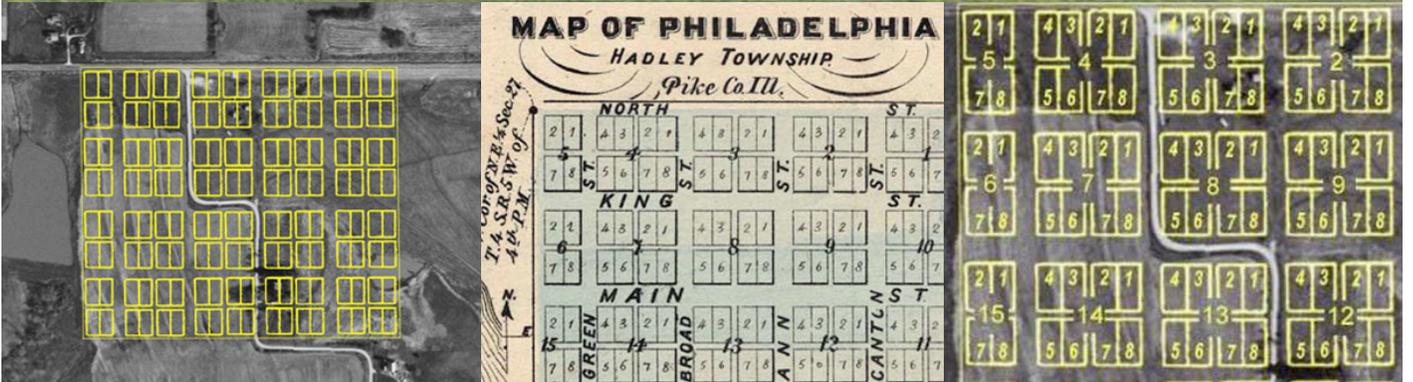


National Park Service  
Midwest Region



# New Philadelphia Townsite Reconnaissance Survey

Barry, Illinois  
January 2012



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This study has been prepared for the Secretary of Interior to explore specific resources and advise on whether these resources merit further consideration as a potential boundary adjustment or as a new park unit. Publication and transmittal of this report should not be considered an endorsement or a commitment by the National Park Service to seek or support legislative authorization for the project or its implementation. This report was prepared by the United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Region. For more information, contact:

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Front Cover Images: Top Row: Aerial photo by Tommy Hailey using powered parachute funded by The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NPS). Middle Row, left to right: Atlas Map of Pike County 1872 (Andreas, Lyter Co., 1872, 84. Illinois Historical Survey Collections, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign); 1998 aerial photograph with town plat overlaid (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign); 1998 aerial photograph (U. S. Geological Survey with overlay by Christopher Fennell). Bottom Row: Panorama of New Philadelphia Townsite (Ian Shanklin, NPS).

Back Cover Image: Detail of Atlas Map of Pike County 1872 (Andreas, Lyter Co., 1872, 84. Illinois Historical Survey Col-

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# 1 SUMMARY

This report is a preliminary evaluation of the New Philadelphia Townsite to determine the likelihood that this site would qualify for inclusion in the national park system. In order to be considered for inclusion, an area must meet the criteria for national significance, suitability and feasibility. The 1998 National Parks Omnibus Management Act established the process for identifying and authorizing studies of new units, also known as “special resource studies”. That Act also allowed the National Park Service to conduct reconnaissance surveys such as this report on New Philadelphia. Reconnaissance surveys are preliminary resource assessments to gather data on potential study areas. Unlike special resource studies, the conclusions in reconnaissance surveys do not provide a final or definitive answer to the question of whether or not an area qualifies for inclusion in the national park system, but rather determine whether or not further evaluation is warranted.

This reconnaissance survey evaluates the New Philadelphia Townsite, a 42-acre archeological site located near the city of Barry, Illinois. The townsite contains remnants of a town believed to be the first town in the United States legally registered and platted by an African-American. The townsite was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005, and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2009. The New Philadelphia Townsite qualified for National Historic Landmark status “for its high potential to yield information of major scientific importance to our understandings of free, multi-racial, rural communities, and for the possibilities the townsite possesses to affect theories, concepts, methods, and ideas in historical archeology to a major degree.” (King, 2009) This report includes a description of New Philadelphia Townsite and its various historic resources, as well as an evaluation of those resources based on a field visit and analysis of available documentation. The significance of New Philadelphia Townsite is



Map of Illinois with New Philadelphia highlighted (NPS)

described in the National Historic Landmark designation as attributable to the below-ground archeological resources.

The townsite’s national significance has been established through its National Historic Landmark designation. A preliminary determination of suitability finds that that New Philadelphia offers an unusual ability to yield information of major scientific importance to an understanding of pre-Civil War free, multi-racial, rural communities and that comparable sites are not adequately preserved and interpreted. Therefore, New Philadelphia would likely be a suitable addition to the System. However, this preliminary evaluation indicates that the New Philadelphia archeological site would likely not meet the feasibility criteria for inclusion as a unit of the national park system, owing to challenges in providing for public enjoyment. As it is unlikely that the New Philadelphia Townsite would be feasible to manage as a unit of the national park system, the National Park Service does not recommend that a full special resource study be conducted for this site.

Though it is likely not feasible for management by the National Park Service (NPS), opportunities exist for promotion and recognition of New Philadelphia Townsite through existing NPS programs such as

Teaching With Historic Places, the Underground Railroad National Trail to Freedom, National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmark technical assistance. Potential also exists for local, state, and/or non-profit groups to apply creative interpretive techniques to telling the story of New Philadelphia.

## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Background of the Survey

In June 2009, then Senator Roland Burris sent a letter to the National Park Service (NPS) requesting that the agency prepare draft language for a bill authorizing a special resource study of the New Philadelphia Townsite. In response, the National Park Service prepared the requested draft bill, which was introduced in the Senate. The next year, another member of the Illinois congressional delegation, Representative Aaron Schock, of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, introduced a companion bill in the House of Representatives. Because of this interest, funding was allocated through the NPS planning program to conduct a reconnaissance study of New Philadelphia Townsite. Reconnaissance studies briefly describe and evaluate resources to determine if the site might qualify as a new unit of the NPS, and whether or not a full Special Resource Study is warranted.

Staff from the National Park Service Planning and Compliance Division within the Midwest Regional Office traveled to the site of New Philadelphia in March of 2010. The planners met with individuals affiliated with the research and preservation of the site to discuss its significance and the types of artifacts and resources that have been discovered through many years of investigations by multiple researchers nationwide. National Park Service planners described the process by which potential new units are evaluated, and the need to demonstrate national significance, suitability and feasibility. While national significance of this site has been demonstrated through the NHL listing, suit-

ability and feasibility were the two criteria that were briefly discussed as possibly being the most challenging of the three criteria in terms of meeting the necessary requirements for becoming a unit of the National Park Service.

