

477/D-349

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**
April 1996



THOMAS STONE
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE / MARYLAND

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**SECTION 1:
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISIONS**



Background

The Thomas Stone National Historic Site General Management Plan (GMP) was approved in March of 1990. Since then, further planning, design and research has identified five significant concerns that are not adequately addressed in the GMP. These include the following:

1. limited physical accessibility to the main house;
2. lack of administrative space at the site;
3. lack of group meeting space at the site;
4. need for expanding partnerships with local and state interests; and
5. need for additional staff.

During the past year, a number of meetings have been held with the park and regional office staff. These have been recorded in memos dated April 5, September 10 and September 22, 1993. Although these meetings primarily focused on construction planning issues, many decisions regarding the future operation of the park were discussed. One of the decisions made in these meetings was the need to modify the GMP so that it adequately describes a future management and facilities plan that includes these more recently identified needs. A second reason was the desire of NPS and local interests to expand existing partnerships between the park and the local community, the region and the state.

This document is a summary of these discussions and serves as a modification to the GMP. In accordance with NPS procedures, this includes a delineation of the concerns and the identification of alternatives and potential resource impacts and the selection of a preferred option.

Concerns

As discussed during a series of meetings in March and April of 1993, the recommended development actions identified in the GMP needed to be re-examined carefully in light of our subsequent design and planning efforts. During this process the following issues were raised as serious concerns.

Accessibility: Currently, the main house is not accessible to those with mobility impairments. This is the primary visitor contact point and the major focus for interpretation of Thomas Stone's life. The GMP proposed bringing all visitors around to the south, up through the terraces and onto the south porch. An outdoor mechanical lift would be incorporated into the porch. This raised several concerns:

Maintenance: The historic terraces are relatively fragile and subject to erosion. The presence of large numbers of visitors walking over the terraces would severely erode the original contours.

Historic scene: All attempts to mitigate this potential erosion and provide access to those with mobility impairments would require the construction of substantial structures at the terraces and

the porch. These all would present a significant intrusion into the historic scene and provide a major distraction to interpretive efforts.

Accessibility: Mechanical exterior lifts are not recommended under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Administrative Space: The two rooms on the second floor in the main block were identified for use as park staff offices or general meeting rooms. This has also raised several concerns:

Interpretation: Visitors to the office would have to walk through the interpretive areas to conduct business with the staff. In addition, if the second floor was to be used for these purposes, it would eliminate the opportunity for interpretation.

Curation: Similarly, the use of this space for administration would virtually leave no space for curatorial storage.

Accessibility: Developing staff space on the second floor would require special access for employees compatible with ADA and the resource conservation goals of the site.

Group Meeting Space: Currently, there is insufficient space to conduct a school program or other group activities. The GMP proposed that the east wing serve that purpose, but it is much too small to contain more than one conference table and 10 to 12 chairs, with no room to conduct an audio-visual program. In addition, similar to the issue with administrative space, these rooms are not handicapped accessible and create a disturbing traffic pattern through the central visitor use area.

Partnerships: The park is in a region rich in American history. Like many other historic sites and recreational areas, Thomas Stone has limited staff and budget. The park is being promoted as one of the main highlights in a new regional heritage tourism campaign. Since a major increase in funding or staffing level for the park is unlikely and there is a major push to build visitor service capacity in the region by private individuals, local organizations, elected officials and state agencies, it is important to identify how NPS can accommodate the potential increase in visitorship and determine how and if we can assist the conservation portion of the new heritage effort. Finding a mesh between the desires of this effort and our needs could become the foundation of a mutually beneficial partnership.

Staff: In the original GMP, there was an inherent assumption that the park would never receive substantial visitation. Consequently, the plan recommended an FTE level of seven (7) for the park at a completely operational level. Thomas Stone NHS is located within the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area - a community poised for massive development. This will directly impact the population growth in the local area. La Plata and the surrounding communities will experience significant growth in the foreseeable future.

As a result of its nearness to Washington, D.C., its attraction to school groups, and its special meaning to

the local community, it is reasonable to expect a dramatic increase in first time visitors and recidivism. In addition, the support provided by George Washington Birthplace National Historic Site has begun to consume staff time and resources to an unacceptable level. The means that the level of staff recommended in the GMP is not sufficient to remain open full time and to maintain the park and resources in the manner required of the National Park Service.

Alternatives

A number of alternatives were developed to address the management objectives outlined in the existing GMP and the issues raised in subsequent meetings. A description of those considered but not chosen are organized by individual idea or design possibility and are briefly summarized. This is followed by more lengthy discussion of the preferred alternative and a statement of potential impacts on natural and cultural resources.

Alternatives Considered But Not Chosen: The following ideas were discussed as possible solutions for some aspect of the GMP. All were rejected because they posed more problems than they solved.

Reuse of the Garage: The present garage or one of the stables could be retained and adaptively reused for administrative space. In either case, serious compromise with circa 1900 appearance would be necessary and this alternative could remove the already limited staff from any visitor contact area.

Access from the south side: This recommendation identified in the original GMP, which requires a lift on the south facade, would seriously compromise the historic character of the building. Increased visitor foot traffic has the potential to seriously erode the terraces. Finally, all research or field investigation has determined that original access went from the house, along the existing entry drive, past the pond and out to the main road. Bringing visitors to the south side would present an experience with no historic basis.

Access along the entry drive: The visitor experience should include both the cemetery and the main house. Developing a trail along the entry drive with a secondary spur to the cemetery visually and organizationally places a lower priority on this important resource. This would be inappropriate to the resource's importance and be a disservice to visitors.

Porch: The south porch is sufficient in size to gather a group; however, this space is not usable during inclement weather and it still does not provide a facility for audio-visual programs.

Preferred Alternative: This section describes only those preferred solutions discussed during this process. This is not a complete description of the preferred solution, only those aspects which are being modified. Final planning and more detailed design will be coordinated with the GMP, Cultural Landscape Report and other park documents and recommendations.

Visitor Experience: The best sequence for a visitor experience would be an orientation at the entry with a first stop at the cemetery, a second along the entry drive and the final one in the main house.

