

COURIER

NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SPECIAL ISSUE

AUGUST 1991

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C O V E R

From the Grand Canyon cabins to modern designs at Crater Lake, NPS housing has come a long way. The cover photograph, the work of photographer Diana Adams, illustrates one of the starting points of the program. The back cover photo by Bob Lopenske shows the elegant simplicity of the Crater Lake design where the family room is above the snow line to take advantage of winter light.



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BEING A GOOD LANDLORD



No one should have to live in substandard housing. But, substandard housing provided by the federal government in places as beautiful as the parks seems particularly unconscionable. Unfortunately, in all too many places, that has been the case for NPS employees. I don't think that's right, and I know previous directors have felt that way too. Requiring permanent or seasonal employees and their families to live in inadequate housing is a disservice to them and truly an embarrassment to us. Housing should be clean, safe, affordable, and large enough to meet needs. These are basic requirements, which our employees are entitled to expect.

Historically, park housing has not received the kind of attention it should. Certainly there have been periods of time when we've given attention to housing, most notably during Mission 66, but most of the time we've only been able to do the bare minimum to keep housing functional, often having to make do with trailers, and falling further and further behind in our housing problem. In recent years we haven't been able to provide the necessary, long-term attention park housing deserves.

Fortunately, things are changing. Although it may have seemed a long time in coming, we are now giving a lot of attention to the park housing issues. Since 1989, \$26 million has been appropriated to address housing and housing-related needs. Next year, we've requested \$8 million, and, in the coming years, we need to continue this commitment to reliably and responsibly funding the Service's housing program. Thirty-four million dollars is a lot of money and this amount is above and beyond what the Park Service already puts toward park housing, but when you consider that we have a housing backlog of \$500 million, you can understand that it will require long-term attention to fully address our housing needs.

I'm pleased to say that the bulk of the money has been going to "bricks and mortar" improvements. We're upgrading existing structures to fit the needs of employees; maintaining those already in good, useable condition; and building new houses where the old units can no longer be rehabilitated or additional housing is justified. In short, we're doing the continual work that a good landlord has to do.

The remaining amount of funding has been and is being put toward planning. The future of our housing program relies on this activity—what we will have tomorrow is what we plan for today. The Denver Service Center is doing an excellent job spearheading the design and planning of most of our new park houses. Planners and designers are taking into account employee needs and desires—looking at space requirements for families, including family rooms, larger kitchens and number of bathrooms; including important amenities like landscaping, storage space, and garages. We're now providing such desirable features as dishwashers, washer/dryers, microwaves, and adequate closet space. Housing is also being designed and built with

proper insulation to ensure a higher degree of energy efficiency. If this all sounds a little like a real estate ad, I take it as an encouraging sign that we can describe our new and rehabilitative housing in such positive terms.

As important as the layout of the housing to the individuals and families is the way it fits in the park environment. We're making every effort to build housing that blends in as much as possible with the landscape of the area. We want our houses to look as if they belong where they're built, which means landscaping and designing them in keeping with the traditional design styles of the area. You won't be seeing beachfront style houses in the Southwest or adobe style on the East Coast. Landscaping will be done that fits with the climate, rainfall,

native species, and other natural growing conditions of the area.

Some of the new homes being built are located in Virgin Islands, C&O Canal, Big Bend, Grand Canyon, Glacier Bay, Isle Royale, Assateague, Bandelier, and Crater Lake. Some of the houses at Crater Lake are good examples of how a good design can and should relate to the needs of occupants and conditions of the area—the bedrooms are on the first floor with the living areas above so that families can get sunlight in the winter when the snow generally is deeper than the ground floors.

If funding comes through, new homes are also being planned for Hubbell Trading Post, Bering Land Bridge, Cape Hatteras, Perry's Victory, and Agate Fossil Beds. The Service is also rehabilitating buildings at Martin Luther King, Gettysburg, and other areas throughout the system. The big thrust in the Rocky Mountain and Western Region is to replace trailers in a number of areas such as Lake Mead, Death Valley, Arches and Bighorn Canyon. So the National Park Service's housing program is certainly doing a lot.

However, the housing program must be a long term, not a short term, commitment. It's a program that's up and running but will need continued attention in the coming years. This is not a program of "quick fixes." Our focus is on creating new, quality homes that are sensibly and sensitively designed.

The housing program is critically important; it directly effects the morale and productivity of employees living in park areas. Our employees deserve a nice, safe place to live and the Park Service has an obligation to provide it. Through the housing program, park housing will be the kind of place one wants to return home to after a hard day's work.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "James M. Ridenour". The signature is fluid and cursive.

James M. Ridenour

BY RICHARD WEST SELLARS

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

THE COOK FAMILY AND NPS HOUSING.

On a cold day in November 1958, John Cook and his wife, Dani, sat down to a festive Thanksgiving dinner with turkey and all the trimmings. The Cooks had just moved into a new home in Chaco Canyon NM. John himself had graded the house site, and had helped Dani select some of the interior colors and materials, such as the tile for the kitchen and bath—and he remembers well the *beautiful* three-bedroom Mission 66 house. John and Dani were newlyweds, and it was their first *real* house to share together, as they had begun their marriage living in a small Park Service trailer at Chaco.

This move was just another step in the Cook family's long odyssey with national park housing. Two generations back, in 1924, John's grandfather, John E. Cook, began working for the NPS at Grand Canyon, where he lived in a small cabin with a kitchen and a combined bedroom and sitting room. Near by was a tent cabin for the children, and an outhouse. Gradually moving up in the world, John E. Cook and his family occupied a duplex, and then a single family house, both at Grand Canyon.

His son, John O. Cook, lived with his folks at Grand Canyon, then began his own Park Service career there in 1936, living in a tent with bathroom facilities across the street. Like his father, John O. lived in a variety of housing at Grand Canyon, including a tent cabin, trailers, and wood-frame cabins. He notes, "When you start at the bottom, the next place looks pretty big," and eventually John and Bee Cook did get a big house at Grand Canyon—a two-story, four-bedroom house with hardwood floors.

They fondly remember their next homes at Montezuma, Wupatki, and Saguaro—two of which were built under the direction of Frank "Boss" Pinkley. These houses were small, yet attractive, and John O. says their Wupatki home was "colder than hell, but still a very nice place." But their favorite house was the gracious and handsome two-story superintendent's residence at Chickamauga-Chattanooga, built in 1912 by the U.S. Army. "Talk



John E. Cook where it all began.

about advancement!" John O. says, thinking back to the tent he and Bee first shared at Grand Canyon.

This generation's John Cook grew up in the park housing his parents rented, and he remembers how housing connoted status—not only for NPS employees at Grand Canyon, but also for those who worked with the Harvey Company and the railroad. Just as his father and grandfather had moved up and into better housing, John repeated this process, living in a tent at Saguaro when he began his career in 1953. By 1958 he had advanced to the small trailer in Chaco Canyon. Anticipating today's integrated pest management, John let skunks under the trailer to keep the mice population down—"it was the risk we had to take," he says.

When John and Dani moved into their new Mis-

sion 66 house at Chaco in 1958, they furnished it with hand-me-down pieces—neither Park Service salaries nor the frequent transfers enabled employees to collect fine furniture. None of this was new for Dani, since she, too, had been raised in parks. Her father, Meredith Guillet, served in several NPS areas, mainly in the southwest. Typical of the national park experience, the Guillet's first lived in a tent, at Black Canyon of the Gunnison NM. But soon after, at Casa Grande, Dani lived with her parents in the oldest of all park housing—the prehistoric ruins! As with many other NPS employees, however, the Guillet's housing situation improved. At Canyon de Chelly, they occupied a fine adobe home, designed by well known NPS architect, Cecil Doty.

