

# **Gone, But Not Forgotten: The Delisted Units of the U.S. National Park System**

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*(Ed. note: The following paper—the only comprehensive survey of this topic that we have seen—was completed in 1983 and presented at the 14th Annual Conference of the Travel and Tourism Research Association in Banff that year. It was summarized in the conference proceedings but has never been published in full. At the time of its completion, Dr. Hogenauer was with the New School for Social Research; now he is an independent consultant living and working in East Asia. In recent correspondence with the Forum, he said that he hoped to be able to note “several minor changes in the original text, and possibly additional delisting(s).” Unfortunately, as things have turned out, his travel schedule is not going to permit him to make these revisions anytime soon. Therefore we are publishing his paper in nearly its original form, having shortened it somewhat by deleting various outdated contemporaneous references*

*and truncating some of Hogenauer’s detailed directions to the sites (he visited each one personally.) Of course, much has happened since 1983 in terms of changes in units, e.g., the absorption of Lehman Caves National Monument into Great Basin National Park. Nonetheless, the primary value of Hogenauer’s study, his history of the delisted sites, remains intact.)*

The greatest natural and historical treasures of the United States, the units of our National Park System, are, at least in part, familiar to millions of travellers through personal experience, and to virtually everyone else by name.

While it is the “crown jewels” among the National Parks themselves which are the most widely known, the U.S. National Park System actually includes many other kinds of designated parks. These are directly administered by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior; a few are formally affiliated with the National Park System, but under independent administration.

Most Americans take these units for granted: they have been, and always will be, there. There will always be a Yellowstone, a Yosemite, a Grand Canyon, a Gettysburg, a Statue of Liberty, a Carlsbad Caverns. Most likely—but there are, in fact, 34 areas which have been “defrocked” of their coveted status as federally authorized or administered units since the first National Park was designated in 1872.

Considering how laborious a process it is to establish a National Park System area, it seems incredible that this many could have subsequently disappeared.

Of course, they are not really gone; how could a natural feature or

historic site disappear? They are all still around; they have simply been delisted (or relisted), and are now under other federal, state, city, or even private ownership. All are still viewable, and all but three can be visited. There is no geographic bias: the units are scattered among 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. All they seem to have in common is their status as relative rarities—natural and historic features whose days of actual or potential glory as National Park System sites have ended, forgotten by virtually all who pass by.

The sites we are focusing on fall within five categories, although only the second and fifth will be covered in detail:

- *Proposed sites* that never progressed further;
- *Authorized but never established, sites*;
- *Established, active sites*;
- *Separately established, but eventually absorbed sites*, now anonymously incorporated into other National Park System units; and
- *Delisted sites*, which, though once established (and in many cases actually developed and staffed), have been removed entirely from the roster.

## PROPOSED SITES

No one has ever counted the number of units proposed for inclusion in the U.S. National Park System but never authorized or established. Such a task would require at the outset a clear definition of "proposed"—for example, was legislation brought to a vote?—and would be particularly complicated by the fact that even among those sites which were ultimately implemented, many were proposed in different

versions before final delineation. Therefore, we will simply note these proposed sites as a general category, and move on.

## AUTHORIZED, BUT NEVER ESTABLISHED, SITES

Although federal legislation was passed to authorize each of these ten sites, agreements to donate or purchase the necessary lands were never reached, and eminent domain was never exercised. Nonetheless, they remain clearly identifiable, and are readily accessible to visitors. Several are significant local attractions, managed by a professional staff. Their status as National Park System units, however, is in limbo, with a definite tendency toward the unlikely.

**Belvoir Mansion & Lord Fairfax Estate.** These partly excavated ruins along the Potomac are on the grounds of the U.S. Army's Fort Belvoir in northern Virginia. They are all that remain of Belvoir, the manor house of William Fairfax, whose son George William was a close friend of and fellow surveyor with the young George Washington. The nine-room mansion was gutted by fire in 1783, and demolished by the British in 1814, so only foundation outlines are left.

Although the unit was authorized to be transferred from the War Department to the Interior Department on August 29, 1935, such transfer has never occurred. Nevertheless, Belvoir's ruins (and Fairfax' grave) can still be seen, slightly north of Whitestone Point, and virtually contiguous to a military housing section on the post.

**Columbus (Battlefield) Marker.** An Act of Congress in 1936 authorized this site to commemorate one of the last engagements of the Civil War: a battle fought for control of

Columbus, Georgia, on April 16, 1865, one week after General Robert E. Lee's Appomattox surrender of his Army of Northern Virginia. In 1938 a granite marker was erected on a grassy median strip at the intersection of Fourth Avenue and Fourteenth streets in downtown Columbus. The inscription on the marker refers to the authorizing legislation, but no other federal involvement was apparently intended or has ever occurred. Although mill structures that figured in the engagement still stand along the Chattahoochee River, these buildings have remained in private hands and are not identified. The solitary marker is the only evidence of this unfulfilled project.

**Eutaw Springs Battlefield Site.** This site in South Carolina, authorized in 1936, commemorates the Revolutionary War battle of Eutaw Springs on September 8, 1781, the last major engagement in the South Carolina campaign. Although much of the battlefield was submerged beneath the waters of Lake Marion (the Santee-Cooper power project reservoir) before any federal development had occurred, the state maintains a three-acre park on the banks of a picturesque inlet on the reservoir's southern shore. The park, with several markers describing the battle, is in the hamlet of Eutaw Springs.

**Fort St. Marks National Historic Site.** A Spanish fort, San Marcos de Apalache, was built at the confluence of the Wakulla and St. Marks rivers in western Florida in 1660. The fourth work at this site, a stone fort, was occupied by the British in 1763 when they acquired Florida, and renamed Fort St. Marks. It was returned to Spain in 1783, then captured by Andrew Jackson in 1818, and finally ceded to the United States in 1821.

