe. Surviving small scale features in the North District of the drive include stone water fountains, boulders, and concrete mile markers (Figures 24-25). The eventual deterioration of the wood signs led to their replacement in the mid-1950s during the Mission 66 program of updating park facilities. The new signage featured an Art Deco style and a wider range of materials.

New small scale features along Skyline Drive include interpretive and directional signage, consisting of fiberglass embedded panels with metal frames, wood panelled boards with an attached roof, or simple wood boards on wooden posts (Figures 26-27).

Items noted in the table below and listed with an \* are entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

#### **Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Mile Posts \*

Feature Identification Number: 145399

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Browntown Valley Overlook Boulder Water Fountain \*(14.9)

Feature Identification Number: 145401

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82913

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Shenandoah National Park

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Feature: Pass Mountain Overlook Boulder Fountain \*(30.1)

Feature Identification Number: 145403

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 81922

Feature: Interpretive Kiosk at Gooney Run Overlook (6.8)

Feature Identification Number: 145405

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Interpretive Kiosk at Beahms Gap Parking Area (28.5)

Feature Identification Number: 145407

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



Figure 24. View of boulder drinking fountain at Browntown Valley Overlook (OCLP, 2010).



*Figure 25. View of typical concrete mile marker along Skyline Drive (OCLP, 2010).*

Skyline Drive - North District  
Shenandoah National Park

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Figure 26. View of interpretive signage at Gooney Run Overlook on Skyline Drive (OCLP, 2010).



Figure 27. View of wood signage at Gooney Run Overlook (OCLP, 2010).

## Condition

### Condition Assessment and Impacts

**Condition Assessment:** Good  
**Assessment Date:** 07/29/2010

#### Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The condition of Skyline Drive – North District landscape is evaluated as “good,” which indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. A program for continued preservation of the drive is ongoing. The inventory unit’s cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions.

## Impacts

<b>Type of Impact:</b>	Adjacent Lands
<b>External or Internal:</b>	External
<b>Impact Description:</b>	Growth of woodland vegetation may impact views from the drive.
<b>Type of Impact:</b>	Fire
<b>External or Internal:</b>	Both Internal and External
<b>Impact Description:</b>	Fire has had a long history within Shenandoah NP. Such events could impact views from the site.
<b>Type of Impact:</b>	Pests/Diseases
<b>External or Internal:</b>	Both Internal and External
<b>Impact Description:</b>	Shenandoah's forest continues to be affected by infestation insects, primarily the Gypsy Moth, a pest whose larvae consumes the foliage of the oak tree and other hardwoods, but also by the pine borer, spruce bud worm, and other insects that kill trees. Stands of hemlock trees have been lost due to an infestation of the wooly adelgid.
<b>Type of Impact:</b>	Vegetation/Invasive Plants
<b>External or Internal:</b>	Both Internal and External
<b>Impact Description:</b>	Exotic invasive plants have infiltrated the area, including tree of

heaven, bittersweet, and Japanese honeysuckle.

**Type of Impact:** Pollution

**External or Internal:** External

**Impact Description:** Air pollution from the Ohio and Mississippi valleys is drawn into the Shenandoah Valley and the resulting haze obscures views from the drive. This is not limited by the park's boundaries. Pollution is trapped in the valley and hollows surrounding the park and obscures the views from the drive, including those of Massanutten Mountain, only twelve miles away.

## Treatment

## Treatment

**Approved Treatment:** Undetermined

### **Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:**

The General Management Plan and Development Concept Plan were completed in 1983. However, these documents are considered out of date and the park superintendent now signs off on the treatment of all buildings and structures as they are added to or updated in the List of Classified Structures (LCS). A memo from the Superintendent states that all structures listed on National Register of Historic Places will be classified under the “Must Be Preserved and Maintained” management category.

Federal Highways work in fiscal years 2001-2003 resulted in the restoration/rehabilitation of the lower eight miles of the drive including the preservation of overlooks, repair/restoration of stone-lined ditches, reconstruction of missing wood guardrails, and repaving of that complete section of the drive (LCS 2010).

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has funded projects including chipping and sealing of 12.5 miles of Skyline Drive. Funds have also been slated for the rehabilitation of fourteen historic overlooks, the repair or replacements of culverts, and the removal or pruning of hazardous along the drive.

Current projects in the Project Management Information System include the following, which total \$15,039,989.09.

154287 – Rehabilitate 7 Historic Skyline Drive Overlooks for Visitor Safety and Resource Preservation

161022 – Rehabilitate Historic Skyline Drive Overlooks for Visitor Safety and Resource Preservation

57649 – Rehabilitate 5 Historic Skyline Drive Overlooks for Visitor Safety and Resource Preservation

150521 – Rehabilitate Roads in the South District of Skyline Drive

150592 – Rehabilitate Roads in the Central District of Skyline Drive

151860 – Rehabilitate Roads in the North District of Skyline Drive

10722 – Replace Historic Plant Landscape Material on Skyline Drive and in Picnic Areas