From their Mission 66 house at Chaco, John and Dani moved to Navajo NM—and back into a trailer. Yet they never felt underprivileged living in park housing. In John's words, "We were proud of these places, and always enhanced the appearance of the houses where we lived." For example, they planted flower gardens and greenery around their trailer in Navajo, and later fully landscaped their yard at Hubbell Trading Post. John also recalls that the rent for park housing was low then: "It was not highway robbery." He certainly feels he benefitted from actually living in parks he was managing, thus getting to know them better.

The last park housing John and Dani occupied was at Canyon de Chelly. There they had "absolutely the most perfect park housing"—a beautiful Southwestern-style home with a lovely view toward the cottonwoods and sand dunes across the canyon. What's more, John remembers rolling up their "first rate shag carpet to reveal beautiful hardwood floors—great for dancing!"

Indeed, to each generation of the Cook family, the houses they lived in became "places in the heart"—no matter what they looked like. For the Cooks, they were *homes* where they raised their families, pursued their careers, and enjoyed the great beauty of the parks. So when John went back to Grand Canyon to talk to the Ranger Skills class in 1988, he naturally had to take his daughter, Kayci (a trainee in that class), around the housing area to show her where her great-grandfather, grandfather, and he, too, had lived. He very likely told her stories about growing up in parks—wisely, she may have believed only half of what her daddy told her! After all, Kayci was born when John and Dani were living in the trailer at Navajo, then moved around with her folks to various parks before becoming an NPS employee also—so she has her own experiences to recall.

Dick Sellars is an environmental historian with the Southwest Regional Office.



Hall of Memories

When the carpet was purchased for government quarters at Death Valley NM, most staff members were excited, but I resisted this "improvement." For one thing, the linoleum tile floors were bright and made our house seem lighter; for another, they were cool on bare feet in the perpetual heat of the Mojave Desert. Those were the practical reasons for my resistance to carpet. Sentimentally, my anti-carpet stance was a product of childhood memories.

At Canyon de Chelly NM, the hall of our three-bedroom Mission 66 house seemed a mile long, hardwood floorboards polished to a dangerous sheen. In sock feet we'd get a running start from the living room and slide as far as we



could. A good trip would take us all the way into Mom and Dad's room. The same slippery quality became a frustration on Christmas mornings as Lafe and I raced from our rooms toward the presents stacked beneath the tree. At the house next door (same floor plan), my grandfather, Meredith Guillet, entertained me by shuffling across his hardwood floor singing the chants of the Navajo Ye'i bi Che'i dancers.

As much fun as the bare floors were, my parents capitulated and bought an area rug that covered most of the wood. But when a parkwide party was held at our house, the carpet was rolled up and stashed in the garage so that dancing feet could slide gracefully across the floor. When I returned to Canyon de Chelly in 1981 as a seasonal, I was disappointed to find permanent carpet placed over the surface that had launched many a great "hall slide."

Other childhood quarters provided new diversions. At Hubbell Trading Post NHS, I found that I could easily climb out of the unscreened windows during my naptime to terrorize the chickens in the historic barn. Equally close was the Hubbell home, at that time still occupied by Dorothy Hubbell, wife of the last Hubbell trader. As a fugitive from naptime, I could seek asylum with Mrs. Hubbell, who would let me look through her stereoscope at old pictures or explain the patterns of the Navajo rugs covering her own hardwood floors.

I prefer to live in park housing. I enjoy being in an NPS neighborhood, perhaps because I grew up in several. The uniform floor plans of Mission 66 aren't monotonous but comforting to me: you can go next door for dinner and not have to ask where the bathroom is. I just transferred to Apostle Islands NL, where there is little government housing. Indeed, I was fortunate even to find a small apartment to rent in Bayfield. It has a lovely view of Lake Superior, but, unfortunately, the hall is too short to go for a good slide. I guess that will be one reason to look forward to a future stint in government quarters—that is unless they're all carpeted by then!

Kayci Cook

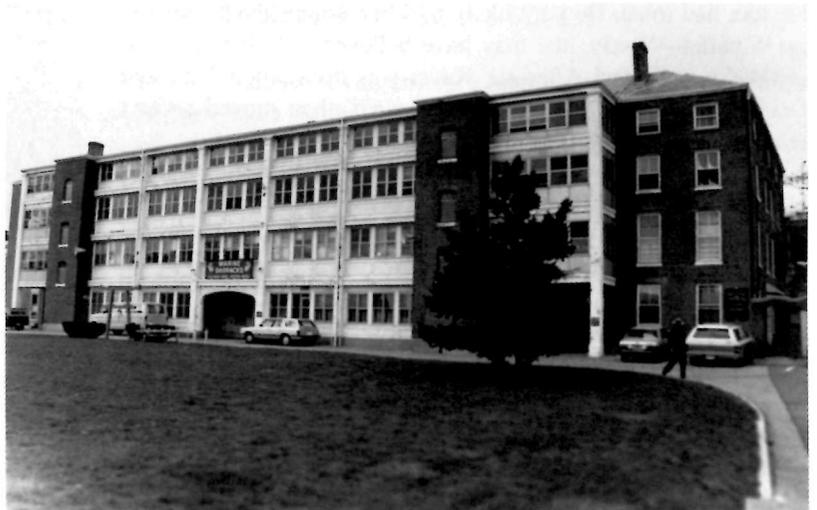
NPS HOUSING – A LOOK BACK...



(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



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(7)

Photo 1 - Occupied only seasonally, the board-and-batten and log cabins at Crater Lake NP fulfilled their part-time, warm weather use.

Photo 2 - Superintendent Jessie Nusbaum and his wife Aileen relied heavily on prehistoric pueblo architecture in designing their residence at Mesa Verde NP (1921).

Photo 3 - Employee housing units provided in the former Marine Barracks at Charlestown Navy Yard has helped alleviate employee recruitment problems at Boston NHP.

Photo 4 - House of the caretaker at Jamestown NHS (1934).

Photo 5 - Beginning in 1947, tent structures, also known as "Rag Houses", served as living quarters for the families of permanent rangers at Wupatki NM.

Photo 6 - Many parks took over 1940's Civilian Conservation Corps "temporary" camp buildings and used them for housing. Areas similar to this one at Rocky Mountain NP existed at Sequoia NP, Shenandoah NP, and other park areas.

Photo 7 - Employee housing during the Mission 66 era.

CHANGING HANDS

Before Jack Morehead, Washington's associate director for operations, left to assume responsibilities as Alaska's new regional director, he took a few moments to reflect on his hopes for the housing program. Jack Davis, the incoming associate director for operations, did the same.

JACK MOREHEAD. Housing definitely has gotten better in the 37 years I've been with the Park Service. When I first started, there was a lot of tent housing, a lot of trailers, a lot of people squeezed into spaces that were far too small. My wife and I lived in tent cabins in Yosemite. We also lived in quarters so small that we slept in the living room in a hide-a-bed. If we had friends in for dinner, we had to put our daughter in the bathtub. And when we went to bed at night, she slept in a closet, because that was the only space we had for her bed. This is what we experienced, and it wasn't atypical. I realize we still have substandard housing conditions in the Service, but, overall, both the quantity and quality of Service housing have dramatically improved.