### 2.2 Purpose and Scope of the Survey Document

The purpose of this reconnaissance study is to conduct a preliminary evaluation of the potential significance of the historical resources of New Philadelphia Townsite and the suitability and feasibility for inclusion of those resources in the national park system. Preliminary determinations in this reconnaissance study are based on National Park Service criteria (described below, in section 3.3) and conclusions are not considered final or definitive. This study provides a recommendation as to whether or not further investigation in a special resource study would be appropriate.

### 2.3 Evaluation Criteria for Inclusion in the National Park System

The following are the criteria a site must meet for inclusion in the national park system. This study provides a cursory review and analysis of the New Philadelphia Townsite based on NPS criteria for inclusion.

**National Significance:** Determinations of an area's national significance are made by NPS professionals in consultation with scholars, experts, and scientists following specific criteria. For cultural resources, significance is evaluated using the National Historic Landmark criteria. For this reconnaissance study, the resource has already been designated a National Historic Landmark, so its national significance has been established prior to the study.

**Suitability:** A property is considered suitable if it represents a resource type that is not currently represented in the park system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another agency or entity. Adequacy of representation is determined

on a case-by-case basis by comparing the type, quality, quantity, combination of resources present, and opportunities for public enjoyment.

**Feasibility:** To be considered feasible, an area must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and to accommodate public use. The area must have potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Other important feasibility factors include land-ownership, acquisition costs, current and potential use, access, level of local and general public support, and staff or development requirements.

**Necessity of Direct NPS Management:** Even if a resource meets the criteria of national significance, suitability, and feasibility, it will not always be recommended that a resource be added to the park system. There are many excellent examples of important natural and cultural resources managed by other federal agencies, other levels of government, and private entities. Evaluation of management options must show that direct NPS management is clearly the superior alternative.

### **3 HISTORIC CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA**

#### **3.1 Historic Context**

The first part of this summary of historic context is largely taken from the National Historic Landmark nomination form for New Philadelphia. The second part of this summary places New Philadelphia in a larger context, not considered in the National Historic Landmark form.

New Philadelphia is the site of a town founded by Frank McWorter, who was born enslaved in South Carolina in 1777. Around 1795, he was relocated to Kentucky by his owner, George McWhorter. While George McWhorter expanded his real estate holdings in Kentucky and Tennessee, Frank managed the farm and was also hired out to other settlers. Despite being enslaved, he was al-

lowed to keep a portion of his earnings. Frank earned additional funds by mining Kentucky caves for crude niter and processing the material into saltpeter, a component used to manufacture gunpowder, which was crucial for frontier life and for the War of 1812. In 1799, Frank married Lucy, a woman enslaved on a nearby farm. With the money he earned, Frank purchased Lucy's freedom in 1817, and, two years later, his own freedom. On the 1820 federal census, he is recorded as "Free Frank." Lucy and Frank had seven children, four were born enslaved and three were free born. In 1830, Frank, Lucy, and their freed children moved to the non-slavery state of Illinois to settle on Military Tract land he purchased from a Dr. Elliot who was aware of Frank's desire to move elsewhere. In 1835, Frank added to this tract of land by purchasing more Military land from the government and, one year later, laid out the town of New Philadelphia on his 42 acres. New Philadelphia is the first known town founded and legally registered by a free African American before the Civil War.

Settlers were attracted to New Philadelphia by the economic opportunities of the western frontier. The years 1835 to 1837 saw avid town founding activity in Illinois but only a few of the plats became actual town, and even fewer survived. By 1837, the cost of transportation improvements led to a nationwide economic downturn that stunted town planning. By 1840, about half of the towns founded around 1836 still survived. New Philadelphia was one of 126 Illinois towns laid out in 1836, and one of the few to survive the economic crisis. New Philadelphia grew from a small community of three dwellings in the 1840s to a village of 58 individuals living in 11 households in 1850. Thirty-eight percent, or 22 people, were of African descent according to the 1850 census. After Frank McWorter's death in 1854, the town he founded continued to attract settlers. New Philadelphia's population peaked by the time of the Illinois state census in 1865 with 160 people living in 29 households; 30 percent, or 48 townspeople, were

recorded as African Americans. According to federal and state census records, the representation of African Americans in New Philadelphia fluctuated from a peak of 38 percent in 1850 to a low of 17 percent in 1880; however, New Philadelphia was considered by many area residents to be a “black” town.

Some towns that survived the economic downturn that began in 1837 succumbed when the railroad passed them by later in the nineteenth century. New Philadelphia was bypassed by a railroad in 1869 (Yuan 2007: 1). Many townspeople had moved away by the turn of the century, but a few families continued to make their home in New Philadelphia into the 1930s. Oral histories, land transfer documentation, and archaeological findings indicate that the town existed into the twentieth century. Archaeological evidence, which includes a large quantity of wire nails first manufactured in the 1890s, indicates building construction continued at New Philadelphia around the turn of the century.

Although unique as the first known town incorporated by an African American, New Philadelphia is part of a larger pre-Civil War phenomenon in which people of African descent established settlements in their quest for self-determination, something virtually impossible within the larger society and culture. While slavery was largely prohibited in the north, the racism that was used to justify black enslavement pervaded the country. The “free states” of the north were not free of racism and discrimination, as evidenced by the existence of oppressive black codes and black laws that attempted to circumscribe the citizenship rights of free people of color.

Living in what has been described as a “hostile environment”, people of African descent constructed independence partly in terms of land ownership and established small rural enclaves in states like Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, representing what has been termed as “geographies of resistance” (La Roche v). Located on marginal lands, these



Watercolors depicting New Philadelphia circa 1915, by Thelma Elise McWorter Kirkpatrick Wheaton, great granddaughter of Frank McWorter, founder of New

areas were often less attractive to white settlement, and thus served as important spaces where free people of color could make lives for themselves and help to secure the freedom of others who remained enslaved. Seemingly counter-intuitive, these communities were often located in close proximity to slave states or in areas surrounded by pro-slavery sympathizers. However, these locations strategically positioned these communities to serve as important places of refuge along the Underground Railroad. Members of these settlements often helped freedom seekers travel to destinations further north or welcomed them into their communities. This was done at great personal risk, as those who assisted freedom seekers faced losing their own freedom, property, and even death. In addition to their involvement in the Underground Railroad, these towns were cen-

ters of early African-American economic, religious, and political development. It was in these communities that African Americans began organizing themselves on larger scales. The Providence Anti-Slavery Missionary Baptist Association which formed in Ohio in the 1830s is considered one the earliest successful attempts of black church organization and as its name indicates, ending slavery was one of its primary focuses. Similar efforts also took place in Illinois and Indiana. The autonomy which people of color demonstrated in these communities challenged ideas of black inferiority, defying notions that slavery was the only status fitting people of African descent.