160926 – Maintain Historic Vistas at Overlooks and Slopes Along Skyline Drive

**Approved Treatment Completed:** No

## Bibliography and Supplemental Information

## Bibliography

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- Citation Title:** Shenandoah National Park and Interpretive Guide
- Year of Publication:** 1988
- Citation Publisher:** McDonald & Woodward Publishing Co.
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- Citation Title:** Everything Was Wonderful
- Year of Publication:** 1999
- Citation Publisher:** Shenandoah National Park Association
- Citation Author:** Engle, Reed L.
- Citation Title:** "The Single Greatest Feature...A SKYLINE DRIVE: 75 years of Mountaintop Motorway"
- Year of Publication:** 2006
- Citation Publisher:** Shenandoah National Park Association, Inc.
- Citation Author:** Engle, Reed L.
- Citation Title:** "Shenandoah: Wilderness By Design?"
- Citation Publisher:** [http://www.nps.gov/shen/historyculture/wilderness\\_by\\_design.htm](http://www.nps.gov/shen/historyculture/wilderness_by_design.htm)
- Citation Author:** Engle, Reed L.
- Citation Title:** "Shenandoah National Park Historical Overview"
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- Citation Title:** "Skyline Drive: Railing at Walls"
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- Citation Title:** Guide to Shenandoah National park and Skyline Drive
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**Citation Author:** Good, Albert H.  
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**Year of Publication:** 1999  
**Citation Publisher:** Princeton Architectural Press

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**Citation Title:** Administrative History Shenandoah National Park, 1924 - 1976  
**Year of Publication:** 1979  
**Citation Publisher:** NPS, unpublished

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**Citation Title:** Undying Past  
**Year of Publication:** 2000  
**Citation Publisher:** Roberts Rinehart Publishers

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**Year of Publication:** 1992  
**Citation Publisher:** OMB No. 1024-0018 Dept. of the Interior

**Citation Author:** McClelland, Linda Flint  
**Citation Title:** Building the National Parks  
**Year of Publication:** 1998  
**Citation Publisher:** Johns Hopkins University Press

**Citation Author:** McClelland, Linda Flint  
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**Year of Publication:** 1998  
**Citation Publisher:** CRM No. 1, 1998

**Citation Author:** National Park Service  
**Citation Title:** Cultural Landscape Inventory, Big Meadows, Level 1  
**Year of Publication:** 2000  
**Citation Publisher:** n/a

**Citation Author:** National Park Service  
**Citation Title:** National Register of Historic Places, Skyline Drive Historic District, April 1997  
**Year of Publication:** 1997  
**Citation Publisher:** U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

**Citation Author:** National Park Service  
**Citation Title:** National Register of Historic Places, Skyline Drive Historic District, Boundary Increase, September 1997  
**Year of Publication:** 1997  
**Citation Publisher:** U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

**Citation Author:** National Park Service  
**Citation Title:** National Register of Historic Places, Skyline Drive Historic District, Boundary Increase, December 2003  
**Year of Publication:** 2003  
**Citation Publisher:** U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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**Citation Title:** National Register of Historic Places, Skyline Drive Historic District, October 2008  
**Year of Publication:** 2008  
**Citation Publisher:** U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

**Citation Author:** National Park Service, Shenandoah NP  
**Citation Title:** "Shenandoah Overlook" (park newsletter)  
**Year of Publication:** 2009  
**Citation Publisher:** [http://www.nps.gov/shen/parknews/upload/09\\_overlook\\_summer\\_web.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/shen/parknews/upload/09_overlook_summer_web.pdf)

<b>Citation Author:</b>	National Park Service
<b>Citation Title:</b>	“Rehabilitation of the Skyline Drive Overlooks, Shenandoah National Park, Environmental Assessment”
<b>Year of Publication:</b>	2007
<b>Citation Publisher:</b>	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
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<b>Citation Title:</b>	“Rehabilitation of 14 Historic Overlooks Along Skyline Drive, Shenandoah National Park”
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 <b>Citation Author:</b>	National Park Service, Shenandoah NP
<b>Citation Title:</b>	“Appalachian Trail History”
<b>Citation Publisher:</b>	<a href="http://www.nps.gov/shen/historyculture/at.htm">http://www.nps.gov/shen/historyculture/at.htm</a>
 <b>Citation Author:</b>	National Park Service, Shenandoah NP
<b>Citation Title:</b>	Landscape Management Natural Resource Fact Sheet, Nov. 4, 2008
<b>Year of Publication:</b>	2008
<b>Citation Publisher:</b>	<a href="http://mms.nps.gov/shen/ncr/docs/factsheets/SHEN_NR_076_Landscape_Management.pdf">http://mms.nps.gov/shen/ncr/docs/factsheets/SHEN_NR_076_Landscape_Management.pdf</a>
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<b>Citation Publisher:</b>	<a href="http://www.nps.gov/shen/naturescience/wetlands.htm">http://www.nps.gov/shen/naturescience/wetlands.htm</a>
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**Citation Author:** n/a

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**Citation Publisher:** <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/natural/chestnut.html>

### **Supplemental Information**

**Title:** "Architectural Details, Route 3, Skyline Drive," 1934 SHEN 134-1083A

**Description:** Architectural details for cut and fill slopes, masonry pipe walls, rustic guard rail, and retaining structures

**Title:** "General & Construction Plan, Project 2-C U.S. Dept of the Interior,  
134-1074-id76379

**Description:** Plan and section for overlook in the North District of Skyline Drive

**Title:** SHEN\_134\_1024\_id176378

**Description:** Site plan drawings for various overlooks along Skyline Drive

**Title:** Shenandoah NP website map

**Description:** Map of Skyline Drive and amenities,  
[http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/whole\\_park.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/whole_park.pdf)