Naturally, the rents have increased also. The new OMB A-45 circular requires that you pay rents comparable to those associated with regional housing, but the comparables shouldn't always be the same. I'm concerned that the rents in parks with new housing will be too high for many employees. We don't want to force GS-3s and 4s to live outside the park, while making housing affordable only for GS-11s.

Overall, however, the changes I have seen since coming to Washington are definitely encouraging. The HUDAT teams have done a good job identifying housing needs and setting priorities. We've been very fortunate getting housing initiative money during the past three years, as well as getting that money out to the parks. In fact, I think the last three years have been so good that I don't want to see the initiative get lost. I'm concerned about keeping it up because we have a lot more needs that have to be met.

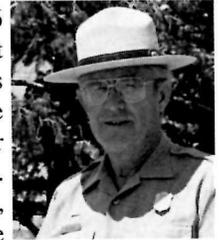
But maintaining the housing initiative at its current level requires the Director's interest. It has to be in his budget request. I think the field has to continue to make it clear that housing is a major concern. We need to keep working on the huge housing backlog.

My contribution to all this simply has been the communication of program needs to the Director and the

budget office. Housing is and will continue to be a major concern of mine.

As regional director in Alaska, I think I will be even more aware of housing, because there's little of it. When the new park areas were added in 1980, many came without housing, and in Alaska these areas were created outside the community. So to provide housing, you have to deal with land acquisition or leasing outside the park, then build new housing. It can be even more complex than in the lower 48. I imagine I'll be in touch with the director on a continuing basis, to discuss how much housing needs to be emphasized in the budget.

JACK DAVIS. I've lived in everything from tent frames to modest homes. Like many folks my age, I've known some primitive times. My wife and I benefited from Mission 66, the first national program to try to provide as many employees as possible with a respectable three-bedroom home and garage. Some of the pre-Mission 66 houses are larger, certainly, but they also have drawbacks as far as utility systems and heating are concerned. Nevertheless, greater efficiency also cost more money. When I first joined the Service, housing costs were inexpensive and always included utilities. My wife, Bobbie, and I paid \$11 a pay period at Organ Pipe, and that included all utilities. Now, with comparability, people are being asked to pay a great deal more.



Nevertheless, we still have a good rental schedule, and those who don't realize that should live in some cities where prices are extremely high. You're on your own outside, where prices are generally more expensive. Still, we must be sure that we don't build homes employees cannot afford to live in.

So far at Grand Canyon, where I come from, the financial impact that new housing could have on employees has been recognized. The homes are not overly pretentious in order to keep the rental rates reasonable. But the new construction is sensitive to environmental concerns, among them water consumption and solar energy. They take advantage of proper siting and only use products that reduce fuel consumption. Solar cells supply some needs, for example, heating water.

I plan to continue to support this program while I'm in Washington because it is extremely important to many parks. Grand Canyon customarily has 25 vacancies because it lacks sufficient housing. Thanks to the initiative, however, we plan to construct a good many homes, perhaps 55 or so, in FY 93. We're doing the preparation and design work for that now. So, we'll be ready to go as long as the construction money is there in '93. The program is making great forward strides, and all of us want to see that momentum continue.

AN ARROWHEAD FOR THAT HOUSE IN THE SHED???



Illustration by Rich Giamberdine

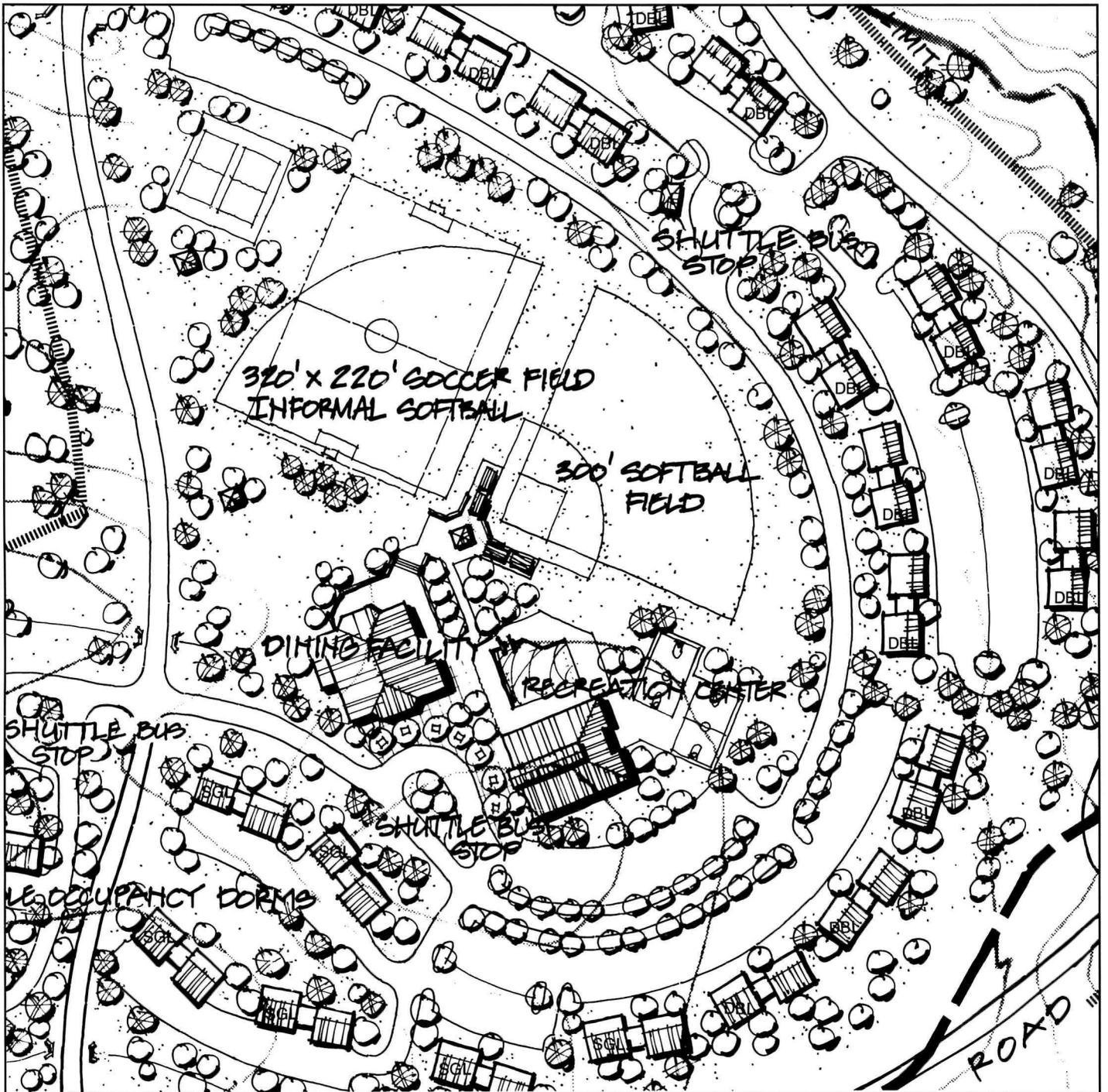
As I helped move my son to a northern Colorado town, we drove through the neighborhood where he had been staying. In that place, the land had been cleared, scraped, and not yet relandscaped. Cookie-cutter houses revealed the hard edge of machine-age efficiency. As we drove around a corner, my son pointed to the large metal shed that was the terminus of the neighborhood. From a distance, the two-story residence under construction was silhouetted in the backlight of the front entrance. The nearly completed house was positioned to be rolled up the street and lowered onto its newly poured foundation. All around, the land had been dozed, scraped, and regraded. Nothing remained of its natural features. Houses sat in rigid geometry, waiting for the addition of street trees to upgrade the community's appearance.