Despite the important historical role of these communities, over time many of these settlements have suffered from a lack of preservation and have virtually disappeared from both the physical landscape and dominant culture's historical memory (La Roche 16). Often what remains of the cultural landscapes of these settlements resides mostly in the archeological record. This is because the racism that led to the founding of these settlements also led to their demise. After the Civil War, racism became more entrenched and areas which were once places of refuge became increasingly less hospitable to African-American settlement. As a result, many residents were forced to make their lives elsewhere. Thus, New Philadelphia and similar towns today often lack the aboveground, structural resources that convey "integrity"



Relocated, Historic, Non-Contributing, Unrelated buildings at the townsite (Ian Shanklin, NPS)

as it is traditionally defined for historic districts.

### 3.2 Location and Setting

The New Philadelphia Townsite is situated amid the rolling hills of rural west central Illinois between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers in Hadley Township, Pike County. The historic townsite is located south of County Highway 2, four miles east of the city of Barry. U.S. Interstate 72 and State Route 36 run east-west just south of the townsite. The site is located approximately twenty-five miles east of the Mississippi River and is surrounded by farmland planted primarily with corn and soybeans, amidst stands of trees. A few widely-separated houses and farms are located in the vicinity. The feeling of the site and landscape is rural and agricultural. Widely spaced farms in the area contribute to a sense of remoteness at the New Philadelphia Townsite.

### 3.3 Land Use and Ownership

The current land use of the New Philadelphia Townsite is as an archeological preserve. Several portions of the townsite are privately owned. The New Philadelphia Association, a not-for-profit organization formed by area residents who seek to preserve a substantial portion of the townsite in honor of Frank McWorter, is the owner of a vacant farmhouse located on the southeast section of the archeological site as well as several surrounding acres. This farmhouse, circa 1938, does not contribute to the historic significance of the site. No one currently resides in the house, or any of the other structures on-site. The Archaeological Conservancy, a national not-for-profit organization, has also purchased over nine acres in the north central part of the townsite. The area around the New Philadelphia Townsite is rural and agricultural. Some adjacent land is still actively farmed.

### 3.4 Evaluation of Cultural Resources

The 42-acre New Philadelphia Townsite was divided into blocks, most of which were subdivided into lots numbered 1 through 8. No photographs or drawings depicting the physical appearance of New Philadelphia during its occupation are known to exist, but oral histories collected from local residents and descendants of residents, written account, census, land deed, and tax records document the town's historical appearance to some degree. According to an 1872 map, Philadelphia, or New Philadelphia as it came to be known, consisted of 144 lots, each 60 feet by 120 feet, laid out in a grid pattern over 42 acres. Most blocks were divided into eight lots. Broad and Main Streets were the primary thoroughfares, and were 80 feet wide; other streets measured 60 feet in width and alleyways were 15 feet wide. New Philadelphia was located along two of Pike County's primary roads during the listed period of significance (1836-1930).

According to oral histories and written accounts, the intersection of Main and Broad Streets represented New Philadelphia's commercial center. Federal census records from 1850 to 1880 indicate that New Philadelphia's residents were involved in a variety of enterprises, occupied as cabinetmakers, shoemakers, a wheelwright, a carpenter, a seamstress, a physician, teachers, merchants and blacksmiths. A post office operated in the town from 1849 to 1853, and New Philadelphia is said to have served as a stagecoach stop. In addition, New Philadelphia contained, at various points in time, a grocery, an African American schoolhouse, an integrated schoolhouse, an African American cemetery, and various domestic buildings.

No original buildings or structures remain above ground and only a few historic building foundations are discernible where they have been exposed by archeological excavations. Today a modern gravel road known as Broad Way, or Broad Street during New Philadelphia's existence, partially follows the platted street pattern from the historic period of significance. Local residents currently refer to it as the New Philadelphia Road.

While only a few partially exposed building foundations are visible at the site of the town, historical documents, modern aerial photographs, oral histories, and archaeological evidence document the town's existence. Although agricultural use disturbed the upper 12-to-18 inches of soil covering, the many subsurface features detected by archeological investigation maintain excellent archaeological integrity. A log cabin and two wooden buildings dating to the mid-to-late nineteenth century were moved to the site from nearby towns in 1998 by property owners Larry and Natalie Armistead. The buildings are non-contributing, having been brought to the site to represent rustic homes similar to those that may once have housed New Philadelphia's pioneer residents.

The New Philadelphia Association, formed by a group of local residents to keep the town's memory alive, erected a metal sign at the edge of the gravel road near the Baylis black top road, formerly the intersection of Broad and North Streets, to commemorate the historic town and its founder. Two plaques recognizing New Philadelphia's listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 and National Historic Landmark in 2009 are mounted below the sign.

### 3.5 Archeological Resources



A pit excavated during the archeological investigations

The New Philadelphia Townsite consists of the archeological remnants of the historic town and six non-contributing buildings and structures installed on the property in recent years. The location of the site has been confirmed through professional land surveys, an archeological walkover survey, geophysical survey, and archeological excavation, which have provided abundant evidence that historic New Philadelphia existed within the boundaries of the 1836 town plat.

Extensive archeological excavations have occurred at this site yielding valuable information regarding the town's genesis in the 1830s and the continued occupation of the site into the 1930s. High concentrations of archeological remains were identified in six town lots through systematic walkover surveys conducted in 2004, 2005 and 2006; and an intensive three-year archeological study conducted from 2004 to 2006 with support from the National Science Foundation. The pedestrian walkover surveys of 2002 and 2003, conducted to assess the archeological potential of the site, located more than 65,000 artifacts from the New Philadelphia town site, which contributed significantly to the nomination and designation as a National Historic Landmark.

Archeological features were bisected for investigation while at the same time the archeological integrity of the townsite was kept intact for future inquiry. Major archeological features uncovered in the excavations include subfloor pit cellars, subsurface storage and privies, wells, a lime slaking pit, and various foundations. The excellent high archeological integrity of the site's undisturbed fea-



2005 aerial photo with original town boundary overlay (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)

tures, stratigraphy, and artifact deposits, holds the potential to yield additional information of major scientific importance.

## 4 EVALUATION OF RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE

### 4.1 Introduction

For a resource to be determined nationally significant, it must meet all of the following four criteria:

- It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
- It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
- It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study.
- It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources is evaluated by applying National Historic Landmarks (NHL) criteria. (*Management Policies 2006*, section 1.3.2) (See Appendix A)

The New Philadelphia Townsite was listed as an archeological site in the National Register on August 11, 2005 and as a National Historic Landmark on January 16, 2009. Under National Register criteria, it was determined to be nationally significant solely under Criterion D for its archeological potential, due to the resources preserved *in situ* related to Ethnic Heritage and Exploration/Settlement. The New Philadelphia Townsite is significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 6 for its high potential to yield information of major scientific importance to our understandings of free, multi-racial, rural communities, and for the potential to affect theories, concepts, methods, and ideas in historical archeology to a major degree.

### 4.2 Conclusion for Resource Significance

Through the National Historic Landmark designation, the National Park Service has established the national significance of the New Philadelphia Townsite, and no further determinations in this category are required to meet this criterion.