In 1962 the Secretary of the Interior was authorized to accept a donation of the site of the fort and its environs, but such donation has not occurred since.

The site is considerably more developed than the others so far mentioned. An excellent interpretive museum, run by the State of Florida, is the focal point of an extensive complex of restored earthworks and a boardwalk to the river's confluence. San Marcos de Apalache State Museum, as the site is now named, is about 30 miles south of Tallahassee in St. Marks.

**Grandfather Mountain National Monument.** This privately owned and commercially operated site, of natural and scenic interest, is a 5900-foot mountain about 15 miles southwest of Blowing Rock, North Carolina. It was authorized in 1917 by legislation providing that the Secretary of the Interior could accept for park purposes "any lands and rights of way, including the Grandfather Mountain" which might be donated. However, the donation has never been made, partly because the owner, Hugh McRae, held out for designation as a "National Park," and Congress offered the designation "National Monument" instead.

A toll road starts at the base of the mountain and climbs 1500 feet up the southern flank to a visitor area, viewpoint, and hanging bridge at the top. For many years, surrounding lands—under the same ownership as the mountain—constituted one of the few barriers to completion of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Designs for the limited-access highway were long ago completed, but construction had to await successful USNPS negotiation for the necessary land.

**Palm Canyon National Monument.** By far the most deserving site

in this group, Palm Canyon preserves a 15-mile stretch of spectacular palm-desert canyon south of Palm Springs, California, on the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation. Several thousand thatch-skirted palms grow in luxuriant splendor along the narrow north-south stream which creates this unique oasis.

The authorizing act of 1922 provided that the lands required can only be "dedicated and set apart" with the "consent and relinquishment" of the Agua Caliente Band of the Mission Indians, which has never been granted. Nevertheless, the seasonal site is open to day-use visitors for a small fee from October through May. A short half-mile walk upstream from the visitor center is ample to convey a feeling for this dramatically different area.

**Patrick Henry National Monument.** This controversial site, still being advocated for USNPS administration, includes the graves of Patrick and Dorothea Henry, and a reconstruction of their last home at Red Hill. The property, 180 feet above Falling River near its confluence with the Roanoke River in south-central Virginia, is four miles from Brookneal. Red Hill was authorized by Congress for acquisition in 1935 and again in 1940, but authorization was withdrawn in 1944 and has not been reinstituted. Opposition to the inclusion of the site in the National Park System has centered around the fact that Red Hill played little or no role in the historically significant aspects of Henry's life.

**Pioneer National Monument.** This four-part unit in Kentucky, authorized in 1934, was an ambitious proposal to "preserve some of the great shrines of pioneer history . . . west of the Alleghenies" as "a counterpart of the American Revolution

east of the Alleghenies." It included Boonesborough, the site of Daniel Boone's fort and settlement on the Kentucky River; Boone's Station, where Boone's son and nephew were buried after being killed at Blue Licks; Bryan's Station, where a fort was successfully defended on August 18, 1782; and Blue Licks Battlefield on the Licking River, commemorating the battle on the following day, August 19, between pursuing Kentucky pioneers and a retreating British and Indian force.

Congress provided that when title to these areas was vested in the United States, the lands would be set aside by presidential proclamation as Pioneer National Monument. However, the lands were never donated, and the project was never completed. Nevertheless, the widely separated sites can still be visited. Following their connecting route, as it meanders through Lexington's magnificent horse farms, is well worth the effort in itself.

Boonesborough's original site is now part of Fort Boonesborough State Park. The site, in the northern part of the park section along the river, is marked by a central monument enclosed by a stone wall. Boonesborough's fort has been recreated on the hill overlooking the original settlement site. The site of the former Boone's Station, about a half-mile east of Athens, includes a 1967 granite marker and five remnant headstones. A circular stone memorial to the pioneer defense of Bryan's Station is along North Elkhorn Creek outside Lexington. The fourth site, 25 miles south of Maysville, has evolved into a combined historic and recreational area operated by the state as Blue Licks Battlefield State Park.

**Spanish War Memorial Park.** Despite more than two decades of proposals (beginning at the Denver Veteran's Convention in 1929) and authorizations (beginning in 1935), nothing came of this ambitious project on the Davis Islands, south of downtown Tampa, Florida.

Several alternative sites were proposed, to include an elaborate memorial commemorating the area's involvement in embarkation of troops for the Spanish-American War. The memorial was to be "a national museum, where the archives of the Spanish American War would be kept." A series of exhibits and dioramas on the war would be developed in eight large rooms, within a massive U-shaped building, fronting on a reflecting lake, and surrounded by 66 acres of park and space for 5,000 cars.

Today, the sites are a combination of vacant land and luxury homes along the Tampa Bay waterfront adjacent to an airport, and part of the airport itself. Nowhere is there so much as a plaque to recall either the historic events in the vicinity, or the extensive plans which were never effected.

**Wolf National Scenic Riverway.** In 1963, a study team from the departments of Agriculture and Interior concluded that the Wolf River, from its confluence with the Hunting River to Keshena, Wisconsin, met the criteria then in effect for a river's inclusion within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and recommended a federal-state cost-sharing agreement for the area's preservation.

In 1966, the Menominee Indian tribe agreed to preserve the Wolf River within 200 feet of the shoreline, from the northern boundary of Menominee County downstream to

Keshena Falls, for an annual payment. Under the terms of the legislation passed by Congress in 1968, this stretch was designated as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, to be administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the USNPS.

In 1970, the USNPS approved a master plan for the development of the Wolf as a National Scenic Riverway. The plan's objectives included fostering the recreational opportunities, interpreting the natural features, and interpreting the Menominee Indian culture and history. A Visitor Center was planned for Keshena, but there was little else in terms of development proposed; the unspoiled river was to be the focus. Public campgrounds, picnic areas, and trails were also recommended.