Trail: A new trail will be developed leaving from the new visitor contact station through the grove of trees to the cemetery. It will follow the alignment of the existing, overgrown field road. From the cemetery, the trail will cross the field diagonally to the entry drive and up to the north porch of the main house. The portion crossing the meadow will be maintained as a mown path, changing location frequently enough to keep grass underfoot. Visitors will leave the main house from the north porch and return along the entry drive towards the parking area. At the intersec-

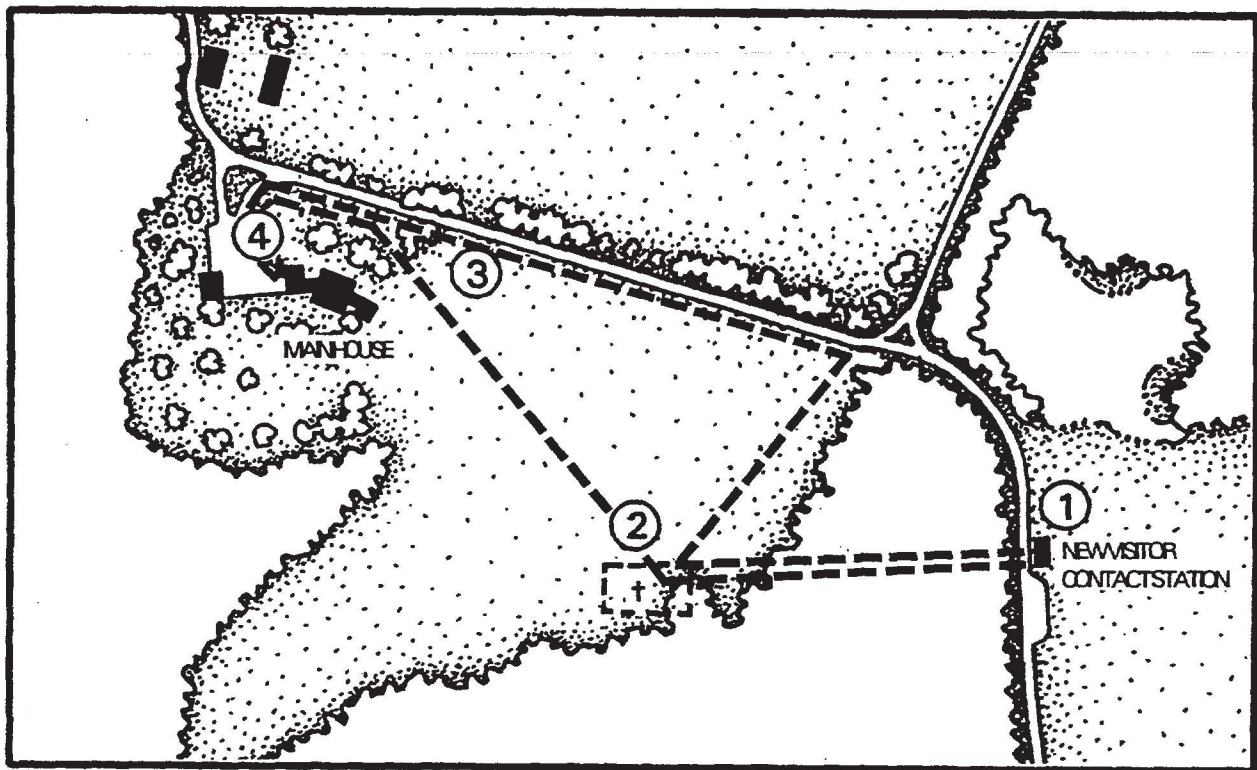


Illustration 1: Proposed Trail and Interpretive Marker Locations

tion of the entry drive and spur to the new contact station, a new trail will leave the road, hugging the wood's edge and bring visitors to the cemetery. This portion of the trail will have a surface accessible to all people and will be sited balancing the need for access with sensitivity to the cultural landscape. Visitors can then either return to the new contact station via the trail along the field road or retrace their steps to the handicapped parking area near the main house. The final alignment, design and maintenance of this entire trail will strive to maximize the visitor experience, provide appropriate opportunities for interpretation and minimize the intrusion into the cultural landscape.

Interpretive Markers: New interpretive waysides will be placed along the trail to orient the visitor and interpret important people and events associated with this site. Generally, they include:

1. a general orientation at the new visitor contact station;
2. information on the people and family relationships at the cemetery;
3. evolution of the cultural landscape and remnants of the Thomas Stone era along the entry drive; and
4. information on Thomas Stone and the building at the main house.

More specific information would be developed through a new interpretive plan.

New Visitor Contact Station: It would be possible to expand the kiosk and rest rooms in the new parking area to make a visitor contact station. This could contain office space and a small lobby or room for group activities, with audio-visual capabilities. The contact station would remain small and unobtrusively sited as possible. It would allow school children, bus groups and other visitors a place for gathering and orientation. It would also allow room in the main house for special exhibits and expanded interpretive areas, while keeping the integrity of the historic scene.

To respond to the staff and fiscal limitations of NPS and developing partnerships, this contact station would be constructed only when funds would become available. It would be designed to function with or without staff and would include an orientation to this park and other regional historic, scenic and recreational sites. Staffing would initially be the responsibility of the partners. Any NPS staffing would only occur following an increase in the existing level at the park.