## 5 PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF RESOURCE SUITABILITY

### 5.1 Introduction

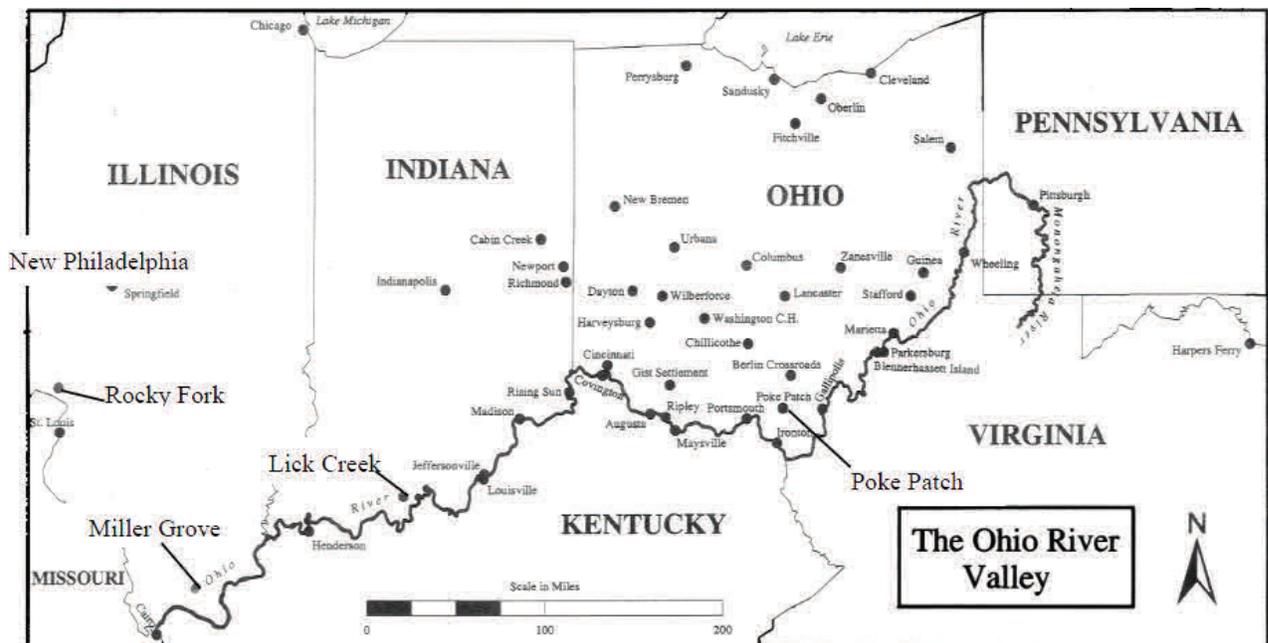
The following are the National Park Service’s Management Policies requirements for suitability:

An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The comparative

analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas. (*Management Policies 2006*, section 1.3.2) (See also Appendix A)

To evaluate suitability, this survey considers the following as similar “resource types” -- communities which share overlapping periods of significance (from the early 1800s to the Civil War), geography (small, rural, along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers), and racial and social composition (mixed race, but primarily free African Americans, many of whom owned property and businesses). As historian and archaeological researcher Cheryl LaRoche (2004; ii) noted, “Exclusive and independent of white abolitionist activities, virtually every nineteenth-century black settlement, urban or rural, offered some form of assistance to those escaping slavery.” While the communities described in this section also played a role in the Underground Railroad, they are not comparable to New Philadelphia for that reason alone. Rather, this analysis considers other factors (as not-



Map showing comparable sites (LaRoche, 2).

ed above, period of significance, geography, racial and social composition) to narrow down the list of sites considered comparable to New Philadelphia.

## 5.2 Description of Comparable Sites

Cheryl LaRoche's 2004 dissertation for her doctorate in American Studies was the primary source for this section. Her research compared New Philadelphia with four other pre-Civil War, primarily African American communities: Rocky Fork and Miller Grove in Illinois, Lick Creek in Indiana, and Poke Patch in Ohio. All four of these communities exist mostly as archeological sites with few, if any, intact historic structures above ground. However, New Philadelphia may have the most integrity as an archeological site and it is the only one of the communities to be designated a National Historic Landmark status for this reason. Within the national park system, the closest comparable property is Nicodemus National Historic Site. The town of Nicodemus, Kansas, was a post-Civil War African American community. Nicodemus is not considered a comparable property both because of its different geography (in the western plains of Kansas) and because of its post-Civil War period of significance. The difference in time period meant the circumstances guiding the town's foundation presented very different dynamics from the pre-Civil War townsites considered below.

### Rocky Fork

By the 1820s, African Americans were already migrating to Rocky Fork. Two prominent white antislavery families, the Spauldings and the Hawleys, contributed to this migration by acquiring land and providing work for escaped slaves, some of whom paid over time for the land they worked. Providing work for runaway slaves was likely at odds with Illinois law. In 1829, the State of Illinois passed a law prohibiting anyone from bringing into the state "any black or mulatto person, in order to free him or her from slavery" and making it illegal to "aid or assist any such black or mulatto person." The State of

Illinois also required people of color who settled in the state to post bond. (Middleton) Despite these restrictive laws, African-American migration to Rocky Fork continued. By 1855, close to half of the population of Godfrey (the township containing Rocky Fork) was African American. In 1863 an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church was built in Rocky Fork to anchor the community. A prominent resident of Rocky Fork, Erasmus Green, co-founded this church after migrating to Rocky Fork upon obtaining his and his wife's freedom.

Today, the original landscape of Rocky Fork remains but no above-ground evidence of the built environment exists. While it is threatened by development pressures, much of this town is preserved both through its use as a Boy Scout camp and through the assistance of the Rocky Fork Historic District Project in nearby Alton, Illinois. Rocky Fork is designated as part of the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

### Miller Grove

Beginning in 1830 and continuing for about 100 years, the community of Miller Grove was home to many African American families who lived a rural, farming life in relative isolation. Miller Grove was formed by 68 freed slaves connected to each other by their former masters, a group of four families in Tennessee. Records show that 42 of these people were freed in 1850. This was a mixed race community with interesting family dynamics. One of the former slave owners who emancipated members of the community, Joseph Dabbs, referred to the newly freedmen of the community as "my black family" (LaRoche 2004: 210).

Headstones in the Miller Grove cemetery are the only remaining above-ground evidence of the town. The townsite is preserved as a part of Shawnee National Forest.

### Lick Creek

Free-born African Americans as well as emancipated slaves and, in some cases, run-

ways from slave-owning states, began populating the area that later became Indiana in the 1810s. Lick Creek was a mixed race community, especially in its early years. Much of the migration of blacks to Lick Creek was facilitated by white Quakers from North Carolina. By 1850, when the Indiana constitution was amended to prohibit African-Americans from settling in the state, Lick Creek had become a substantial community of color. Records show that free-born African Americans bought land in Lick Creek in 1817 and, by 1840, ten men of color owned 780 acres of Lick Creek. (LaRoche 2004:246).