My impressions of this machine-built neighborhood mingled with thoughts stimulated by the regional chiefs of

HUDAT (Housing Unit Design Assistance Teams). I reviewed the progress of our own NPS housing program, still in its infancy.

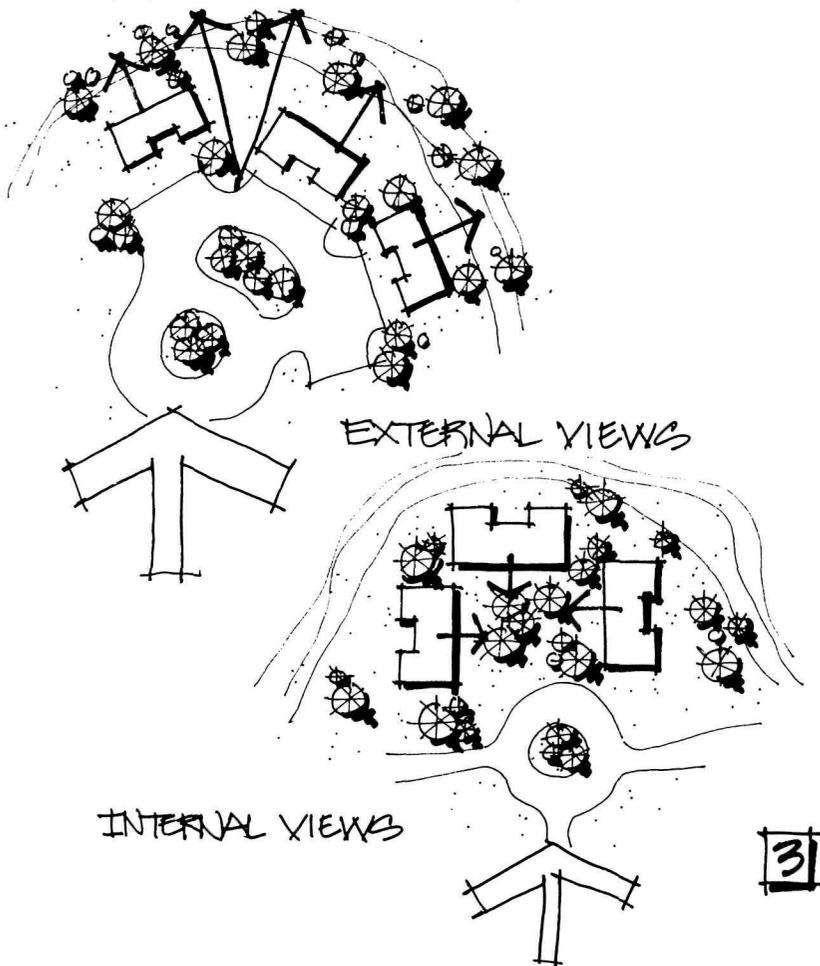
I know, of course, that some factory-builts can be cured of their harshness by the thoughtful execution of site-sensitive design, well executed specifications, and careful materials selection. However, given the difficulties of remote locations, complex terrain, climate demands, occupant requirements, design character, soils, and other variables, standard solutions are self-defeating when it comes to national parks. With the present effort to replace park trailers with more acceptable housing, we are, I hope, putting our own NPS machine-age housing to sleep.

Our tools for doing it better are rooted in NPS history. The term "master plan" came from that history, as did the decision to develop comprehensive plans for every park. Secretary



□ SITE PLANNING

CLUSTER UNITS AND MID-RISE BUILDINGS (2-STORY DORMS) CAN BE ADAPTED TO FIT DIFFERENT SITE CONDITIONS. FOR SCENIC SITES, ORIENT OUTWARD TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VIEWS AND LIGHT. ON LESS SCENIC SITES, ORIENT INWARD TOWARD LANDSCAPED AREAS.



At left, NPS cluster housing design showing community integration into the natural scene. Detail of that plan above. Drawings by Mike Morelli.

Lane's 1918 directive to first NPS director Steve Mather provides clear direction for park design. "All improvements will be carried out in accordance with the preconceived plan, developed with special reference to the preservation of the landscape." "With special reverence" also fits rather easily in the same context.

In recent history, however, neglect, inadequate funding, and general confusion of housing goals led to trucked-in solutions. Today the housing issue is on the verge of a new, more positive day. Some money has started flowing into the program, and the results of good professional work are much in

evidence. We are seeing contemporary solutions that address the lifestyle needs of NPS employees, and address management's concern "that more employees are leaving than we would like to see."

Housing is a two-way street requiring institutional and individual collaboration. For occupants and visitors, the quality of the built environment expresses how well we perform our stewardship responsibilities; the appearance of our parklands reflect our capability to leave this nation's heritage in better shape than when it first was placed under our protection.

This is a significant era for NPS housing. The Service did its homework with respect to employee surveys, privatization studies, guidelines, and the creation of design assistance teams. Results thus far are mixed. On the whole, the park housing landscape looks promising. The Service's housing initiative produced a model of what we can expect from park housing when the ten-year target date is reached.

Some model restoration efforts are taking place that are very nearly the best in historic and adaptive use reconstruction. Everyone wants to rid the parks of the trailer blight and return to sensitive siting, and harmony of structure and site. The standard spec house is proving to be unadaptable to the variety of housing needs imposed by park landscape and employees. The Mission 66 house consumes land. Cluster housing affords economies with amenities—energy savings and opportunities for more personalized outdoor spaces. Community facilities can more easily be grouped around cluster housing. More can

be done, of course, but a community of such homes implies occupant responsibility—stewardship again.

In closing, I return to that recently visited northern Colorado neighborhood where houses were being assembled in the large tin shed. The Service is trying to avoid problems associated with such construction. So, as the Romans said, *carpe diem*. Seize the day. We have the destiny of the housing program in our grasp. Like that visited neighborhood in Colorado, our houses are in the shed too, awaiting the arrowhead.

Rich Giamberdine currently serves as DSC senior landscape architect. His work reflects the organization's interests on a wide range of activities including employee housing, sustainable environmental design, and the development of an international park with the Soviet Union.

HOUSING AND HERITAGE – A RECONCILIATION

Summer returned to Atlanta. The flag in front of the Birth Home hung limp in the still, humid air. Dozens of visitors, many of them foreign, waited quietly to tour the house Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., occupied as a boy. The house stands to one end of a residential block in an all-Black neighborhood built during the early 20th century. Most of the other buildings are two-story, frame structures with jig-sawn porch brackets and turned columns much like the King residence. A few are smaller, one-story buildings, often subdivided as two or three apartments, and locally referred to as "shotguns."

Across Auburn Avenue, west of the Birth Home, six of these shotguns line the street. Bright yellow tape and orange traffic cones mark two of the middle buildings as a construction zone. Workers in hard hats and face masks wheel loads of broken plaster, years of accumulated trash, and rotted floor joists to a waiting dump truck. Temporary posts prop up the front porches. Plywood panels cover most of the windows and doors. The exteriors are a patchwork of freshly-primed, replacement siding interwoven with sound but weathered clapboards.

Of course, the impression of disorder is somewhat misleading. Every rehabilitation project goes through an "ugly-duckling" stage when the building looks worse than it did at the start and the work seems to be dragging on with no end in sight. But there are indications that progress is being made and that there is an order to the apparent confusion. Many of the original walls are being left in place. All of the window openings are intact. Trim is neatly stacked if it has been removed. Fireplace mantles are protected, and sound flooring is being retained. Clearly, the houses are not being gutted.