None of this development eventuated. Although the legislation provided for acquisition of up to 7,600 acres (320 acres per mile along the 24 miles), the Menominee Indians were unwilling to sell their land at a mutually acceptable price in fee simple, or to provide scenic easements. By 1975, the unit had been quietly delisted.

In spite of its non-progress as a UNSPS unit, the river is still readily viewable.

### **SITES SEPARATELY ESTABLISHED, BUT EVEN- TUALLY ABSORBED INTO OTHER USNPS UNITS**

Each of the these 34 units once had an independent identity, but for various reasons all have now been consolidated into other USNPS designations. Since the lands are still under USNPS administration, these units will not be discussed further. (In cases where the current USNPS

designation for a unit is merely a re-designation for an identical or nearly so predecessor, neither unit is shown on the list.)

Formerly                      (Now Absorbed Into)

Ackia Battleground Natl Monument  
(Natchez Trace Parkway)

Antietam Natl Cemetery  
(Antietam Natl Battlefield)

Arbuckle Natl Recreation Area  
(Chickasaw Natl Recreation Area)

Baltimore-Washington Parkway  
(National Capital Parks)

Battleground Natl Cemetery  
(National Capital Parks)

Chaco Canyon Natl Monument  
(Chaco Culture Natl Historical Park)

Chalmette Natl Hist Park & Cem  
(Jean Lafitte Natl Historical Park)

Cinder Cone Natl Monument  
(Lassen Volcanic Natl Park)

Denali Natl Monument  
(Denali Natl Park)

Edison Home Natl Historic Site  
(Edison Natl Historic Site)

Edison Laboratory Natl Monument  
(Edison Natl Historic Site)

Fort Donelson Natl Cemetery  
(Fort Donelson Natl Military Park)

Fredericksburg Natl Cemetery  
(Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania  
County Battlefields Memorial Natl  
Military Park)

General Grant Natl Park  
(Kings Canyon Natl Park)

Gettysburg Natl Cemetery  
(Gettysburg Natl Military Park)

Gran Quivira Natl Monument  
(Salinas Natl Monument)

Grand Canyon Natl Monument  
(Grand Canyon Natl Park)

Jackson Hole Natl Monument  
(Grand Teton Natl Park)

Lassen Peak Natl Monument  
(Lassen Volcanic Natl Park)

Marble Canyon Natl Monument  
(Grand Canyon Natl Park)

Meriweather Lewis Natl Monument

(Natchez Trace Parkway)  
Mount Olympus Natl Monument

(Olympic Natl Park)  
Mt. McKinley Natl Park

(Denali Natl Park)  
Mukuntuweap Natl Monument

(Zion Natl Park)  
Natl Cemetery of Custer's Battlefield

Reservation  
(Custer Battlefield Natl Monument)

Old Philadelphia Custom House Natl  
Historic Site

(Independence Natl Historical Park)  
Platt Natl Park

(Chickasaw Natl Recreation Area)  
Poplar Grove Natl Cemetery

(Petersburg Natl Battlefield)  
Santa Rosa Island Natl Monument

(Gulf Islands Natl Seashore)  
Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing) Natl Cem

(Shiloh Natl Military Park)  
Stones River Natl Cemetery

(Stones River Natl Battlefield)  
Suitland Parkway

(National Capital Parks)  
Vicksburg Natl Cemetery

(Vicksburg Natl Military Park)  
Yorktown Natl Cemetery

(Colonial Natl Historical Park)

## DELISTED SITES

This group is the most intriguing. Each of the following 24 units was once either a separately administered part of the U.S. National Park System, or a park of its own before the USNPS was established in 1916. All have been expunged from the System roster.

### *Atlanta Campaign National Historic Site*

This unit commemorated five episodes of General William T. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign during the Civil War. The park was established in 1944, pursuant to Congressional legislation of 1935. The park consisted of five sites between Chat-

tanooga, Tennessee, and Atlanta, totaling only about 21 acres. Although the areas were developed by the USNPS, their size and relative obscurity limited their potential, and they were never more than roadside rest stops. In 1950 they were collectively conveyed to the state of Georgia, which now administers them with little enthusiasm. The five sites—Ringgold Gap, Rocky Face Ridge, Resaca, Cassville, and New Hope Church—are strung along the U.S. Highway 41 corridor; all have descriptive markers.

### *Camp Blount Tablets National Memorial*

All that remains of this site is a stone marker along U.S. Highway 231 near Fayetteville, Tennessee. The site was authorized to commemorate the rendezvous of Andrew Jackson's troops in 1813, en route to Horseshoe Bend. Another rendezvous occurred at Camp Blount of troops en route to the Second Seminole War in 1836.

In 1861, an arched stone bridge was completed across the Elk River, not far from the site. Both the camp and the bridge played minor roles in the Civil War: Union troops of the Army of the Cumberland occupied the camp in 1863 and spared the bridge from destruction.

A 1927 proposal to make the area a National Military Park was unsuccessful, but in 1930 the Secretary of War was authorized to accept, by donation and gift, lands sufficient to commemorate both the camp and bridge. In 1933, the site was transferred from the War Department to the USNPS, but nothing further was done to develop the park, and in 1944 it was abolished. In 1969 the old stone bridge collapsed. With a shopping center now covering the

bivouac site, only the forgotten marker is left.

### *Castle Pinckney National Monument*

The thousands of visitors who annually make the boat trip to Fort Sumter National Monument in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, cast only brief glances at yet another island fort in the same waters. The Castle Pinckney site was reconnoitered as early as 1794, and the first fort built by 1797. By 1809, the post had 30 guns and quarters for 200 men. In December 1860, Castle Pinckney was seized by a detachment of South Carolina militia, thereby making the fort the first U.S.-held territory to fall to Confederate forces. The fort remained in their hands until February 1865, just before the end of the Civil War. It was never critical to Charleston's defense, however, as it was too small and too close to the city. In 1890 the structure was partially dismantled to make way for a lighthouse.