Resources dating to this period of Lick Creek's history are archeological. They are protected as part of the Hoosier National Forest.

### **Poke Patch**

Poke Patch, Ohio has been extensively documented as an active Underground Railroad site. In fact, it has been suggested the sole purpose of this community, which lasted from 1820-1870, may have been to serve as a harbor for runaway slaves (LaRoche 2004: 287). Records show at least 200 runaways found refuge in Poke Patch. Unlike New Philadelphia, Poke Patch was not an organized town, but rather a collection of farmsteads spread over a rural landscape. Poke Patch is in the Hanging Rock Iron Region, a 30-mile iron ore belt in southern Ohio and Northern Kentucky – a location that proved key to its ability to shelter runaway slaves as iron furnaces in Ohio played an important role in the Underground Railroad, providing supplies and shelter to those seeking freedom from slavery.

A cemetery in which several soldiers from the United States Colored Troops are buried exists in Poke Patch today, along with archeological resources. Poke Patch is part of Wayne National Forest.

### **5.3 Conclusion for Resource Suitability**

While this comparison suggests that the history of the towns of Rocky Fork, Miller Grove, Lick Creek, and Poke Patch are closely related to it, New Philadelphia is the only African American National Historic Landmark in the Midwest associated with the theme of archeology. This theme was identified by the African American NHL Assessment Study as requiring significant improvement. It can be concluded, therefore, that this theme is under-represented in the national park system. Since there are a multitude of recognized Underground Railroad sites, many of which are open to the public, the association between New Philadelphia and the Underground Railroad by itself would not likely make it unusual enough to merit a finding of suitable for inclusion in the national park system. However, the archeology of New Philadelphia offers an unusual ability to yield information of major scientific importance to our understandings of free, multi-racial, rural communities. While the four communities described here also have yielded interesting archeological evidence of their historic period, and the preservation of the three sites in national forests is reasonably assured, none of these four communities has a legal or ownership structure that requires they be interpreted as historic and archaeological resources. These two factors -- the documented wealth of archeology in New Philadelphia and the lack of adequately preserved and interpreted comparable sites -- make it likely that New Philadelphia would meet the suitability criteria.

## **6 PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF RESOURCE FEASIBILITY**

### **6.1 Introduction**

According to the National Park Service Management Policies of 2006, to be feasible

for NPS management, a property must meet two requirements:

- (1) be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries), and
- (2) capable of efficient administration by the Service at a reasonable cost.

Factors considered for these requirements also include:

- landownership patterns
- public enjoyment potential and access
- current and potential threats to the resource
- staffing requirements
- local planning and zoning
- the economic and socioeconomic impacts of designation, and
- the level of support for the property's inclusion in the national park system.  
(*Management Policies 2006*, section 1.3.3. See also Appendix A)

A reconnaissance survey is limited in scale and does not include broad public input and review. Therefore, some factors cannot be fully addressed such as the level of local and general public support, availability of land for acquisition, and the socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system. For the purposes of this study, a preliminary evaluation of feasibility for the New Philadelphia Townsite has been conducted for most of the above factors. For those factors that do not include a preliminary evaluation, an identification of potential concerns is provided.

## 6.2 Size and Boundary Configurations

New Philadelphia Townsite comprises 42 acres of land. To support management requirements and to protect archeological resources, adjacent properties would likely need to be acquired to provide non-sensitive building sites for associated infrastructure.

As the lands surrounding the townsite are still agriculturally active, the determination would have to be made if the construction of a visitor's center and need for additional park structures for maintenance would be more valuable to the area economy than the agricultural goods produced by farming and if there is a willingness to sell lands and potentially change the land use.

## 6.3 Current and Potential Uses of the Study Area

As part of a masters of landscape architecture student project at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a series of development and management options were proposed for the New Philadelphia Townsite by Nanguo Yuan (2007). Proposals included landscape redesign, construction of a "pioneer village" similar to Lincoln's New Salem, creation of a walking trail with interpretive signage and outlined building foundations, and opening an interpretive/ educational center in the vacant house owned by the New Philadelphia Association. The feasibility of these options varies, but most are likely not viable if the townsite were to be included in the national park system due to strict management policies the National Park Service applies to all of the units it manages. The ideas from this project for ways in which New Philadelphia might be preserved and interpreted, together with a



National Register plaque at southeast corner of the townsite parking lot (Ian Shanklin, NPS)

consideration of how National Park Service policies and practices would be applied, form the basis for this preliminary feasibility assessment.

A very modest interpretive center could be located in the vacant house. Programming could be accomplished in collaboration with the New Philadelphia Association, as they have significant expertise regarding the site and its history. There is potential for establishing an agreement with other current landowners regarding access to the townsite for educational or interpretive programming.

A walking trail through New Philadelphia Townsite linked by interpretive markers highlighting points of interest would likely have a low impact on the site's archeological integrity depending on the exact route, surface materials and volumes of pedestrian traffic. However, installation of stone or other materials introduced into the landscape to outline resource footprints, or the erection of full scale buildings could disrupt the archaeological fabric and could potentially adversely impact the resources onsite. A proposal such as the "pioneer village" concept would be considered reconstruction. Reconstructions are generally not permitted under National Park Service management policies, particularly if sufficient data substantiated by documentary or physical evidence does not exist to enable accurate reconstruction. These policies also prohibit NPS from attempting conjectural design and generalized representations of typical structures. (NPS Management Policies 2006: Section 5.3.5.4.4).

## **6.4 Land Ownership**

The current ownership of New Philadelphia is a mix of private and not-for-profit. The New Philadelphia Association has expressed support for efforts to preserve New Philadelphia as a park unit. It seems likely that the Archeological Conservancy would be sup-

portive of this as well. The private owners are believed to be supportive, but adjacent lands are actively farmed, and the willingness of these owners to sell their land for park unit purposes is unknown.

The potential need to expand beyond the boundaries of the townsite to support park operations while avoiding impacts to historic resources concentrated in a central location should be considered in determining feasibility. The potential impact of new facilities directly on archeological resources, as well as on the landscape, could potentially create significant and adverse effects and must be taken into consideration. While the surrounding landscape has not been evaluated for its rural character as part of this reconnaissance study, great care should be taken when considering alterations or development related to the New Philadelphia Townsite. The overall landscape setting is dominated by rolling agricultural fields mixed with stands of wooded lots. While individual buildings and specific farming methods have changed over time, generally speaking, land use activities have continued in many similar ways since the time of New Philadelphia. The introduction of new educational, recreational or other support facilities risks significantly altering existing land uses, activities and patterns of spatial organization that currently create a rural agricultural landscape setting and provide an innocuous backdrop for the New Philadelphia site.