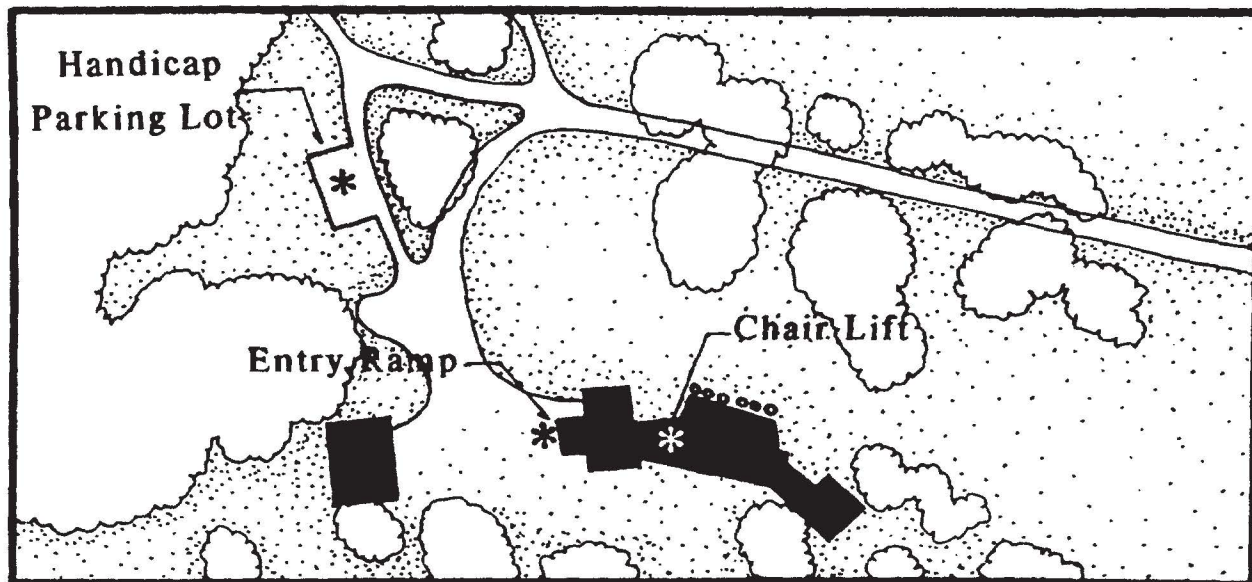


Illustration 2: Proposed new access System to the Main House

Visitor Contact: The existing visitor contact station in the main house and the group orientation location of the porch would be maintained for the near future. Additional facilities, staff and funds would initiate discussion between the park, partners and the regional office to determine how and when this would be modified.

Parking: A parking lot would be constructed near the new visitor contact point with minimal impact to wetlands and the view along the entry drive. One or two handicapped spaces would be established just west of the main house with direct access to the new entry ramp.

Entry Ramp: Alternatives for developing access to the main house that are not destructive of the resource, intrusive into the historic scene, and comply with Americans with Disabilities Act are limited to bringing visitors through the west wing door. An inside chair lift will enable visitors to go from the level of the west wing and hyphen to the main house level. This would eliminate both the maintenance and the visual intrusion problems of an exterior lift. This is the preferred option for this concern.

Staffing: To provide adequate protection, interpretation, administration and maintenance of the park, 16 FTE will be required. This will include:

6 FTE for operating two duty stations operating seven days a week, covering operations, lunches, presentations, lieu days, annual and sick leave;

6 FTE for maintenance of newly restored structures, grounds, facilities, equipment and vehicles;

3 FTE for visitor protection and resource management;

1 FTE for administration - probably located at George Washington Birthplace National Monument.

Impacts

Thomas Stone National Historic Site GMP revision is subject to compliance requirements under both the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended.

This Section and the regulations promulgated by the Advisory Council on Historic preservation (36 CFR Part 800) require the National Park Service seek to avoid or to mitigate any possible adverse impacts on cultural resources within the park or listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Advisory Council and the State Historic Preservation Officer are being consulted and informed of the changes in the GMP for this site.

NEPA and the regulations and procedures issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR Part 1500-1508) direct the federal government to consider a broad range of alternatives when developing a proposal for federal

action. The National Park Service has discussed these changes with the community and public agencies. Preliminary comments have been included in this document.

The environmental assessment, Section 2, in this document discusses the impacts of this General Management Plan Revision to natural and cultural resources in more detail. These draft documents will be reviewed concurrently by the National Park Service at the park, the region and in Washington. At the same time, it will be available for public review and discussions will be held with the community, affected elected officials and public agencies - including the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Comments should be addressed to the Superintendent of George Washington Birthplace National Monument. The final document will address all of the comments and include appropriate correspondence and related compliance information.

SECTION 2:
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



Summary

**Proposed
Actions:**

The National Park Service proposes to amend the 1989 "General Management Plan" for Thomas Stone National Historic Site.

The amendments will correct deficiencies affecting use of historic resources and the visitor experience. The amendments vary from the original document in the following ways: the construction of a full service visitor contact station instead of a kiosk, improvements in access for the physically challenged, and an increase in administrative space. Without these changes, a kiosk with restrooms and a 60 car parking lot will be erected.

**Type of
Statement:**

Environmental Assessment (Draft)

Lead Agency:

National Park Service

**Cooperating
Agencies:**

Southern Maryland Museum Association
Southern Maryland Tourism Council
Charles County, MD Historical Society

**Information
Contact:**

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Abstract:

The National Park Service proposes to amend the 1989 GMP to include a visitor contact station rather than the kiosk described in the original plan. This facility will provide space for interpretive operations, administrative use, and meetings.

As part of the Environmental Assessment existing structures were considered for accommodation of visitor and administrative facilities. However, the construction of a new visitor contact station is the preferred alternative as it most adequately addresses the needs for more space, historic compatibility and physical accessibility.

Purpose and Need for Action

Introduction

The National Park Service acquired Thomas Stone National Historic Site in 1978, but little action to develop the property took place until 1987. At that time, the General Management Plan (GMP) process began, and the resulting document received approval in 1990. Several concerns with the preferred alternative of the Plan have arisen since its approval. The GMP calls for the adaptive use of the Mansion House as the primary visitor contact station and for staff offices. This alternative provides inadequate meeting space, limited administrative space, and poor physical accessibility for future needs. In addition, a federal/state/local partnership program proposed for Thomas Stone NHS will require more space than is provided for in the original plan.

Decision Needed

The National Park Service needs to decide whether to amend the 1989 General Management Plan to address inadequacies of the original proposed alternatives. Specifically, the agency must decide whether constructing a new visitor contact facility is a feasible method of managing the lack of space and physical accessibility present in the preferred alternative of the General Management Plan.

Scoping Summary

National Park Service staff from George Washington Birthplace NM and Thomas Stone NHS have conducted meetings with Southern Maryland Tourism Council, the NPS Denver Service Center, the NPS Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, and other Maryland state and local agencies. Maryland Senator Sarbannes, Congressman Hoyer and their aides have also participated in planning meetings.