Proclaimed as a National Monument by President Coolidge in 1924, and administered initially by the War Department, Castle Pinckney was never developed for visitors, even after its transfer to the USNPS in 1933. It was finally delisted in 1956. Now privately owned, Castle Pinckney lies slumbering, a virtually sea-level ruin on the southern tip of the 3.5-acre Shute's Folly Island, in the Cooper River entrance to Charleston Harbor, about a mile offshore East Bay Street in downtown Charleston.

### *Chattanooga National Cemetery*

Lying in Chattanooga, Tennessee, within sight of Point Park on Lookout Mountain, the cemetery was established by Union Major General

George H. Thomas in 1863. The initial burials were directly related to the military engagements which had taken place nearby; by 1865 there were more than 12,000 interments.

In 1867, the National Cemetery was officially designated, and remained under the aegis of the War Department until 1933, when it (along with numerous other properties) was transferred to the USNPS. In 1944 legislation was passed returning the property to the War Department's jurisdiction, primarily because it was not contiguous with the battlefields and was still being used for unrelated burials. In September 1973, jurisdiction passed to the Veteran's Administration.

Regardless of administration, Chattanooga National Cemetery has been maintained in its original design. There have been few changes to the traditional orderly rows of uniform white headstones. The site, on Bailey Avenue in central Chattanooga, is bordered on three sides by railroad tracks and covers a 100-foot knoll. A circular road surrounds the hill.

#### *Father Millet Cross National Monument*

This unit has few, if any, contenders as the least-viable property the U.S. National Park System has endured. It was declared by President Coolidge in 1925. A site within the Fort Niagara military reservation near Buffalo, New York, was provided to commemorate the erection of a marker of gratitude in 1688 by the French Jesuit priest Father Pierre Millet.

In 1926 the Knights of Columbus erected a stone cross on the designated spot along the Ontario lakefront wall inside Fort Niagara; this was the National Monument's only

"development." The USNPS took over jurisdiction from the War Department in 1933; in 1934 the fort was deactivated and turned over to the Old Fort Niagara Association. In 1949 the Father Millet Cross was defrocked as a National Park System site.

Fort Niagara is today a restored historic site administered by the State of New York. The cross is still there, overlooking Lake Ontario.

#### *Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area*

When Flaming Gorge Dam was created in 1962 across the Green River in northeastern Utah as part of the Colorado River Storage Project, a 91-mile reservoir began forming, stretching north as far as the town of Green River, Wyoming. Shortly thereafter, a National Recreation Area—jointly administered by the USNPS (in the northern portion) and the U.S. Forest Service—was authorized to provide outdoor recreation facilities on and around the reservoir. Consistent with a departmental policy of reducing joint administrations, the USNPS withdrew in 1968, and the USFS administers the entire area today.

The former USNPS portion, north of the Uinta Mountains, is characterized by rolling sagebrush rangelands sloping gently west from the shore of the reservoir, and by more abrupt relief to the east. The picturesque Firehole Canyon is part of this area. Campground and boat launch facilities were developed by the USNPS at several sites, including Lucerne Valley on the western shore and Antelope Flat on the eastern.

#### *Fossil Cycad National Monument*

Established in 1922 by President Harding, this 320-acre monument



It was designed to protect the fossilized remains of ancient cycads. They had been discovered near Edgemont, South Dakota, by a local resident in 1892, and were later studied in detail by Professor George R. Wieland, a Yale paleobotanist. He was so committed to the project that he initially obtained a personal homestead claim to protect the area from inappropriate development.

After studies of the surface fossils were complete, however, it appeared that any further specimens, if such existed, were buried in the subterranean sandstone underlying the site. No extensive effort was made to explore these lower reaches, and the field itself was soon plowed over and became indistinguishable from its surroundings. In 1957 the lands were turned over to the Bureau of Land Management, which still administers it.

### *Holy Cross National Monument*

Established in 1929 by proclamation of President Hoover, this park was designated to protect the unusual seasonal cross formation resulting from snow deposits in a 1500-foot vertical crevasse and 750-foot horizontal ledges on the northeast slope of the Mount of the Holy Cross in Colorado.

The cross formation was supposedly noted first by Spanish missionaries, but was not documented until 1873, when U.S. Geological Survey photographer William Jackson clearly recorded its image. Subsequent tributes—on canvas by Thomas Moran and on paper by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—further increased the fame of the site, which eventually became part of Holy Cross National Forest.

After World War I, local religious interest developed. By 1927, this in-

terest had grown to include support from the *Denver Post* for an annual religious pilgrimage. This in turn led to public and U.S. Forest Service support for National Monument status. Construction of a driveable road to and beyond Tigiwon, part way up adjacent Notch Mountain, significantly improved access. This was further enhanced in 1933-34 when the Civilian Conservation Corps built a trail to and a rest house on the crest of Notch Mountain, overlooking the cross.

In spite of these developments, and transfer of the site to the USNPS in 1933, official opinion that the Monument was not viable began to grow. The pilgrimages peaked the year after the USNPS took over, and continued sporadically until 1938 with diminished enthusiasm and attendance. Apparent collapse of the right arm, variable snowfall, and even a lessening of religious fervor contributed to increased uninterest. Having the area closed to visitors from 1938-50 while the U.S. Army was training mountain fighters did not help matters much, either. In August 1950 Holy Cross National Monument was delisted and the lands re-absorbed into the National Forest. The cross is still there, in what is now White River National Forest, across the mountain lake known as the Bowl of Tears, and clearly visible from the Notch Mountain shelter.