The reconnaissance survey process did not include contacting landowners, determining whether there might be any willing sellers or what the possible costs might be for land acquisition. This study also did not attempt to determine the willingness of landowners to engage in a range of approaches to preservation of historic resources, including cooperative management with the NPS or other agencies.

## **6.5 Public Enjoyment Potential**

A major issue regarding feasibility at New Philadelphia is the ability to accommodate



Education panels outlining locations of known archaeological resources at the townsite parking lot (Ian Shanklin, NPS)

public use. Though the site possesses excellent subsurface features of high archeological integrity, it lacks the surface resources that typically appeal to public interest and curiosity. Due to the strength and nature of the New Philadelphia story, the lack of above the ground features/structures does not preclude a potentially provocative visitor experience, as many aspects of the story relate to the importance of the location and landscape.

National park system archeological sites typically include both visible and buried features. Because the historic resources at New Philadelphia Townsite are below ground, it would be necessary to apply creative interpretive techniques in order for visitors not already aware of the townsite's story to understand its significance. While at least one proposal (Yuan's "pioneer village" concept, described above) suggests ways to make interpretation attractive and engaging to visitors, the actions in the proposal would likely be difficult to implement if the townsite were included in the national park system given the strict management guidelines that apply to all units of this system.

The above factors suggest that, while other entities such as local or state government and/or a non-profit organization, could provide for public enjoyment by employing creative interpretive techniques, it may be infeasible for the National Park Service to do so.

## 6.6 Costs

The costs for acquisition, development, staffing commitments, and continued operation of New Philadelphia Townsite as a unit of the national park system would depend on the nature of the park unit and the type of role for the National Park Service (see section 7.3 for a description of potential NPS roles). For the purposes of this study, a comparison of similar park unit operations and costs has been identified. A full range of feasible management options was not included and is out of the scope of this preliminary analysis.

An examination of similar parks in the region can provide guidance on potential operating costs and staffing needs. As noted, the majority of park units associated with archaeological evidence are much larger than New Philadelphia. However, Nicodemus National Historic Site in Nicodemus, Kansas offers a similar site that can be used for comparison. With 161 acres, Nicodemus is almost four times as large as New Philadelphia, and in fiscal year 2010 required a staff of six full time equivalent (FTE) positions and a budget of \$704,000. One difference is the presence of five historic buildings at Nicodemus, and only a temporary visitor center at the Township Hall, the only publically accessible building onsite, whereas New Philadelphia has no extant buildings among its historic resources.

Creation of a park unit at New Philadelphia would likely require the construction of a public contact facility, management office space and other infrastructure and on-site amenities to support site operations. The vacant farmhouse owned by the New Philadelphia Association could possibly be rehabilitated as administrative office space, but would not likely meet long term National Park Service requirements as a public visitor center. The cumulative cost and complications of acquiring and retrofitting the farmhouse for administrative use, while meeting National Park Service standards, would likely be great. Construction of a new facility would likely better meet management needs

and could be specifically designed for the designated purposes. Additionally, the operation and maintenance of an administrative facility at the farmhouse which is within the historically platted lots of New Philadelphia may compromise the integrity of the site, creating adverse effects to its resources. As it seems likely that expansion beyond the boundaries of the existing site would be necessary given resource impact concerns, acquisition of adjacent lands would likely be necessary, increasing the cost of management. Construction of facilities would be required to provide a base of operations for staff, as well as an interpretive center for public use. While staffing would likely be minimal based on the size of the site and potential visitation, this is a cost that must also be considered.

### 6.7 Threats to the Resources

Threats to the New Philadelphia Townsite include looting and vandalism, as well as interests of hunters to use the land to develop facilities to accommodate deer hunters. The rising interest and exposure of New Philadelphia coupled with its rural location increase the vulnerability of the site to the threat posed by vandals or archaeological “treasure hunters.” This is a problem common to exposed archeological sites that could be addressed by looking into comparable sites and their protection methods. The threat from hunters could be characterized as minimal, since current landowners have not shown interest in constructing hunting facilities or selling their land to others who would do this. The sale or donation of land for conservation easements could prevent the inappropriate use of the land while preserving the archeological integrity of the townsite.

### 6.8 Local Planning & Zoning, Support, and Impact

New Philadelphia is located in Hadley Township, Illinois, approximately four miles east of the City of Barry, in Pike County. As Hadley Township does not have an orga-

nized government, planning and zoning would fall under the county’s jurisdiction. Pike County operates under the township form of government, and is governed by a county board consisting of nine elected officials. They do not have a dedicated planning staff or committee, though they do employ a zoning administrator. Any changes in land use, building plans and request for permits would likely have to go through this administrator.

There are a few noteworthy efforts indicating local support. In addition to the activities of the New Philadelphia Association, Pike County openly recognizes the tourism value of the townsite. A visitor’s guide entitled “Discover Pike County” mentions New Philadelphia in its first paragraph, and dedicates almost a full page to the story of the townsite and Frank McWorter. The City of Barry website lists the New Philadelphia Association as a community organization “dedicated to improving the quality of life,” though makes no specific mention of New Philadelphia Townsite. At the federal government level, New Philadelphia enjoyed support from Senator Roland Burris while he held office, and is currently receiving considerable promotion by Illinois Representative Aaron Schock of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. On October 2, 2010, Representative Schock publically reiterated his strong support for the site at a dedication ceremony



Aerial photo of the New Philadelphia Townsite, 2010 (Google Maps)

honoring New Philadelphia's National Historic Landmark designation.

The socioeconomic effects of creation of a park unit at New Philadelphia Townsite would likely be most noteworthy for the City of Barry, as it is the closest to the site. However, it is possible the addition of a tourist attraction connected to Illinois' African-American and Underground Railroad history could potentially be beneficial on a more regional level, drawing visitors from and leading visitors to other historic tourism sites. This could lead to a perceptible effect in local economies. A full economic analysis could investigate the potential contribution to tourism in the creation of a similar park unit, and how designation could affect the communities in the vicinity of New Philadelphia Townsite.

## **6.9 Conclusion for Resource Feasibility**

Based on available information, this preliminary analysis has determined that the New Philadelphia Townsite is likely not feasible for inclusion in the national park system. The primary issues contributing to the lack of feasibility for National Park Service management are the challenges of providing for public enjoyment, and land protection, operation, and staffing requirements.

## **7 NEED FOR DIRECT NPS MANAGEMENT**

Existing programs administered by the National Park Service could be beneficial to New Philadelphia Townsite in lieu of being added as a unit of the national park system. The National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program was mentioned earlier as a possible new connection to NPS for New Philadelphia. There are multiple avenues available to promote resources using the NPS' various Underground Railroad projects. The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom includes sites associated with the

Railroad that were often destination sites, or whose activities may have included the act of rescuing individuals. Frank McWorter's activities in New Philadelphia appear to meet both of these criteria for association. Therefore it could potentially qualify for the National Underground Network to Freedom; however such a determination is outside of the scope of this reconnaissance study. Further inquiry should be made to the necessary program representative by parties representing New Philadelphia Townsite if they are interested in joining the program.