While an effort is being made to protect the historic character

and fabric of the shotguns, it is equally apparent that significant changes are also taking place. Freshly cut studs frame several new spaces. The wall between the two halves of each duplex has been cut through. Interior doorways are being widened, and a second bathroom is being added to the rear of each building. These modifications are essential to meet the needs of contemporary residents. They provide for larger bathrooms, eliminate traffic through bedrooms, increase storage space, and accommodate wheelchair users. When completed, the houses will be sold or leased to area residents.

The shotgun rehabilitation project at Martin Luther King, Jr., NHS is not typical but it is certainly part of the NPS housing program. Usually less than 35 years old, mainstream housing is located in rural areas where it is occupied by NPS employees and their families. But it is important to note that housing also embraces buildings in urban settings too, that these houses may be historically significant, and that Servicewide standards for housing quality apply to all units within parks regardless of their occupancy.

Although NPS houses are usually not historically significant, many more have historic value than might be imagined. According to Laura Soulliere Harrison, approximately one quarter of all park housing can be classified as either historic or potentially historic. Her conclusions are based on a 1990 study titled *Historic Housing in the National Park System*. The study includes a brief administrative history of NPS housing and identifies some of the historic house types that can be found in parks. More importantly, Harrison identifies all 1082 buildings that are used for housing and should be preserved for their historic values.

This overlap between historic buildings and employee



476-78

480-82

484-86

488

This row of shotgun houses faces the birth home. Work is underway on 480-82 and 484-86.

Floor plan for an Auburn Avenue shotgun showing the original layout and its conversion to a two-bedroom home.

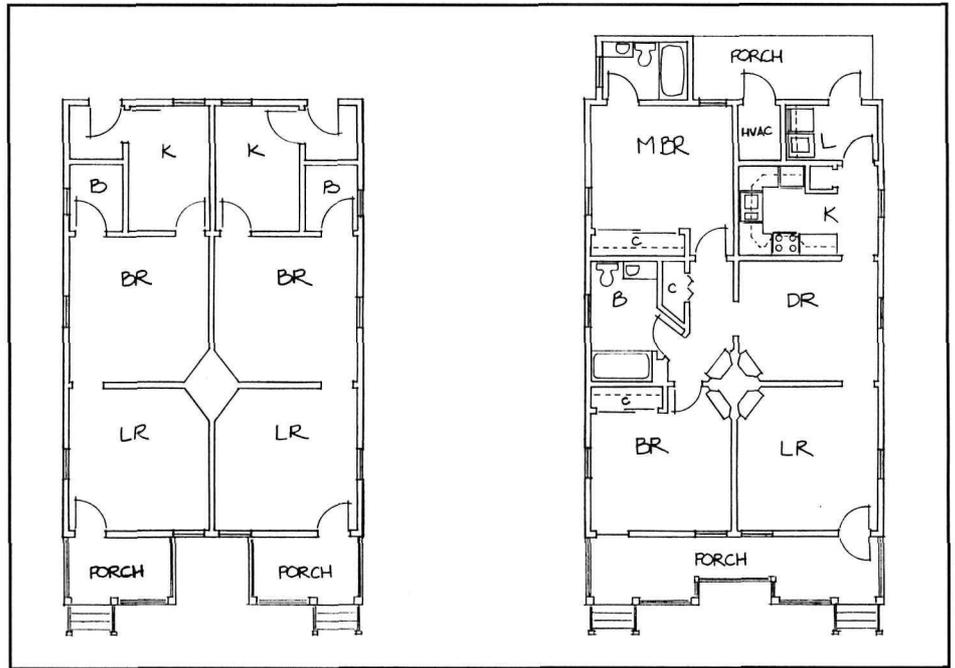
housing has proven to be confusing and somewhat problematic. Most of the confusion stems from classifying a building either as "housing" or "historic." Of course, neither is truly a building type: the first is actually a use designation and the second a matter of social value. In either case, it is now clear that the two are not mutually exclusive.

Unfortunately, rehabilitation of historic houses isn't as simple as resolving conflicts in the use of bureaucratic labels, but neither is it an impossibility. Historic rehabilitation often requires additional time for clearance of proposed work, additional funds to cover the cost of actual construction, and special design skills to meet program objectives.

Of these three problems, time may be the most easily addressed since in many cases it can be handled through careful scheduling. The issue of cost has also proven to be somewhat illusory. Quite simply, the extra funds needed to rehabilitate a historic house have been viewed as acceptable because of the special value the structure contributes to a park. This has been especially true in parks with primary historic themes where houses contribute to the "historic scene" but also are needed for practical purposes.

The real challenge inherent in historic housing is the mutual accommodation of housing standards with historic values. This can be done reasonably well if the historic qualities of a house are identified at the outset of the design process. Molding, mantles, porches, doors, roof shapes, windows, flooring, paint colors, chimneys, lighting fixtures, siding, and wall finishes are typical characteristics that should be preserved in historic houses. Equally important are the sizes and relationships between rooms and the nature of landscaping around the building.

This is not to say that badly deteriorated material needs to be saved at all costs or that unsafe wiring must be retained in place; common sense and consideration of historic values can work hand-in-hand. This is well expressed in two general rules: first, that historic material should be retained where possible, and, second, that replacement material should be visually compatible with the historic character of the building.

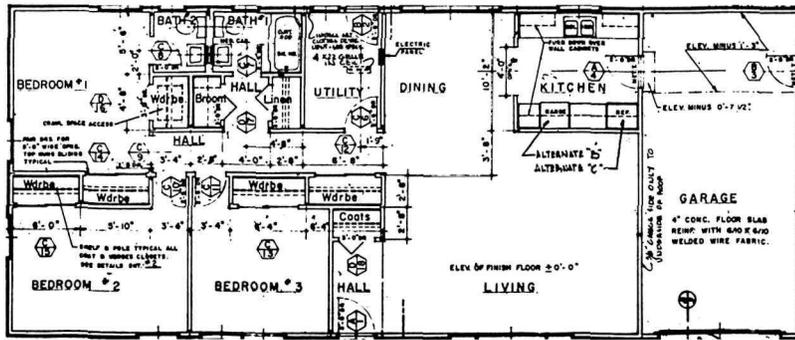


Mount Rainier cabin being rehabilitated. Photo courtesy of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