### *Lake Texoma National Recreation Area*

In 1943, the Red River between Texas and Oklahoma was dammed west of Denison, Texas, forming Lake Texoma reservoir behind the Army Corps of Engineers' Denison Dam. In 1946, with the support of U.S. Representative Sam Rayburn,

the USNPS took over responsibility for developing the recreation potential along the shore.

Unfortunately, there were problems—primarily economic ones. Most importantly, the recreation potential had been overestimated. Lake Texoma was simply too far at that time from major population centers, and there were numerous “intervening opportunities” for regional residents. While ambitious plans were never lacking, the funds for them—federal or private—certainly were. Of the many boating concessions granted around the shoreline, most went into bankruptcy. Some picnic sites were developed, but little else of substance evolved.

As a further constraint, the USNPS was adamant that its high standards would have to be followed if Texoma was to be developed under its administration. This was often incompatible with local visions of Texoma as a commercial enterprise.

Even though political support was available, the prospects for the area’s financial viability were just too limited. Conservatism prevailed, and in 1949 the USNPS turned control of Lake Texoma National Recreation Area back to the Corps, and delisted the unit.

Today, there are only two developed public recreation areas around Lake Texoma: Lake Texoma State Park on the western shore in Oklahoma, and Eisenhower State Park, just west of the dam, in Texas. Both are traditional camping, boating, and picnicking areas, and have cabins and lodges for more luxurious vacationing. There are also nearly 40 other campgrounds and about 20 private resorts at various points around the lake.

## *Lewis and Clark Cavern National Monument*

This Montana unit is perhaps the most paradoxical of all in the delisted group. Because the caverns were initially developed by the USNPS and Civilian Conservation Corps under standard planning criteria, they could easily be mistaken for an active National Park System unit.

The surface lands above the caverns were granted to the Northern Pacific Railway Company in 1864 as part of an extensive land allocation. The caverns themselves were not discovered until 1892, when two local ranchers looking for their cattle happened upon an entrance hole. During the next ten years, any visits underground were informal.

Then, in 1902, a local mine manager named Dan Morrison took an active interest and began to invest time and money in cavern development. Unfortunately, Morrison never had or could obtain legal title to the property. This aspect was further complicated when the caverns were designated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 as Lewis and Clark Cavern National Monument. The title issue was not resolved until May 1911, when the lands were formally surveyed and the park re-proclaimed by President Taft.

In 1919 responsibility for the caverns was assumed by the three-year-old USNPS and assigned to the superintendent of nearby Yellowstone National Park. Despite USNPS acquisition of the site, no development took place immediately. Visitation was still casual and informal; the caverns were never formally opened by the USNPS to public access.

Significant development of the caverns did occur when a CCC camp was assigned to improve the area

beginning in 1935. However, even while this was taking place, the caverns were turned over to the state of Montana in 1937. They became Morrison Cave State Park. Control never reverted to the USNPS. The caverns' name was changed to Lewis and Clark State Park in 1946, back to Morrison Cave in 1953, and finally to Lewis and Clark Cavern State Park in 1954. The park is west of Three Forks, Montana, and north of the Jefferson River Canyon, off of old U.S. Highway 10.

### *Mackinac Island National Park*

There are bound to be exceptions to any classification scheme, and this is one of them. This unique delisted National Park, lying in the Straits of Mackinac between Michigan's two peninsulas, was both established *and* removed before the creation of the USNPS in 1916.

Initially designated in 1875, Mackinac Island National Park was never operated in the sense that the term implies today. Under War Department oversight, lots along the bluffs overlooking Lake Huron were leased to wealthy individuals for home sites, and the Army was the principal administrative force during the twenty-year life of the Park.

The focus of historical interest on the island, Fort Mackinac, was begun by the British in 1780, surrendered unfinished to the United States in 1796 under the terms of Jay's Treaty of 1794, and recaptured by the British during the War of 1812. John Jacob Astor made the island the northern headquarters of his American Fur Company in 1815. Although the fur trade declined steadily after 1840, the fort itself remained active throughout most of the period that the National Park existed.

During this time, thousands of visitors flocked to the island in season. The destination was widely featured in steamboat and railroad excursion leaflets and advertisements, and numerous resort hotels were developed, including the massive Grand Hotel, built in 1887 and still open for guests.

In 1894 the Army finally abandoned the fort and the island; the next year, the island was transferred to the state of Michigan for use as a state park. Today Mackinac Island remains a principal tourist destination, and is served by seasonal ferry connections from St. Ignace and Mackinaw City at either end of the Mackinac Bridge. On the island itself, the historic fort is well-preserved under the administration of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission.

### *Mar-a-Lago National Historic Site*

This palatial mansion in Palm Beach, Florida, built on a site between the Atlantic Ocean and Lake Worth Lagoon, was offered as a donation to the federal government by its owner, Marjorie Merriweather Post, the cereal heir.

Originally, the mansion was proposed as a presidential retreat and a lavish guest house for foreign dignitaries. It is indeed an opulent setting: a 115-room Spanish-Moorish villa, with gilded 30-foot-high ceilings and columned cloisters, furnished with rare period antiques. A 75-foot tower affords a sea-to-ocean view, and a special tunnel leads under the beachfront boulevard to a private beach. The mansion, completed in 1927 after four years of work, is set in 17 acres of spectacularly manicured grounds. At times, a staff of over 70 was required to maintain it.

Unfortunately, continuing operating expenses—estimated to be between \$150,000 and \$250,000 per year—were deemed excessive, even if supported in part by Post's trust funds, and the foreseeable incompatibility with the surrounding exclusive residential area was always a concern.

Eventually, plans to employ the mansion as a guest house were abandoned, and the site was considered instead for development as a unit of the National Park System. Although Mar-a-Lago was designated a National Historic Site in 1969, it was never developed nor officially opened to visitors, and was finally delisted in 1980.