If New Philadelphia Townsite does not immediately qualify to meet the criteria for the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, interested parties could seek to become Network Partners. Partners of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom work alongside, and often in cooperation with, the National Park Service to fulfill the program's mission. They are closely involved in the entire process of preserving resources, commemorating, and educating the public about, the Underground Railroad. Many partners have worked cooperatively with the National Park Service either in formal or informal roles to accomplish these activities. Most important, it is often through the dedicated efforts of Network Partners that elements are added to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

One other NPS program in which New Philadelphia is already included is *Teaching with Historic Places*, classroom-ready lesson plans available via the internet using sites already listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or designated National Historic Landmarks. "New Philadelphia: A Multiracial Town on the Illinois Frontier" contains readings on Frank McWorter, the founding of New Philadelphia, the archaeological research conducted, as well as accompanying maps and images, and research questions and activities to create an interactive learning experience for students. It is one of four lesson plans for Illinois, and is included in the categories of African American History,

Archaeology, Community Planning and Development, Entrepreneurs, Family Life, Pioneer America, and Westward Expansion. There is considerable potential for schools to incorporate New Philadelphia into lesson plans in any of these areas.

As a designated National Register of Historic Places site and National Historic Landmark, New Philadelphia is eligible for National Park Service technical assistance.

The necessity of direct management by the National Park Service at New Philadelphia Townsite would consider several options, including maintaining existing management, county or state involvement, management solely by the NPS or a non-profit organization, and collaboration between the NPS and another entity.

The site is currently under private and non-profit ownership, with educational institutions given permission to conduct archaeological excavations. It is important to note that existing management is not necessarily inferior to NPS management, as the excavations allowed have been the primary method by which the town plan and location of several buildings has been determined. However, if the landowners and organizations involved in the excavations at New Philadelphia wished for these activities to continue, National Park Service archeological protection standards would require a new level of oversight and, potentially, restriction on future excavations. Such a change could possibly create the greatest fundamental difference between current management and possible management by the National Park Service and must be taken into account when considering potential future activities and desired future conditions of this archeological site.

As noted in above, there are possibilities for further inclusion of New Philadelphia Townsite in existing NPS programming, such as the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program. *The National Park Foundation's Complete Guide to Na-*

*tional Historic Landmarks* has not been updated since 2006; a newer edition would certainly mention New Philadelphia and potentially draw interest based on listing there. These options do not require direct management by the NPS, but could supplement the ongoing work to promote New Philadelphia using its archaeological bounty as a teaching tool. The possibility also exists for inclusion as an affiliated site on the NPS' Aboard the Underground Railroad: A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary, which currently features only three sites in Illinois, all of which are houses. However, some sort of connection could potentially be established between these and other sites telling the story of the African-American struggle for freedom in Illinois, though this would not require direct management by the National Park Service.

The possibility of Pike County or the State of Illinois becoming involved in site management as a county or state park has not been addressed in this preliminary analysis and could offer alternatives to direct National Park Service site management. Further involvement of other regional, state or national non-profit organizations could be solicited in the promotion of New Philadelphia Townsite, particularly those with an interest in African-American history, the Underground Railroad, or historic tourism. These parties could collaborate with the New Philadelphia Association and the property owners in promotion and interpretation of the site. The NPS could also potentially become involved in this effort in a consulting or cooperative role with these agencies. Further development and analysis of these options or any others, including impacts and costs is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance study.

## **7.1 Conclusion for Need for Direct NPS Management**

Based on available information, this preliminary analysis has determined that direct management by the National Park Service is not necessary. Opportunities are present for

promotion of the site through partnerships with other, related historic sites and existing NPS programs, such as the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom and Teaching with Historic Places. Additionally, cooperation with other African American historic sites in the state and region could provide the possibility of a new program between affiliated sites, but further development or discussion of those possibilities falls outside the scope of this study. It seems likely that further investigation in a special resource study would determine that direct management of this site by the National Park Service would not offer strong advantages over existing management or management by other public agencies, private individuals, or organizations.

## 8 RECOMMENDATION

The National Park Service has completed a preliminary analysis of resource significance, suitability and feasibility of including the New Philadelphia Townsite as a unit of the national park system. Based on this preliminary analysis, the National Park Service does not recommend that a full special resource study be conducted to determine if the study area should be included as a unit of the national park system.

While the significance of this site and the associated history is both well-documented and compelling, and the site and resources appear to be suitable for inclusion in the national park system, this analysis has identified significant concerns regarding the feasibility of incorporating New Philadelphia into the national park system and the need for direct National Park Service management.

Several factors in the preliminary feasibility analysis have been identified as significant concerns to the extent that the New Philadelphia Townsite would likely not be feasible as an addition to the national park system. Opportunities for public enjoyment and operation and staffing costs all present considerable concerns that this site would not be likely meet feasibility criteria. Other analysis

that is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance survey includes evaluation of acquisition costs, preservation costs, and the level of public support. The ability of New Philadelphia to be incorporated into existing educational programming and historic tourism efforts that could effectively draw potential visitors to the site indicate that viable alternatives to direct National Park Service management exist.

While a special resource study would provide greater analysis of the resources in question, it is unlikely that a final determination would differ significantly from this preliminary study based on the issues that have been identified regarding feasibility or the need for direct NPS management of the New Philadelphia Townsite.

Sites where people of African descent sought self-determination hold special meaning for descendant populations. These areas are returned to in much the same way one would visit an ancestral homeland. NPS encourages local, state and/or non-profit efforts to continue to preserve and interpret the story of New Philadelphia.



Aerial photo by Tommy Hailey using powered parachute funded by The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NPS).

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# Appendix A: National Park Service Management Policies 2006

## 1.3 Criteria for Inclusion

Congress declared in the National Park System General Authorities Act of 1970 that areas comprising the national park system are cumulative expressions of a single national heritage. Potential additions to the national park system should therefore contribute in their own special way to a system that fully represents the broad spectrum of natural and cultural resources that characterize our nation. The National Park Service is responsible for conducting professional studies of potential additions to the national park system when specifically authorized by an act of Congress, and for making recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, the President, and Congress. Several laws outline criteria for units of the national park system and for additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the National Trails System.

To receive a favorable recommendation from the Service, a proposed addition to the national park system must

(1) possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources, (2) be a suitable addition to the system, (3) be a feasible addition to the system, and (4) require direct NPS management instead of protection by other public agencies or the private sector. These criteria are designed to ensure that the national park system includes only the most outstanding examples of the nation's natural and cultural resources. These criteria also recognize that there are other management alternatives for preserving the nation's outstanding resources.

### 1.3.1 National Significance

NPS professionals, in consultation with subject-matter experts, scholars, and scientists, will determine whether a resource is nationally significant. An area will be considered nationally significant if it meets all of the following criteria:

- It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.