Major Issues

The major issues to be considered in planning any action at Thomas Stone NHS are as follows:

Effects on Cultural Resources

Structures; Landscape; Archeological Remains

Effects on Natural Resources

Soils; Wetlands; Floodplain; Vegetation; Wildlife; Air Quality; Noise

Visitor Use Effects

Visitor Experience; Regional Recreation Opportunities

Socio-Economic Effects

Landowners; Economy

Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

This section details the alternatives that the National Park Service has described for the Amendments to the 1989 Thomas Stone NHS General Management Plan and the environmental consequence of each.

Alternatives Considered

The following alternatives were considered for the purposes of this Environmental Assessment:

- A. No action; Adaptive use of the Mansion House; as described in the 1989 GMP preferred alternative.
- B. The continued use of the current visitor contact station, located in the former garage structure.
- C. Construction of a Visitor Contact Station.

Summary of the Environmental Effects of the Alternatives

The following chart summarizes whether or not each alternative will have an effect on the identified resource. During analysis of this Environmental Assessment it was found that while an alternative may have an effect on a resource all effects were either positive or minor in nature.

| Element | Alternative A | | Alternative B | | Alternative C | |
|----------------|---------------|----|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Mansion | X | | | X | X | |
| Other Struc. | X | | | X | X | |
| Landscape | X | | | X | X | |
| Archeo-logical | X | | | X | X | |

| Element | Alternative A | | Alternative B | | Alternative C | |
|--------------------|---------------|----|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Soils | X | | | X | X | |
| Water | X | | | X | X | |
| Flood-plain | | X | | X | | X |
| Wetland | X | | | X | X | |
| Vegetation | X | | | X | X | |
| Wildlife | X | | | X | X | |
| Air | X | | | X | X | |
| Noise | X | | | X | X | |
| Visitor Experience | X | | X | | X | |
| Accessibility | X | | X | | X | |
| Recreation | X | | | X | X | |
| Land-owners | X | | | X | X | |
| Economy | X | | | X | X | |

Identification of the Agency Preferred Alternative

Alternative C, Construction of a Visitor Contact Facility is the Agency preferred alternative. This alternative allows for the design of a structure that can accommodate increased staff and visitation needs, provide meeting rooms, and allow for an enhanced visitor experience for physically challenged individuals.

Affected Environment

Introduction

This section of the environmental assessment will consider the baseline conditions at the Thomas Stone National Historic Site. The resources described in this chapter are those that either would be affected or would affect the alternatives if implemented.

Cultural Resources

Little is known about pre-European settlement of the Thomas Stone NHS area. The first deeds for the plantation called "Habre de Venture" were recorded in 1682. Over the ensuing years, the property passed through several hands and structural improvements were made. Thomas Stone, a future Maryland signer of the Declaration of Independence, acquired the plantation from his uncle in 1770. Stone probably used the land primarily for livestock and subsistence farming, as it was considered poor for the raising of cash crops. By the time of Stone's death in 1787, it is considered that the plantation was no longer functioning as even a subsistence operation. The farm went through various periods of feast and famine, passing out of Stone family hands in 1936. In 1945, Ruth and Peter Vischer purchased the property and made landscape and structural changes. The Vischer's operated a successful horse farm until Peter's death. The family abandoned the property after fire destroyed the interior of the house in 1977. The National Park Service acquired the property in 1978.

The Mansion: The Mansion House at Thomas Stone NHS consists of three structures linked by architectural "hyphens"; the East and West wings, and the Main House. The Main House was constructed during Thomas Stone's occupation of Habre de Venture. Each of the existing wings stands upon the remains of 18th century foundations of earlier structures. The East Wing is an 18th century building moved from an unknown location to its present site next to the main house. The East Wing likely served as an office for the plantation. The West Wing is a 19th century structure and originally served as a kitchen. Fire destroyed the interior and roofs of the house in 1977. The National Park Service currently is restoring the house to its earliest verifiable appearance, approximately the turn of the 19th to 20th century. Plans call for the interior to be adaptively used as interpretive exhibit and office space.

Farm Buildings and Other Structures: In addition to the Mansion House several other structures currently exist at Thomas Stone NHS. These consist of a garage/apartment, the Stone Family Burial Ground, Tenant House, Hog Barn, Cattle Barn, Chicken Houses, Corn Crib, Tobacco Barn, 2 Horse Barns, a Farm Shed, and a Sheep Shed.

The garage/apartment structure was built approximately 1935-1949. It is not considered historically significant. The building currently houses a small visitor contact station and staff offices.

The Stone Family Burial Ground is the final resting place of Thomas Stone, his wife Margaret, and other

family members. Local tradition suggests that the plantation slaves are buried near the family plot. A 19th Century wrought iron fence surrounds 18th and 19th century gravestones.

The Tenant House consists of a 19th century structure with a 20th century addition. Local oral tradition suggests that the older section was used as slave quarters before the Civil War.

The Sheep Shed is in a state of advanced decay. It is considered early 19th or possibly late 18th century construction. The shed may be an early example of a "pre-fabricated" building; i.e., the timbers sawn to exact size at one site and transported for assembly at its present location.

The Cattle Barn and Corn Crib were constructed approximately 1860-1880. The Tobacco Barn was built approximately 1840-1849. One of the Horse Barns consists of an 1850-1870 structure. All of these buildings except the Corn Crib have 20th century additions.

The Hog Barn, Chicken House Complex, and the second Horse Barn are all mid 20th Century structures constructed during the Vischers' occupation of Habre de Venture.

Cultural Landscape: Study of the cultural landscape patterns of Thomas Stone NHS has defined the circulatory pattern of a large farm. Traces of old agricultural fields and roads have been detected through use of document searches, observations and infra-red photography. Several agricultural fields have been reopened and are currently farmed in hay. Surrounding the Mansion House are the remains of garden terraces thought to date to the 18th Century. Lines of mature trees delineate old roads and fence lines. Much of the landscape consists of mature second growth woodlands.

Archeological Resources: The National Park Service has conducted archeological research at Thomas Stone NHS in an effort to define the structures and landscape present at the site. Investigations have revealed evidence of late Archaic period aboriginal occupation. European occupation of the site dates to the last quarter of the 17th century.

The majority of archeological investigations have focused on the Mansion House. Evidence of earlier 18th century structures are present under the East and West Wings.