### *Millerton Lake National Recreation Area*

In 1944, Friant Dam was built for irrigation purposes across the San Joaquin River in central California, at the point where the river enters the Central valley from the foothills of the Sierra Nevada to the east. Behind the dam, the 16-mile-long Millerton Lake was formed; around its shores, an 11,605-acre National Recreation Area was developed, first administered by the USNPS in 1945.

The period of USNPS control was short-lived, and the area was turned over to the state in 1957. Now known as Millerton Lake State Recreation Area, it is primarily used for camping, picnicking, and water sports. It lies 20 miles northeast of Fresno.

### *The National Visitor Center*

This gratefully delisted unit is the most embarrassing in USNPS history.

In 1968, legislation was passed which authorized the conversion of much of the once-lavish Union Station in Washington, D.C., to a Na-

tional Visitor Center. The ambitious plans for the Center were all-embracing, including a "Welcome to Washington" audiovisual presentation on a 100-foot wall screen in a special viewing pit sunk into the floor of the former station; two 175-seat mini-theaters; a Discover America Hall of States; provision for medical, police, and travel assistance; an elevated parking garage for 500 cars; and a replacement rail station a quarter of a mile from the original site.

Unfortunately, the Center was in trouble from the start. Administration was divided among the Departments of Interior and Transportation, Congress, and the railroads. Actual conversion only began in 1974, and was rushed to sufficient completion for the Center to open on July 4, 1976, for the Bicentennial celebrations. The original budget of \$16 million escalated to as much as \$100 million by 1981.

By this time it was clear that the concept, its execution, or both, were disastrous. Visitors were almost nonexistent. The presence of homeless people gave the Center a dismal reputation. At the depths of the Center's distress, a massive roof leak led to the collapse of the ceiling, extensive water damage, toadstools growing on the carpeting, an invasion of pigeons, and closure in mid-February 1981. In December 1981 the USNPS was relieved of involvement. Union Station has since been restored as a subway station and shopping complex.

### *New Echota Marker National Memorial*

By 1820, the independent Cherokee Nation had abandoned its earlier form of government by tribal council, and adopted a republican structure. In 1825 the Cherokee legisla-

ture adopted a resolution providing for establishment of a capital, to be called New Echota. For the next thirteen years, New Echota was developed and expanded into a thriving community, with its own court house and print shop for the tribal newspaper.

After the Cherokees were expelled from the Southeast in 1838 and 1839, the site fell into disuse, was plowed over, and ultimately "lost" by the turn of the century. Only scant knowledge of the location of New Echota existed even as late as 1930, when a National Memorial was established on 0.92 acres of donated land near Calhoun in northern Georgia. The Memorial was originally placed under War Department management. In 1931, a granite shaft was erected to commemorate the Cherokee capital, but the unit was obscure and rarely visited. The advent of USNPS control in 1933 did little to expand its impact.

Then, in the early 1950s, a group of citizens from Calhoun sought to determine the site of New Echota through archaeological investigations. They were successful, and purchased 200 acres of the former town area for development as a historic site. The National Memorial, which was actually not on the town site, was delisted in 1950 and turned over to the state of Georgia in 1952. The granite shaft is now on the 14th hole of the Elks Club Golf Course.

Today, New Echota is a well-developed historical attraction operated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Extensive efforts have resulted in the reconstruction of Vann Tavern, the Print Shop, and the Court House, and a nearby missionary house.

### ***Old Kasaan National Monument***

If remoteness, rather than accessibility, were the principal criterion for retention on the USNPS ledger, then this former monument would never have been delisted.

Old Kasaan is a 38-acre site on the north shore of Skowl Arm, on the east coast of Prince of Wales Island, west of Ketchikan, Alaska. It was proclaimed a National Monument in 1916 by President Wilson to commemorate "historic aboriginal ruins," primarily a group of beachfront totem poles, of the Haida Indians.

Old Kasaan was so remote and inaccessible that it was little visited. No development was undertaken even after the unit was transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the USNPS in 1933. In 1955 it was delisted, jurisdiction reverted to the U.S. Forest Service, and the lands were incorporated into Tongass National Forest.

In the early 1970s, when it was finally recognized that the totems were being destroyed by years of continual exposure to moisture, the poles were moved from Old Kasaan to the Totem Heritage Center, a specially designed museum in Ketchikan.

Ironically, the original site is now comparatively easy to visit by means of the ubiquitous charter floatplane. Although the cost is relatively high, there is value indeed in witnessing the silent majesty of the encroaching forest's mossy embrace, and the few relict totems lying in decay.

### ***Papago Saguaro National Monument***

Passengers on final approach to Phoenix's Sky Harbor International Airport, and motorists driving along U.S. Highway 60/89, most likely give little more than a passing

glance to a group of bizarre sandstone outcrops four miles east of Sky Harbor in Tempe, Arizona. Yet the present Papago State Park and adjacent Phoenix Military Reservation contain the fascinating geological formations which were once part of Papago Saguaro National Monument, which existed from 1914 to 1930.

The monument of nearly 2,000 acres was set aside to protect "splendid examples of giant cacti and yucca palm, and prehistoric pictographs of archeological and ethnological value." Today, power lines, a canal, and railroad tracks detract from the scene, but if a viewer can mentally remove these and other developments from sight, the former monument can be visualized as "a bit of unchanged desert in the midst of the cultivated and really alien luxuriance of the Salt River Project."

#### *St. Thomas National Historic Site*

The structure housing fire and civil defense offices in downtown Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, is also Fort Christian, the oldest remaining building in the Virgin Islands. Dating from 1671 and completed in 1680, Fort Christian served as the hub of early Danish settlement on the island, housing the governor, the Lutheran ministers, as well as the fort garrison. It was also used as a fortification and a place of worship. In 1960, the area between Emancipation Park on the north, and the Marine barracks and Coast Guard station on the south, including Fort Christian, was designated as St. Thomas National Historic Site.