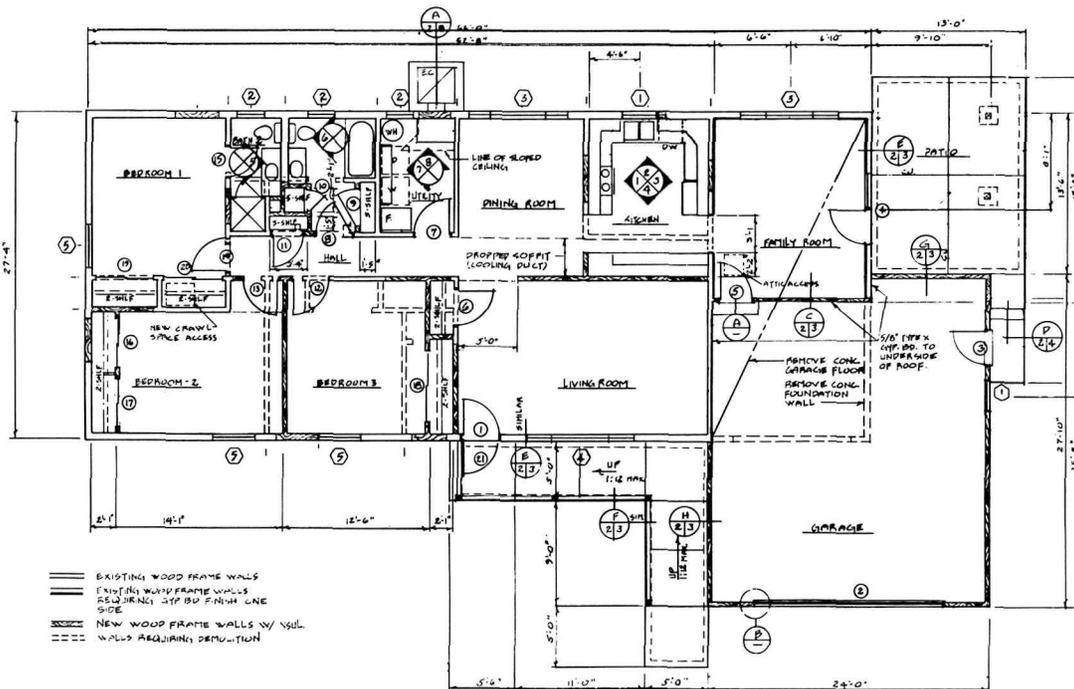
Looked at from the housing perspective, this approach suggests that a bedroom smaller than the recommended minimum would be acceptable if additional storage could be found elsewhere in a historic house. An equally valid approach is to change the level of occupancy planned for a historic unit to minimize the amount of change. For example, a small two-bedroom cabin might be reclassified as a one-bedroom unit, with the second room designated a study.

The bottom line is that historic houses are being rehabilitated in many park areas, and most are being done within both housing and preservation standards. From Yosemite NP to Cape Hatteras NS, and Bandelier NM to Martin Luther King, Jr., NHS, work is moving ahead. A few of the projects have been extremely difficult. Others have been highly controversial. On the other hand, all have helped meet the existing need for quality housing, and all have helped to perpetuate a part of our common heritage.

Billy Garrett, a registered architect, has been active in the Housing Initiative as a member of the Servicewide Housing Oversight Committee, instructor for HUDAT training courses, and co-author of NPS-76. He is currently serving as Chief, Historic Architecture Division, Southeast Region.



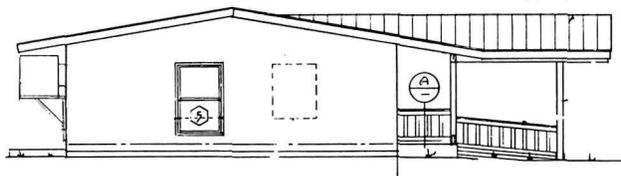
EXISTING FLOOR PLAN



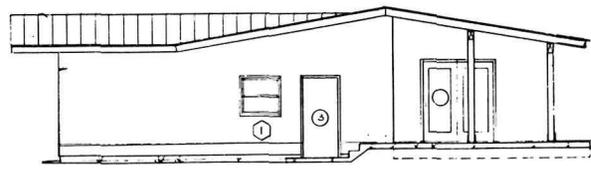
PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN



NORTH ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"



EAST ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"



WEST ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

REMODEL QUARTERS # 6. - ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

INSTITUTIONALIZING A BETTER PRODUCT

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR NPS HOUSING.

At the 1990 HUDAT meeting, a task force came together to review how NPS-76, the Housing Design and Rehabilitation Guideline, related to private sector construction. Why was this necessary? Some parks considered Mission 66 units to be the NPS housing standard, and, though such units had been kept in fair to excellent condition, they did not offer what the average person expected in a modern 21st century home. Parks that wanted to upgrade their standards hesitated in the face of restrictive federal spending policies. Staff felt that they could not justify amenities such as two-car garages, extra storage, dishwashers, microwave ovens and privacy. The ultimate design decisions were left to the parks, and employees were at the mercy of managers with negative attitudes toward improved standards. In spite of unanimous desire among employees for additional bathrooms, a manager might override the proposed change because "families have survived for ages with one bathroom; why waste money on a luxury?"

But things are changing, and, in the NPS housing arena, minimum standards exceed minimum standards everywhere else. NPS minimums go beyond the basics. They provide for greater space and better insulation than is available in conventional housing. Take a look.

NEW CONSTRUCTION.

- housing unit floor space increased ten percent, with all new units being designed to address the issue of handicapped accessibility; another ten percent can be added to square footage to provide additional storage in remote areas;

- one-bedroom units designed with a full-sized bathroom, two bedroom units with 1-3/4 bathrooms, and three- or more bedroom units with a minimum of two full-sized bathrooms;

- in isolated areas and areas of extended inclement weather, consideration given to an additional living area such as a family room so that family members can get away from each other if necessary; where the frost line requires deep foundations, consideration given to a basement for additional space;

- two-car garages (carports in tropical areas) with a minimum of 100 square feet of extra storage for two- or more bedroom units;

- dishwashers, microwave ovens, trash compactors and garbage disposals recommended;

- new units constructed to require minimal energy for heating, thus restricting the installation of conventional wood burning stoves unless there is no alternative;

- a minimum of 150 square feet of outdoor living space in the form of decks, patios, or screened yards for single family units

HOUSING REHABILITATION.

- wherever possible, units are to be rehabilitated or upgraded to minimum standards required of new construction; interior and exterior space limitations and historic compliance may preclude expansion or additions to the unit or alterations to the interior;

- replacement should be considered for units that cannot meet standards without a sizeable investment;

- historic units that cannot be altered should be downgraded to fewer occupants.

WHOLE HOUSE CONCEPT. Many regions have applied the whole house concept when starting a rehabilitation program. This involves entering a housing unit and completely rehabilitating it, rather than taking a piecemeal approach by rehabbing kitchen cabinets in all housing units, then going back to do windows, and then bathrooms until the entire complex is complete. Although applying the whole house concept keeps a unit vacant for an extended period of time, it meets the NPS high quality standard when complete.

Upgrading all units to current minimum standards will be costly, but NPS employees deserve the quality these standards require. For the record, it is important to incorporate the minimum standards into NPS-76. This recognizes their importance to the Service, and puts in writing the Service's willingness to produce comfortable, attractive housing for its employees.

Terry Gess is the Rocky Mountain Region's chief of maintenance.

Floor plan (at left) showing conversion to a "better product."

SUCCESSFUL HOUSING SOLUTIONS

HOW DO WE DO IT. Just about everybody in the Park Service is familiar with at least one aspect of the housing picture. Some employees have a personal understanding gained from living in a specific area; others have worked on the program; still others have heard details second-hand. This is an effort to provide some nitty-gritty details—and perhaps a more complete picture—of exactly what's been done in one region of the National Park Service.

The Western Region has 1,651 housing units: 181 trailers; 50 obsolete houses; 100 rehabilitated structures, and 1,320 remaining structures in need of moderate to extensive rehabilitation for health and safety reasons. At the present level of funding under the housing initiative, we would need 25 years to replace and rehab what we've got. That's far too long to wait. So, to shorten the projected time, we continue to look at ways to maximize the program without sacrificing quality work.

REPLACEMENTS. After analyzing all the possibilities, we found modulares to be the most efficient and cost effective. Remember, these are *not* the double units you used to see on the trailer lots but quality housing constructed to NPS specifications under climate-controlled conditions. The standard unit cost of \$90,000 provides 1,500 square feet of space, complete with a two-car garage, high efficiency HVAC, quality appliances and fixtures, maximum insulation, and construction that meets seismic codes. A matrix included in the contract document allows parks to choose roof slope, roof material, siding, appliances, HVAC options, color, wood stoves, bay windows, carpet and other elements in keeping with park and employee needs. It also tells the bidder what is involved with each site.