Evidence, although scant, exists to suggest the presence of slave quarters in the field west of the tenant house. There is also some evidence that the garden terraces date to the 18th century.

Further investigation of the entire site is needed to paint a complete archeological picture of Thomas Stone NHS.

Natural Resources

Thomas Stone NHS lies within the landform area known as the Coastal Plain Province. The underlying strata of this region are porous, consisting of unconsolidated sand, clay and gravel. The site is situated on the plateau of a

large ridge. The western and southern edges of the property are defined by three large ravines cut by intermittent streams. The western base of this ridge lying within the boundary of Thomas Stone NHS is defined by Hog Hole Run. Approximately 7% of NPS property in this area lies within a floodplain. Many springs exist on the site as a result of the Coastal Plains Province's characteristic high water table. The park lies within the Potomac River watershed, a part of the Chesapeake Bay Drainage Basin.

A complete flora and fauna inventory is needed for the park site.
No known endangered species have been listed for this area.

Soils: Thomas Stone NHS lies within the Beltsville-Exum-Wickham soil association characterized by sloping land consisting of well drained and moderately deep loamy soils. Subsurface strata are densely packed and contain little organic materials. The best uses for the level lands, as defined by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, are for the production of woodlands, grains, seeds, legumes, and grasses. The flat terrain features can also support livestock grazing and building foundations. Highly erodible sloping areas are best left in woodlands. Due to the porous nature of subsurface strata, the water table is quite high.

Wetlands: The wetlands at Thomas Stone NHS are classified as palustrine-non-tidal freshwater containing shrubs, trees and persistent emergent plants.

There is one farm pond approximately 1 acre in size located near the turn of the current entrance road. This pond is classified as open water, and has some emergent vegetation growing along its edges.

Hog Hole Run and its tributaries within the park consist of either forested wetlands with occasional flooding, or emergent wetlands that flood seasonally. Extensive beaver activity has created several large impoundments, most of which lie outside park boundaries.

Floodplain: The only section of the park that lies within the 100 year floodplain is the lower half of Hog Hole Run. This floodplain varies in width between 100-300 feet. The 500 year floodplain has not been defined for the park, however, it is assumed that all park structures lie outside this area due to elevation.

Vegetation: Three major secondary growth forest stands cover approximately two-thirds of the park. The most common stand is yellow poplar mixed with oak, red maple, hickory, loblolly and Virginia pines. Approximately 2,000 linear feet of wetland occupy the southern end of this stand. The next most common stand consists of oak, hickory, beech, sweetgum, and red maple. The least common stand consists of Virginia pine and southern red oak.

A 1 acre section of oaks show signs of Oak Decline Syndrome. Gypsy moth infestation of this area was discovered in 1994.

Understory species consist of flowering dogwood, sassafras, black locust, serviceberry, blueberry, and mountain laurel.

Agricultural areas used for the production of hay and lawns make up the remaining one-third of the park vegetation profile.

A complete floristic inventory is needed for the site. At this time there are no identified federally listed vegetation species present at Thomas Stone NHS.

Wildlife: A faunal inventory has not been completed for the park. White tail deer are regularly seen within the boundaries. An active beaver colony lives along Hog Hole Run. No endangered, threatened, or rare species have yet been identified for the park site, however, Bald Eagles could be incidental users of the area.

Air Quality: The park lies within a Class II area.

Noise: Thomas Stone NHS lies in an agricultural/residential area. Homes in the vicinity lie on large tracts of land, most of which is kept in woodland rendering the area fairly quiet. The only major contributing factor to the noise around the park is traffic along Rose Hill Road.

Visitor Use

Thomas Stone NHS was opened to the public in March 1992. Current visitor use hours are seven days/week during June-August, five days/week September-May. The park averages approximately 25 visitors/day in summer months, and approximately 15 visitors/day during the off season. One permanent full time interpretive ranger is employed at the site; this position is augmented with a full time seasonal interpretive ranger during the summer months. Gaps in visitor services are filled by the site manager or maintenance staff.

Visitor Experience: Presently, visitors enter the grounds along the main entrance road to the site, passing by the Mansion House. Parking facilities for approximately 3-4 cars are next to the temporary Visitor Contact Station. This structure, the former garage/apartment, contains exhibits on Thomas Stone and the history of the plantation. A portion of this area has been set aside for the viewing of a TV/VCR orientation tape. This area also serves as a "conference room" for park meetings. The public restroom facility is unisex and handicap accesible, but only one person at a time can use it.

Rangers or other staff greet visitors in the Visitor Contact Station. An interpretive tour of the exterior of the Mansion House is provided upon request, focusing on the evolution and restoration of the site. In-house produced site bulletins are available to describe historical and architectural aspects of the park.

Presently, visitors can reach the Stone Family Burial Grounds via a grass path leading from the garden terraces. Visitors can also follow farm roads leading to Hog Hole Run or the Tenant House. The paths are maintained by mowing. Interpretation of these areas is accomplished by self-guiding site bulletins.

Several "Special Events" are offered during the year focusing on historic or cultural themes. The fields immediately adjacent to the east end of the Mansion House are used for overflow parking if necessary.

Physical Accessibility: Currently, the first floor of the "garage" Visitor Contact Station is accessible to disabled persons. Administrative offices on the second floor of this structure are not accessible.

Regional Recreational Opportunities: The area of Southern Maryland immediately around Thomas Stone NHS (LaPlata/Waldorf) is not considered a tourist destination. Efforts are currently being made to form federal/state/local partnerships to increase visitation to this area.

General Smallwood State Park is approximately 16 miles from Thomas Stone NHS and consists of a colonial home, marina, picnic grounds, and campgrounds. Tours of the home are provided on a seasonal basis.

Chapel Point State Park, an essentially undeveloped site, lies along the Port Tobacco River. Opportunities for hunting and fishing are provided for at the park.

Port Tobacco, approximately 2 miles from the park, is a restored townsite with tours of a Historic Courthouse.

The National Colonial Farm at Accokeek is 20 miles from Thomas Stone NHS, and presents a "living history" picture of Colonial America.

Several local groups are working towards establishing the "Southern Maryland Heritage Area" with Thomas Stone NHS as a central focus.