- It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.

- It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study.

- It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources will be evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmarks criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 65 (*Code of Federal Regulations*).

### 1.3.2 Suitability

An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The comparative analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.

### 1.3.3 Feasibility

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area must be (1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries), and (2) capable of

efficient administration by the Service at a reasonable cost.

In evaluating feasibility, the Service considers a variety of factors for a study area, such as the following:

- size
- boundary configurations
- current and potential uses of the study area and surrounding lands
- landownership patterns
- public enjoyment potential
- costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation
- access
- current and potential threats to the resources
- existing degradation of resources
- staffing requirements
- local planning and zoning
- the level of local and general public support (including landowners)
- the economic/socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system

The feasibility evaluation also considers the ability of the National Park Service to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected availability of funding and personnel.

An overall evaluation of feasibility will be made after taking into account all of the above factors. However, evaluations may sometimes identify concerns or conditions, rather than simply reach a yes or no conclusion. For example, some new areas may be feasible additions to the national park system only if landowners are willing to sell, or the boundary encompasses specific areas necessary for visitor access, or state or local governments will provide appropriate assurances that adjacent land uses will remain compatible with the study area's resources and values.

#### **1.3.4 Direct NPS Management**

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. The National Park Service applauds these accomplishments and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities and by other federal agencies. Unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the Service will recommend that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not receive national park system status.

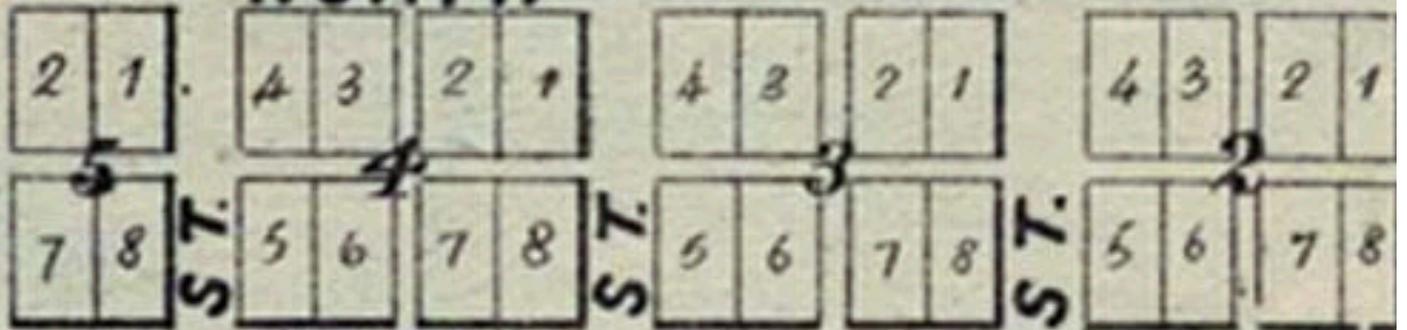
Studies will evaluate an appropriate range of management alternatives and will identify which alternative or combination of alternatives would, in the professional judgment of the Director, be most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment. Alternatives for NPS management will not be developed for study areas that fail to meet any one of the four criteria for inclusion listed in section 1.3.

In cases where a study area's resources meet criteria for national significance but do not meet other criteria for inclusion in the national park system, the Service may instead recommend an alternative status, such as "affiliated area." To be eligible for affiliated area status, the area's resources must (1) meet the same standards for significance and suitability that apply to units of the national park system; (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the national park system; and (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the Service and the nonfederal management entity. Designation as a "heritage area" is another option that may be recommended. Heritage areas have a nationally important, distinctive assemblage of resources that is best managed for conservation, recreation, education, and continued use through partnerships among public and private entities at the local or regional level. Either of these two alternatives (and others as well) would recognize an area's importance to the nation without requiring or implying management by the National Park Service.

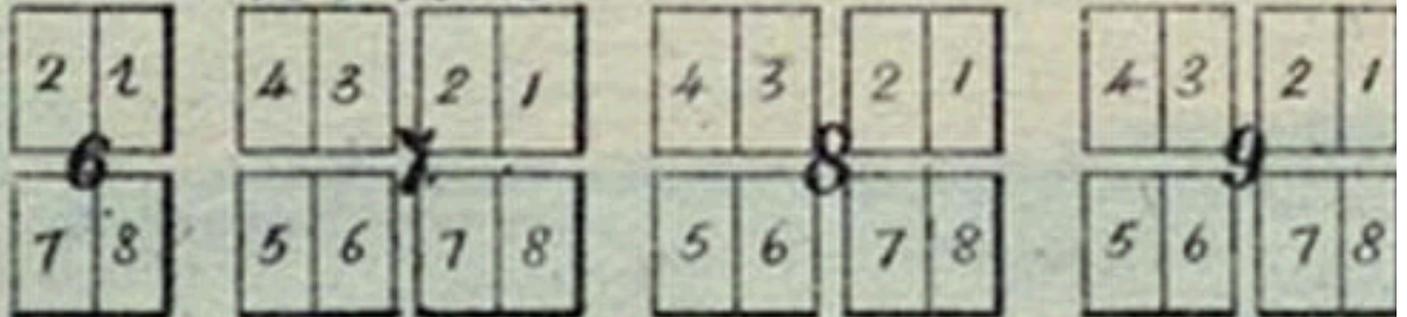




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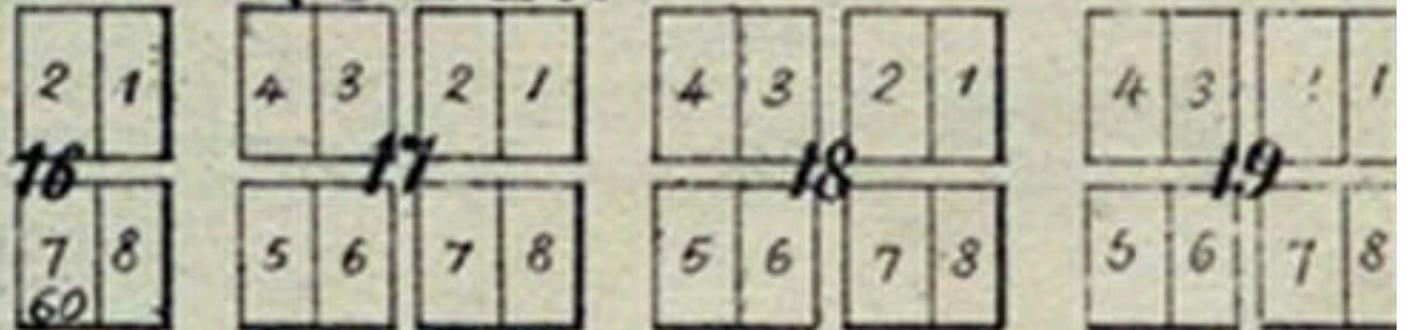
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