Not only is house construction a major consideration, but also site access and preparation. The units typically come in 14-foot-wide modules that are 50 to 60 feet long. Accommodating this at the site may mean more tree removal than is typical of stick-built houses. Site conditions tend to pose the biggest problem associated with modulares because no two sites are the same. Generally the parks take care of site preparation which can cost between \$10,000 and \$30,000 per unit depending on location and landscaping plans. To date we have replaced or are in the process of replacing 50 trailers with 3-bedroom houses or two-bedroom duplexes. Experience suggests that modulares will supply a large percentage of the region's housing needs but that they may not be the answer to every replacement. Right now, the



same \$90,000 that buys a modular also would buy a stick-built house at Grand Canyon. However the same stick-built house in California would cost \$179,000. So we maximize benefits for the entire region by using a region-wide contract that emphasizes factory-built modulares.

The Western Region is committed to safe functional housing for all employees. In 1990, \$1.6 million in housing initiative funds were obligated. In keeping with the region's original housing commitments, the initiative also draws on other fund sources: \$200,000 from repair/rehab; \$200,000 from equipment replacement (some trailers were originally amortized). In 1990 approximately \$800,000 was drawn from other regional sources, bringing the total to \$2.8 million, of which approximately 2/3 went toward replacement and 1/3 toward rehabilitation.

REHABILITATION. The key here is good, detailed professional assessments that deal with all the items listed under Rehab in NPS 76. We subscribe to the whole house concept and follow its principles to the extent we can. The bottom line, however, is that the need for extensive health and safety work means we may have to do five or six electrical systems at one time rather than rehabilitate one whole house. The professional assessment gives us a prioritized checklist that says we have done this much of a whole-house rehab, and it enables us to continue to up-grade these units.

MAINTENANCE. Routine and cyclic maintenance must be programmed, and more cost effective and efficient ways to accomplish quality work continually pursued. Sharing the MMS housing reports has been an important morale factor in some Western parks because they show occupants that not only their rent but also cyclic repair/rehab, equipment and operating funds comprise the housing pie—a total of a lot more than is collected for rent.

The Western Region is making progress. But no one person is responsible for how far we've come. It's happened because of a fantastic team of people that includes everyone from the regional director, the budget officer, and the cultural resources folks, to park staffs who take care of site preparation and compliance requirements. Everyone of us are dedicated to improving the livability of the places NPS people call home.

Irv Dunton is the Western Region's chief of maintenance.

TASK FORCE STUDYING HOME HEALTH HAZARDS

The desire to reduce health hazards in the home and workplace has encouraged Americans to improve their health and lifestyle choices. This is as true Servicewide as it is nationwide. Early on, HUDAT teams took into account employee interest in the "health" of their housing units as well as their workplace. Where local health hazards were known and documented—areas with high radon concentrations, for example—reducing potential health threats became critical to housing design considerations. Nevertheless, overall hazard awareness among employees was lower than hoped. To remedy this, a task force was created, with the understanding that this would be an evolving issue as health research caught up with earlier technology and construction practices. The task force decided to focus on health hazards in buildings, a decision with implications for both home and workplace. The following recommendation will be submitted to the director in the near future:

The NPS will identify health hazards to all employees/occupants in all buildings and will take appropriate action to eliminate these hazards. Imminent health hazards must be addressed immediately. Housing units plus related structures (schools, day care) will be the Service's first priority.

The task force has taken on three areas of initial emphasis— asbestos, radon gas, and lead paint—with future areas to include formaldehyde, pesticides, mercury, and insulation as well as items such as electro-magnetic radiation, which are just coming to light. Asbestos and lead paint were recognized as industrial hazards years ago, and were dealt with on that level. Recognizing those hazards in the home is an evolving process, much of which has to do with education.

Asbestos is only a health risk when found in a crumbling, easily inhaled form. Many obvious cases have been found and eliminated. However, the damaged coverings, the sanding of asbestos containing tile, and the removal of asbestos-containing acoustical and spackling material is often forgotten. Knowing what you're dealing with dictates how to eliminate the hazard.

Lead paint hazards have received little recent attention, the assumption having been made that eliminating the lead eliminated the problem. In one sense this is true. Lead blood levels have dropped dramatically since the mid 1970s, primarily because leaded gasoline was phased out. Lead also has been removed from all but industrial paints, and drinking water is now subject to stringent lead testing and reduction regulations.

RADON REDUCTION IN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

REGION	BUILDINGS TESTED	BUILDINGS LEVEL - OK	BUILDINGS REQUIRING MITIGATION	% BUILDINGS REQUIRING MITIGATION	BUILDINGS MITIGATED	% BUILDINGS OK OR MITIGATED
ALASKA	58	49	9	16%	8	98%
MID-ATLANTIC	213	206	7	3%	0	97%
MIDWEST	134	125	10	7%	6	98%
NORTH ATLANTIC	148	146	2	1%	0	99%
NATIONAL CAPITAL	68	66	2	3%	0	97%
PACIFIC NORTHWEST	109	109	0	0%	0	100%
ROCKY MOUNTAIN	961	768	193	20%	82	88%
SOUTHEAST	413	391	22	5%	9	97%
SOUTHWEST	206	200	6	3%	2	98%
WESTERN	850	835	15	2%	0	98%
TOTALS	3160	2895	266	8%	107	95%

NOTE: The above chart reflects all buildings that were screened for radon, but only shows as mitigated those that now are below the allowable level. The buildings that remain consist of those at levels requiring mitigation within a few years or those having lower risk occupancy, such as administration buildings. Those with the higher risks have been abated to lower levels or had their use changed.

This is a good news/bad news scenario, however, as the lead levels in blood that were considered acceptable 25 years ago are acceptable no longer. All of this also has implications for children under six, because lead paint still exists, albeit under many coats of non-lead paint. Ultimately such paint becomes exposed through weathering and chipping, then disintegrates into dust that eventually finds its way into the child's mouth. If a house was built after 1978, there is little chance that it has lead paint in it. If it was built after World War II, the lead in the paint was greatly reduced. Houses built before World War II are the most likely places to find lead paint residues.

Keeping a clean house and knowing where lead paint exists reduces the hazard, but removal can also create its own hazards. The biggest single unknown is where the lead paint is and what to do about it. The task force is creating guidelines to deal with this issue—one that's going to come up more and more in the near future.

The third major concern is radon gas, a naturally occurring by-product of uranium decay. Here, the associated health hazard is lung cancer caused by breathing minute particles in high concentrations. In 1987 the NPS and Public Health Service initiated a program that tested 3,500 NPS buildings, primarily residences. More than 550 of these buildings (16 percent) showed levels requiring follow-up testing. The task force is concentrating on testing and abatement as part of the housing initiative.

The end result of the task force's work will be an expandable document to educate, test, inventory, mitigate, and protect NPS buildings and their occupants. It will also be a fairly simple document written in language that managers and supervisors can use to prevent health hazards through education and planning. The timing of this effort as part of the housing initiative makes it something that can be implemented immediately. That it affects people makes it our highest concern.

Tim Hudson is chief of maintenance, Yellowstone NP.

History of the Housing Initiative

1982—parks required, through housing management plans, to justify housing needs and assess housing conditions. NPS housing officer designated.

1984—decision that trailers could not be purchased and that only existing trailers would be used as housing.