Socio-Economic Factors

The LaPlata/Waldorf area is considered a bedroom community of Washington, DC. The area continues to grow as urban sprawl stretches across Southern Maryland. Population should continue to increase on a steady basis. Land use in the area immediately adjacent to the park are primarily agricultural and residential.

Landowners: Park boundaries surround a six acre parcel of land, currently the home of the ex-wife of the Vischer's farm manager. A small 20th century house is located on the property in direct view of the Mansion House.

Directly across Rose Hill Road from the entrance to Thomas Stone NHS is a large home and incidental antique shop. This house may be of 19th century construction with extensive 20th modifications. The owner of this property takes an active interest in park planning.

An "estate sized" lot housing development has been opened across Rose Hill Road from the park's northeast corner. It appears that no more than 10-15 lots have been planned for the area.

Approximately four homesites are located next to park boundaries. These houses are of modest construction. Contact has been made with some homeowners, however, they have shown little interest in park activities.

Rose Hill Farm, a large 18th historic plantation, lies to the south of the park. The owner of the farm has shown interest in Thomas Stone NHS and currently holds an Agricultural Special Use Permit to maintain park fields in hay.

A.T. & T. and Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative have deeded "Right-of-Ways" across sections of park property. These are maintained by the companies involved.

Economy: The economy of the LaPlata/Waldorf area is generally middle-upper class. Development of retail and residential areas is increasing due to fallout from the urban sprawl of the Washington, DC area.

Environmental Consequences of the Alternatives

Introduction

This section will describe the probable consequences of each alternative on selected resources present at Thomas Stone NHS.

Chapter 4 is organized by alternative, and will discuss the resources affected in the same order as presented in Chapter 3.

Alternative A. No Action. Adaptive use of the Mansion House, as described in the 1989 General Management Plan Preferred Alternative.

This alternative calls for the adaptive use of the mansion house as the primary visitor contact facility. A kiosk with restroom facilities, 60 car parking facility, and trail are also proposed.

The Mansion House will continue to be restored. Exhibit space and visitor contact facilities would be constructed on the first floor. The second floor of the structure would be used for administrative offices; the resulting traffic of which would result in the consumptive use of the historic resource and its concomitant impacts. An external chair lift would be installed on an exterior porch creating a visual intrusion to the historic scene.

Under this alternative, the other farm structures on the plantation would be restored if historic, removed if non-historic.

The cultural landscape scene would improve as 20th century visual intrusions immediately around the Mansion would be removed. Parking facilities would be placed along with a small kiosk in the field containing the farm pond. Woodlands would screen this area from the Mansion. A trail from the kiosk area to the house would detract little from the historic scene, as it will incorporate the current entrance road. A small parking area for disabled visitors would be placed near the house and cause a minimal intrusion.

Archeological resources would be affected in areas of restoration and construction. Some resources potentially

would be destroyed or rendered inaccessible. However, there would be increased archeological investigations as mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act, which would increase the knowledge of and mitigate any inadvertant resource destruction at the site.

Natural resources would be affected by this alternative. Soil compaction would occur in areas of construction, particularly the trails and parking areas. The farm pond will be drained and result in a loss of open water acreage, but a gain in wetland acreage. The floodplain would remain unaffected. Vegetation in areas of construction would be disturbed, although most of this would take place in the fields maintained as hay. Wildlife would be affected by the removal of the stock pond. Losses in open water species would occur, with potential gains in wetland species. Disturbance to wildlife grazing and circulation patterns would be minimal. Air quality will be minimally affected by the increase in traffic afforded by larger parking facilities. Small increases in noise levels would occur during construction phases, and by increased vehicular and visitor traffic.

The visitor use experience would be enhanced by this alternative. Visitors will be able to view not only the exterior but the interior of the Mansion House as well. The second floor of the Mansion would remain unavailable for interpretation under this alternative. Meeting space for large groups would remain inadequate, as this alternative calls for using the porches as gathering places. This would create safety and comfort problems during periods of inclement weather. Facilities for a visitor contact area and audio-visual programming would have to be constructed within the mansion.

Adequate parking facilities would be provided for 60 cars. The trail from the kiosk/parking area would direct visitors past the Burial Ground, thereby emphasizing the Thomas Stone story.

Physical accessibility to the house would be by means of an external chair lift attached to one of the porches, presenting safety and visual intrusion problems. Accessibility to the second floor offices would be by means of stairs, creating problems for disabled visitors or employees.

Recreation opportunities at the site would be minimal and consist primarily of picnicking, hiking, and viewing the plantation structures. Additional parking facilities would allow for increases in Special Event programming.

Slight increases in traffic and noise would be the only potential affects of this alternative on local landowners.

The ability of the park to handle increased visitation and the attraction of access to the Mansion House interior should result in increased visitation. This could create a moderate increase in tourist expenditures in the surrounding area and small gains in the local economy.

Alternative B. Continued Use of Current Visitor Contact Station.

This alternative describes the effects of taking no action, i.e., continuing the use of the garage as the visitor contact station and administrative offices.

The Mansion House and other structures would be unaffected by this alternative. No adaptive use for visitor services or administration of the Mansion would take place.

The remaining visual intrusion of the 20th century garage structure would continue to affect the cultural landscape. Its proximity to the Mansion House causes a disruption of the historic scene.

Archeological resources would not be affected by this alternative. No further construction would take place.

Natural resources, as listed above, would not be affected by this alternative. No increases in noise levels would be expected, as visitation levels would remain at a low level.

The visitor experience would be affected by the no action alternative as it is now. Interpretive facilities are inadequate, particularly for managing large groups. Restroom facilities are inadequate, especially if visitation increases. Staffing levels will by necessity stay low due to the lack of administrative space. The park would continue to use part of the visitor contact area to hold meetings, disrupting viewing of the orientation tape and exhibits by visitors.

The first floor visitor contact station and public restrooms in the garage structure are physically accessible for disabled visitors. The offices for the park are located on the second floor of this structure and can only be reached by way of exterior stairs. Not only does this present problems for visitor and employee accessibility, safety factors can arise due to inclement weather causing the stairs to be slippery.

Regional Recreational opportunities, and adjacent landowners would be unaffected by this alternative.

The local economy would remain unaffected by this alternative.