Although other structures commemorative of the period of Danish possession have been successfully restored and interpreted by the USNPS as Christiansted National Historic Site in nearby St. Croix, Fort Christian's

contemporary role apparently outweighed its historic importance, for no progress was ever made in developing the site. In 1975 the unit was dropped from the USNPS register and reconveyed to the Virgin Islands government.

#### *Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area*

Shadow Mountain is unique in this group: it is the only delisted unit fully developed by the USNPS and then transferred in its entirety to another federal agency for continuing operation. This property, adjacent to Rocky Mountain National Park, was developed under the USNPS's Mission 66 program under terms of an agreement signed with the Bureau of Reclamation in 1952.

The Colorado-Big Thompson project, a major Bureau undertaking, diverts water from the Colorado River Valley on the western slope of the Continental Divide to the eastern slope, where it is used for irrigation. Water from Lake Granby (elevation 8281 feet) is pumped up to Shadow Mountain Lake and Grand Lake (8366 feet) and then sent through the 13-mile-long Adams Tunnel under the peaks of the National Park to the Big Thompson drainage on the eastern slope of the Divide. Three reservoirs on the western slope—Willow Creek Reservoir, Shadow Mountain Lake, and Lake Granby—and the largest natural body of water in Colorado, Grand Lake, comprise the "Great Lakes" storage area of the project, and the basis for the 19,200-acre National Recreation Area. Boating, fishing, camping, and hunting are the principal activities at Shadow Mountain.

In 1978, a tract of land including Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area was redesignated as Ara-

paho National Recreation Area under Forest Service administration. Transfer of USNPS responsibility was made effective in 1979, and the unit formally delisted. Arapaho continues to be operated, however, virtually without change.

### *Shoshone Cavern National Monument*

Shoshone Cavern National Monument, outside Cody, Wyoming, was discovered by one Ned Frost in 1908 and accordingly named Frost Cave. It was established sight unseen as Shoshone Cavern National Monument by President Taft in 1909. The enabling legislation referred to the cavern as being of "great scientific interest and value to the people of the United States" because it was "of unknown extent" with "many windings and ramifications and containing vaulted chambers of large size, magnificently decorated with sparkling crystals and beautiful stalactites, and containing impenetrable pits of unknown depth." Moreover, the cavern's location, east of Yellowstone National Park and on a major access route, suggested a promising future.

Despite these initial high expectations, Shoshone Cavern never fulfilled its oversold promise. The cavern did not come close to Carlsbad, Mammoth Cave, or Wind Cave in extent or quality of features. It was also relatively difficult to reach, the entrance being high up on Cedar Mountain, and was therefore never developed sufficiently to be opened to the public, either before 1933 or after, when the USNPS took over.

Internal reports of the 1930s and 1940s noted the limited resources and difficulty of development, and finally proposed abolishment of the unit. Recommendations included turning

the cave over to the state of Wyoming or city of Cody. The latter prevailed, and the unit was turned over to Cody in 1954. It was in turn developed and run privately until 1966, when it closed for good.

### *Sullys Hill National Park*

Sullys Hill Park—commemorating General Alfred H. Sully—was established as a game preserve by presidential proclamation in 1904 within the boundaries of Devils Lake Indian Reservation in North Dakota. It was never officially designated as Sullys Hill *National Park*, but came to be regarded as such by being administered with other pre-USNPS units.

Sullys Hill was succinctly described as "a small park with woods, streams, and a lake. . . ." The 780-acre tract was well-wooded and in its southwest part was a small lake. There were no buildings or improvements of any kind. Legislation in 1914 and 1921 designated the unit as a game preserve and bird refuge, respectively.

The USNPS inherited Sullys Hill in 1916 with mixed emotions. It remained in the National Park System until 1931, when it was transferred to the Department of Agriculture for use as a National Game Preserve. Sullys Hill is now under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The area lies south of the town of Devils Lake. Small herds of buffalo, elk, and deer are found throughout the park.

### *Verendrye National Monument*

This site is the only one delisted because the historical premise upon which it was based turned out to be false. Verendrye National Monument was designated in 1917 on about 250 acres of what was then Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota.

It commemorated what was thought to be the point from which the French explorer Sieur de la Verendrye "first saw beyond the Missouri River" in 1738. By the mid-1920s it had become reasonably certain, however, that Verendrye himself had never reached the site. Yet his two sons had apparently camped there in 1742 on their expedition from present-day Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, and again in May 1743 on their return—covering territory sixty years before Lewis and Clark.

The lands comprising Verendrye National Monument were initially identified as the site because of their proximity to the Old Crossing of the Upper Missouri near the Mandan Indian village on the left bank. The National Monument included Crowhigh (or Crow Flies High) Butte, a regional landmark some 565 feet above the river.

In 1955, Lake Sakakawea began forming behind the Garrison Dam eighty miles downstream, eventually submerging the riverfront portions of the monument. Given that the unit's historic value was questionable at best, in 1956 it was abolished. Even though the waters of the Missouri have risen 200 feet, Crowhigh Butte remains the local high point. A state historical marker and crumbling concrete and pipe fence are the only surviving remnants of Verendrye National Monument. Yet the early morning panorama west from the Butte remains a spectacular sight, and a worthy point for tribute to the explorers whose arrival at the spot 250 years ago was considerably more challenging.

### *Wheeler National Monument*

High on the southern slopes of the La Garita Mountains in southwestern

Colorado, above the headwaters of Bellows Creek, is a unique area of ancient volcanic dust deposits, sculptured and eroded into bizarre shapes by wind and rain. Local Ute Indians apparently used the area as a hide-out, and pointed it out to early Spanish explorers. An exploring party headed by John C. Fremont passed nearby in 1848-49, and Lieutenant George M. Wheeler and his team conducted extensive surveys in the vicinity in 1874, but neither party mentioned sighting the remote formations.