**Alternative C. Construction of a Visitor Contact Station, as described
in the 1995 Amendments to the GMP.**

This alternative is similar to Alternative B. except that it provides for the construction of a visitor contact station. This station would include meeting and administrative space. Alternative C. also changes the method that disabled persons will use to enter the Mansion.

The Mansion House would be adaptively used to accommodate exhibit space and a small contact area. There would be no need for audio-visual space within the structure as that could be accommodated in the Visitor Contact Station. Increased space for exhibit space and curatorial storage would be available on the second floor, since staff offices would be located in the Contact Station. A ramp into the West Wing and an internal chair lift would provide accessibility, and result in less intrusion on the external historic scene of the Mansion.

Affects to other structures on the plantation would remain the same.

The cultural landscape would be affected to a greater degree than in Alternative B. The Visitor Contact Station would be a small visual intrusion in the stock pond field. The station would be screened from the historic area and Mansion by woodlands, however.

More archeological resources potentially would be damaged or rendered inaccessible by this alternative due to Contact Station construction. This would be minimal, as mandated investigations of the construction site would take place. This would result in a gain in the base archeological knowledge of the site.

Additional soil compaction created by construction of the contact station would be minimal. Only slight increases in disturbances to natural resources are expected in this Alternative versus Alternative B. Some disturbance in wildlife circulation patterns would be expected. Air quality and noise levels would remain the same as Alternative B. Some temporary increases in noise would occur during the construction phase of the Contact Station.

The visitor experience would be greatly enhanced by the construction of a Visitor Contact Station. An audio-visual area and additional exhibit space would be available within the station. Large groups could be oriented to the site in an interior meeting room. Park meetings could take place in non-visitor use areas. Increased administrative space would allow for greater staffing levels, resulting in increased interpretive operations. In addition, removal of the offices from the Mansion would free the second floor for use as potential interpretive exhibit space.

The visitor experience for disabled persons would be enhanced under this alternative. Physically challenged individuals would be able to reach additional exhibit space in the contact station as it would be constructed under provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A ramp at the West Wing of the Mansion House and interior chair lift would allow viewing of more exhibits by wheelchair bound persons. Disabled employees would be better accommodated under this alternative, as office as well as work space would be accessible.

Recreational opportunities would be the same as for Alternative B.

The effects to landowners and the local economy would be essentially the same as Alternative B.

Copies of the Assessment have been sent to the following:

The Accokeek Foundation
National Colonial Farm
3400 Bryan Point Road
Accokeek, MD 20607
--William Corkern
--Susan Van Buren

Robert Agee
Chaney Enterprises
P.O. Box 548
Waldorf, MD 20604

The African-American Heritage Society
Attn.: Louise Webb
2540 Old Washington Road
Waldorf, MD 20601

Calvert County Chamber
Attn.: Joan M. Connel
P.O. Box 9
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Calvert County Tourism
Attn.: Herman Schieke, Jr.
Courthouse
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Charles County Commissioners
Charles County Government Building
P.O. Box B
La Plata, MD 20646
--The Honorable Murray D. Levy, President
--The Honorable Marland Deen
--The Honorable Robert J. Fuller
--The Honorable M. Charles Kisamore
--The Honorable Wm. Daniel Mayer

Charles County Community Services
Attn.: Joanne Roland
Star Route 1, Box 1144
Port Tobacco, MD 20677

Charles County Community College
Attn.: Sarah Barley
P.O. Box 910
La Plata, MD 20646-0910

The Charles County Library
La Plata, MD 20646

Charles County Sheriff's Office
Mr. Frederick E. Davis, Sheriff
P.O. Box 189
La Plata, MD 20646

Charles County State Delegation
216 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991
The Honorable Thomas E. Hutchins, Delegate
The Honorable Samuel C. Linton, Delegate
The Honorable Van Mitchell, Delegate

Chesapeake Bay Trust
Attn.: Richard Leader
60 West Street
Suite 200 A
Annapolis, MD 21401

Crain Memorial Travel Information Center
Attn.: Paulette Clay
P.O. Box 158
Newburg, MD 20664

George Dyson
P.O. Box 217
Ironsides, MD 20643

General Smallwood State Park
Attn.: Pat Norton
Rt. 1, Box 64
Marbury, MD 20658

The Historical Society Of Charles County
P.O. Box 261
Port Tobacco, MD 20677

The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Congressman
1705 Langworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thomas Mac Middleton, State Senator
210 James Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Greenways
Attn.: Ken Shanks
580 Taylor Ave., D3
Annapolis, MD 21401

Paul Nistico
7 Red Spruce Court
Bryan's Road, MD 20616

NSWC-Indian Head
Attn.: Christina S. Adams
101 Strauss Avenue
Indian Head, MD 20640

Patuxent River State Park
Attn.: Jean Tierney
1600 Croom Airport Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco
P.O. Box 302
Port Tobacco, MD 20677

Surrat House
Attn.: Laurie Verge, Director
P.O. Box 427
Clinton, MD 20735

Don White
303 Post Office Road
Suite B4A
Waldorf, MD 20602

Bibliography

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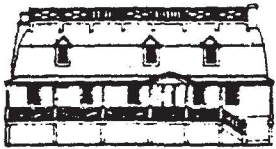
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Thomas Stone National Historic Site

Martha Walker
Lead Ranger,
Thomas Stone National Historic Site

MARYLAND
HISTORICAL



TRUST

Parris N. Glendening, Governor
Patricia J. Payne, Secretary

December 8, 1995

Office of Preservation Services

Ms. Marie Rust, Field Director
Northeast Field Area
National Park Service
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Re: Draft GMP Revision and EA
Thomas Stone National Historic Site
Charles County, Maryland

Dear Ms. Rust:

Thank you for your recent letter, received by the Trust on 23 October 1995, requesting our comments on the above-referenced document.

The proposed revision to the General Management Plan (GMP) addresses concerns which were not adequately addressed in the 1990 GMP, primarily limited physical accessibility to the main house, lack of space for certain functions, and additional staff. The preferred alternative entails construction of a new visitor contact station, trails, interpretive markers, parking, and an accessible entry ramp to the main house. The Trust has no objection to these proposed modifications to the GMP. We look forward to working with NPS to complete the Section 106 review of the proposed new undertakings, as project planning progresses.

If you have questions or require further assistance, please call Ms. Beth Cole (for archeology) at (410) 514-7631 or me (for structures) at (410) 514-7630. Thank you for your providing us this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Jo Ellen Freese
Administrator
Project Review and Compliance

JEF/EJC/9502711

cc: Ms. Tina LeCoff
Mr. John Donohue (Superintendent)
Dr. Ralph Eshelman
Ms. Peggy Shaumburg

Division of Historical and Cultural Programs

100 Community Place • Crownsville, Maryland 21032 • (410) 514-_____

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) pledges to foster the letter and spirit of the law for achieving equal housing opportunity in Maryland.



M. H. H. H. H. H.
Cultural Res. Specialist (Assignment)
T. H. H. H. H. H.
Acting Chief, PHPD/RSAP
H. H. H. H. H. H.
Secretary, PHPD/RSAP
H. H. H. H. H. H.
Secretary, NS&P, CHSO/ALSO
H. H. H. H. H. H.
CHSO/ALSO Team Member/NS&P

H30(NEFA/P-PHPD)

OCT 19 1995

Robert D. Bush
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Executive Director
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 809
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Dr. Bush:

Enclosed is the General Management Plan Revision and Environmental Assessment for the Thomas Stone National Historic Site in LaPlata, Charles County, Maryland. We are submitting this for informal consultation under Stipulation E of the 1990 Programmatic Agreement.

If you have any technical questions, please feel free to call Superintendent John Donohue at (804) 224-1732.

Please direct Section 106 comments to this office, Attn: Tina C. LeCoff at (215) 597-5194.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH DIBRETTI

[Signature]
Marie Rust
Field Director

cc:
Superintendent, THST

bcc:
PRP, THST, 106 file FY 96
PRP, Iris-Williams
PRP, Pascale
PRP, LeCoff
General
Daily
Field Directors Reading File
JPascale:bh:10.16.95

AS OF APRIL 8, 1996, NO RESPONSE HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

10/16
C. Tolson/T. Kilob
Cultural Res. Societies (Organizers)
10/16
Acting Chair, PHPD/RS&P
Hague 10/16
Secretary, PHPD/RS&P
10/17
Secretary, NS&P, CHSO/ALSO
K. Everett 10/17
CHSO/ALSO Team Leader/RS&P

H30(NEFA/P-PHPD)

OCT 18 1995

J. Rodney Little
State Historic Preservation Officer
Maryland Historical Trust
Division of Historical and Cultural Programs
Department of Housing and Community Development
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023

Dear Mr. Little:

Enclosed is the General Management Plan Revision and Environmental Assessment for the Thomas Stone National Historic Site in LaPlata, Charles County, Maryland. We are submitting this for informal consultation under Stipulation E of the 1990 Programmatic Agreement.

If you have any technical questions, please feel free to call Superintendent John Donohue at (804) 224-1732.

Please direct Section 106 comments to this office, Attn: Tina C. LeCoff at (215) 597-5194.

Sincerely,

J. Keith Everett
Marie Rust
Field Director

Enclosure
cc:
Superintendent, THST
bcc:
PRP, THST, 106 file FY 96
PRP, Iris-Williams
PRP, Pascale
PRP, LeCoff
General
Daily
Field Directors Reading File
JPascale:bh:10.16.95

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record Environmental Assessment

Addressing the Impacts of the Amendment to the 1989 "General Management Plan" for Thomas Stone National Historic Site

Introduction

The National Park Service has completed an Environmental Assessment to address the impacts of the 1995 Amendments to the 1989 "General Management Plan" (GMP) for Thomas Stone National Historic Site.

The purpose of this document is to record the decision to enlarge the size of the visitor center proposed in the GMP which will provide additional administrative and meeting space, and to improve physical accessibility of park structures. This document will also provide a "Finding of No Significant Impact" pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1500).

Compliance

The 1989 "General Management Plan" for Thomas Stone NHS was found to inadequately address several concerns. These issues became apparent during planning, design and research processes after the approval of the Plan in 1990. The five issues identified are as follows:

1. Limited physical accessibility to the main house;
2. Lack of administrative space at the site;
3. Lack of group meeting space;
4. Need for expanding partnerships with local and state interests; and
5. Need for additional staff.

An "Amendment" to the 1989 "General Management Plan" was drafted in 1995 to address these inadequacies. These amendments provide for the enlargement of the visitor center to include space for staff offices and public meetings. The additional administrative space would accommodate increased levels of NPS or partnership agency staff. The amendment also revises the method of entry/egress to the main house to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act in a manner that is less intrusive on the historic scene.

An Environmental Assessment was completed to address the impacts of the "Amendments to the General Management Plan". The views of federal, state, and local government agencies, private organizations, and interested individuals were sought. The review process for the Environmental Assessment extended from July 5 through August 5, 1995.

A total of 131 copies of the GMP Amendment/Environmental Assessment were distributed. Seven respondents provided comments. The respondents consisted of a NPS Volunteer, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, two members of the Charles County Historic Trust, and the directors of the Charles and Calvert County, MD Tourism Councils. All of the comments to the Amendments and the Environmental Assessment were positive in nature.

The environmental consequences of the alternatives of the Assessment are listed on pages 18-21 of the document. Alternative C--Construction of a Visitor Contact Center is the Agency preferred alternative. No endangered or threatened natural resources will be impacted by this alternative. No previously identified cultural resources will be significantly impacted, however, implementation of Alternative C will be carried out under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impact contained in the Environmental Assessment; and after review of public and agency comments, I have determined that the 1995 Amendments to the 1989 "General Management Plan" for Thomas Stone NHS does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

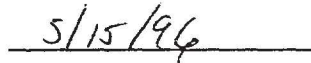
Decision

It is my decision to implement Alternative C as described in the Environmental Assessment.

Recommended:

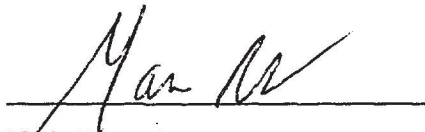


John J. Donahue, Superintendent
Thomas Stone NHS

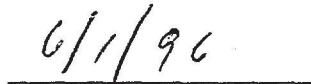


Date

Approved:



Marie Rust, Director
North East Field Area



Date





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