It was only in 1908, when a local rancher, Elwood Bergey, convinced the regional U.S. Forest Service supervisor to make an inspection, that the area received attention. The supervisor, a man named Frank Spencer, was sufficiently enthusiastic to recommend National Monument status to Forest Service head Gifford Pinchot. In the spirit of the times, Pinchot convinced President Theodore Roosevelt to accord the area this protection. Despite suggestions that the park be named after Fremont, Wheeler National Monument was proclaimed in December 1908 on 300 acres under Forest Service jurisdiction.

Not much happened to the site after that. In 1933, Wheeler was transferred to the USNPS, but its extreme remoteness doomed the park to benign neglect. In 1950 the National Monument was abolished and returned to the Forest Service, where it is now known as the Wheeler Geologic Area within Rio Grande National Forest. Access remains difficult today, and the formations, once reached, can only be explored on foot.



## **White Plains National Battlefield Site**

The battle of White Plains, New York, was fought from October 28 to November 1, 1776, as General George Washington's patriot army, moving northward in retreat from Long Island and Manhattan, successfully delayed further advances by Sir William Howe's pursuing British force.

To commemorate various locations pertinent to this fighting, White Plains National Battlefield Site was proclaimed under War Department administration in 1926, and transferred to the USNPS in 1933. No federal lands were ever involved, and what little development there was, was limited to three descriptive markers. The Battlefield Site, such as it was, was dropped from USNPS records in 1956.

Two years later a group of local citizens organized the Battle of White Plains Monument Committee to identify, preserve, and protect as many of the relevant sites as possible. For a number of years the Committee sponsored an annual re-enactment of the battle, and they laid out a nine-mile Heritage Trail connecting all the principal points of interest.

## **CONCLUSION**

This brief, nostalgic examination of the delisted USNPS sites leads to the conclusion that the periodic re-evaluations and selective parings of the past have not proved detrimental to the National Park System or to the properties themselves, and therefore future delistings should not be feared. Such a conclusion, which is certainly not an advocacy for wholesale deletions, is appropriate for several reasons.

First, the parings have been extremely selective. Only 24 units have

actually been deleted, and only 10 authorized without ever being established. Collectively, they represent less than 9% of all the units ever created.

Second, there is no geographic bias. The defrocked units are in 19 states, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia.

Third, only one of the 34 units (Shoshone Caverns) is currently beyond general visitation or visibility.

Fourth, and most important, none of the units, except for the National Visitor Center (which was neither historic nor scenic) have lost their integrity as historic, natural, and recreational areas, even under diverse, non-USNPS administrations.

Are there any regrets?

Definitely. But not over their delisting *per se*. Rather, that the demonstrated developmental and interpretive skills of the USNPS staff were never fully applied to these sites so as to preclude their delisting. But that is a regret which could be voiced at countless locations, including numerous sites currently within the National Park System.

As the System has grown, particularly in recent years, quality development and interpretation have fallen behind. Major units have deteriorated, and minor units have been neglected or left in a state of partial completion. This is the greatest tragedy, for high standards and selectivity have made the U.S. National Park System great. Endless expansion of the System is not only utterly impractical, but ultimately self-defeating, as quality inevitably suffers as quantity increases.

Because of the demonstrated interpretive skills of the USNPS staff, every National Park System unit theoretically has the potential for quality development and significant

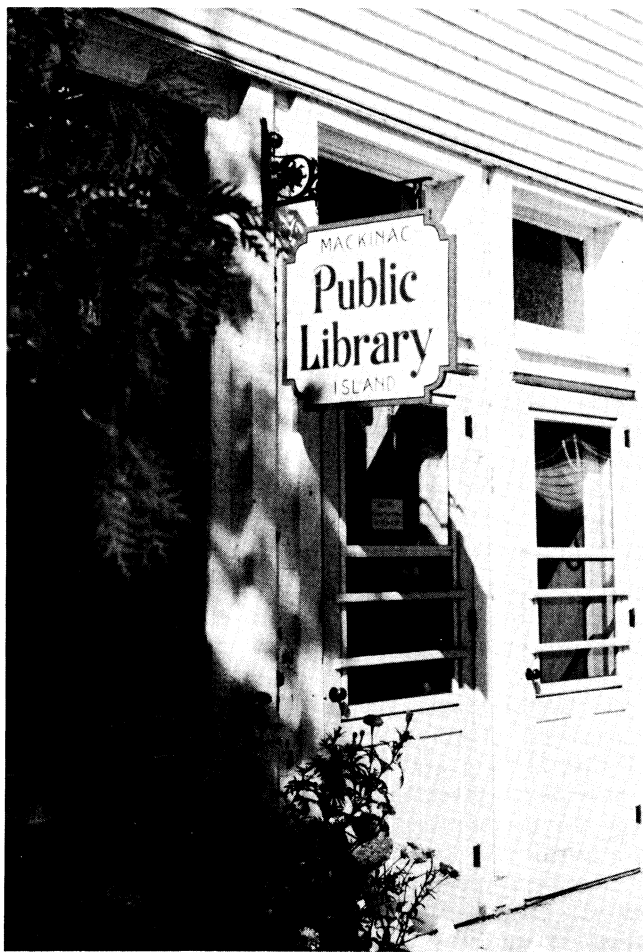
public benefit, if these skills are fully applied. Yet funds for these purposes are not unlimited: when Congress fails to appropriate or the USNPS fails to budget the amounts necessary to support acceptable development of a unit or units, such sites may ultimately warrant reconsideration. Moreover, national tastes and interests are constantly changing.

This suggests the need for a continual review of priorities, rather than an automatic policy of cumulative retention, as a means of maintaining overall System integrity.



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*Photo by Charles Eshbach*