1986—conference report in October accompanying the 1987 Interior and Related Agencies appropriations bill, which requested a complete housing study.

1987—Housing Oversight Committee met in June to outline management strategy, then finalized the Employee Housing Initiative Report for submission to Congress in November. Employee survey conducted. Special Directive 87-5 (Required Occupancy) issued.

1988

February—Housing Initiative Report submitted to Congress, proposing a \$270 million housing initiative program. Report recommended \$43 million for seasonal rehab, \$46 million for permanent rehab, \$89 million for new seasonal units and the same for new permanent units. Report also asked that constraints on size, livability, and cost be lifted.

March—Regional Housing Unit Design Assistance Teams (HUDAT) appointed.

July—NPS-76 provided Servicewide standards for all rehab/repair and new construction. Special Directive 88-4 issued

October—Congress appropriated \$10 million, with 20 percent for housing and construction planning, and 80 percent for "bricks and mortar" improvements.

1989

March—Housing Oversight Committee developed health hazards bulletins on asbestos and lead; HUDAT created a task force to develop a guideline concerning health hazards.

October—Congress appropriated \$8 million in FY 1990; \$1 million was added from the Servicewide Planning Program. "Bricks and mortar" received 91 percent of these funds.

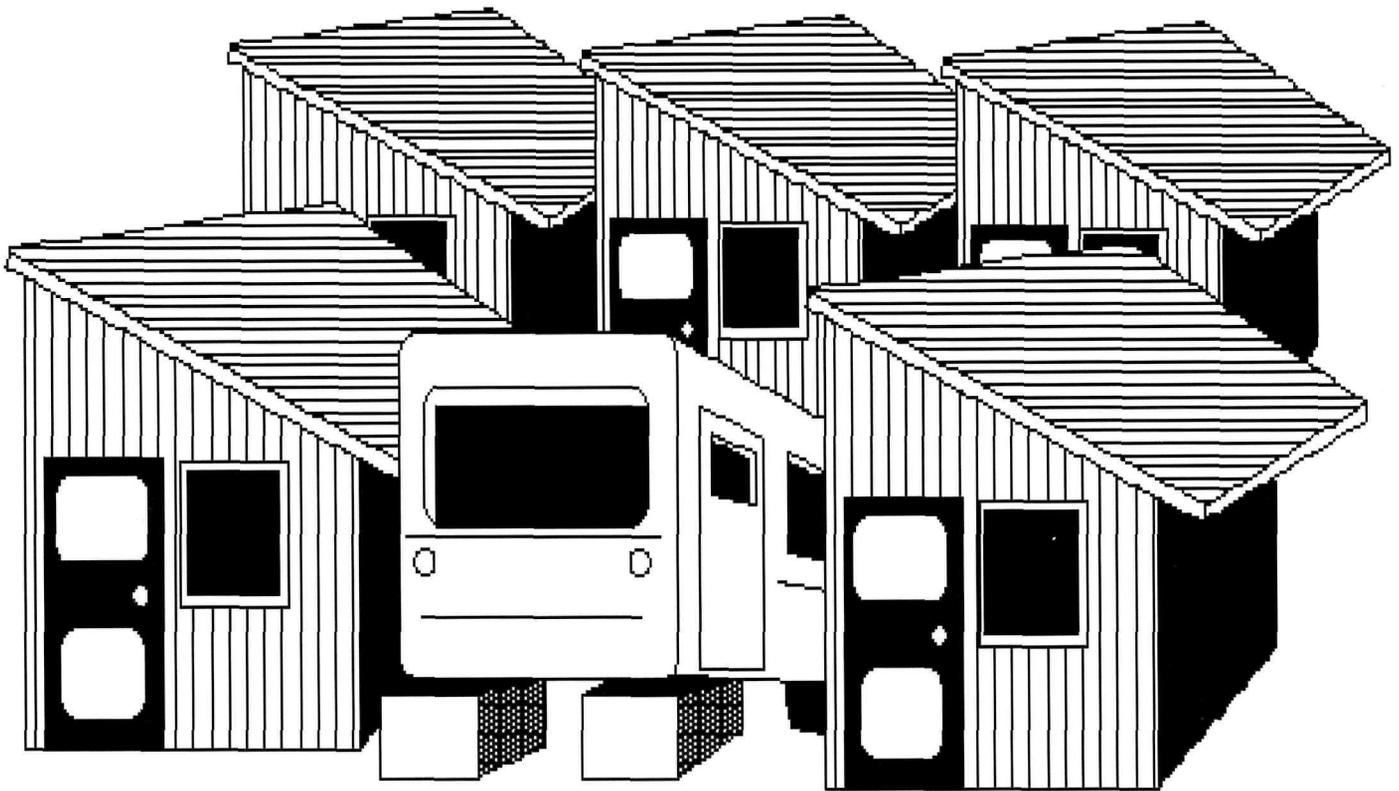
1990

March—Health Hazards Task Force established.

October—Congress appropriated \$8 million for FY1991, with "bricks and mortar" receiving 86 percent and planning 14 percent.

1991—HUDAT chairs determined to carry out a Servicewide Condition Assessment; a total housing backlog of more than \$500 million was reported for FY1992 in the House Appropriations Budget Report

NPS HOUSING FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE



I began working on replacement housing a year or two before HUDAT and the housing initiative program got under way. I was stationed in the NPS Western Regional Office. There, thanks to Irv Dunton's futuristic thinking, we started a trailer replacement program.

Our goal at the time was to replace as many trailers as possible with factory-built homes. Written specs were generated, floor plans created, and a matrix devised. In just over three years more than 50 trailers had been replaced with two-bedroom duplexes and three-bedroom single family units. In order to get the most for our money, we agreed that the factory-built units would be generically designed. The standard layout offered only a few necessary options to enable the houses to be adapted to fit parks in the region—options such as exterior siding, roof pitch, roofing materials, and heating sources.

We all were quite pleased with our product and felt our accomplishments were significant. The more than 18 parks that received new units were grateful. But we still heard there were needs our generic factory-built units didn't satisfy.

Well, guess what? Time has passed. I'm back in a park

as a chief of maintenance facing a lot of those very decisions I helped make and enforce. Now I really can appreciate what some of my counterparts were trying to tell me. The park I oversee has more than 160 housing units; 38 of them are trailers, another 30 obsolete historic cabins. Trying to incorporate NPS-76 minimum standards, address immediate seasonal housing needs, construct units in a historic district and do it all with a standard design or floor plan just "ain't easy."

It's clear to me now that we need individual design at the park level as well as the flexibility to make some of our existing units continue to work for us without major reconstruction or alteration of floor plans. We'll do the best we can to meet these needs and others, using all available NPS resources (i.e. regional support, DSC, A&E firms, and, of course, our resident experts). I suppose what I've learned from this experience is the importance of studying every possible influence on any situation. It's quite an eye opener for me now to be on the "other side of the fence."

Jack Peay is chief of maintenance for Grand Teton NP.

PARK HOUSING – A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

To understand the regional perspective on park housing, think of the National Park Service as you would a home, with walls, floor, and roof that depend on the sturdy reliability of each other.

WASO HOUSING OFFICE represents the land, the lot, the site. This office nurtures the growth of the Service's housing program. It administers and develops policy, monitors compliance, serves as a liaison between NPS and the Department, and provides overall program guidance.

DENVER SERVICE CENTER represents the foundation. The Service Center supports the design, planning, and construction so critical to the housing initiative.

REGIONAL OFFICES are the framework. They establish the shape of the building, using braces and beams to interconnect, define, enclose, and link one structural level to another.

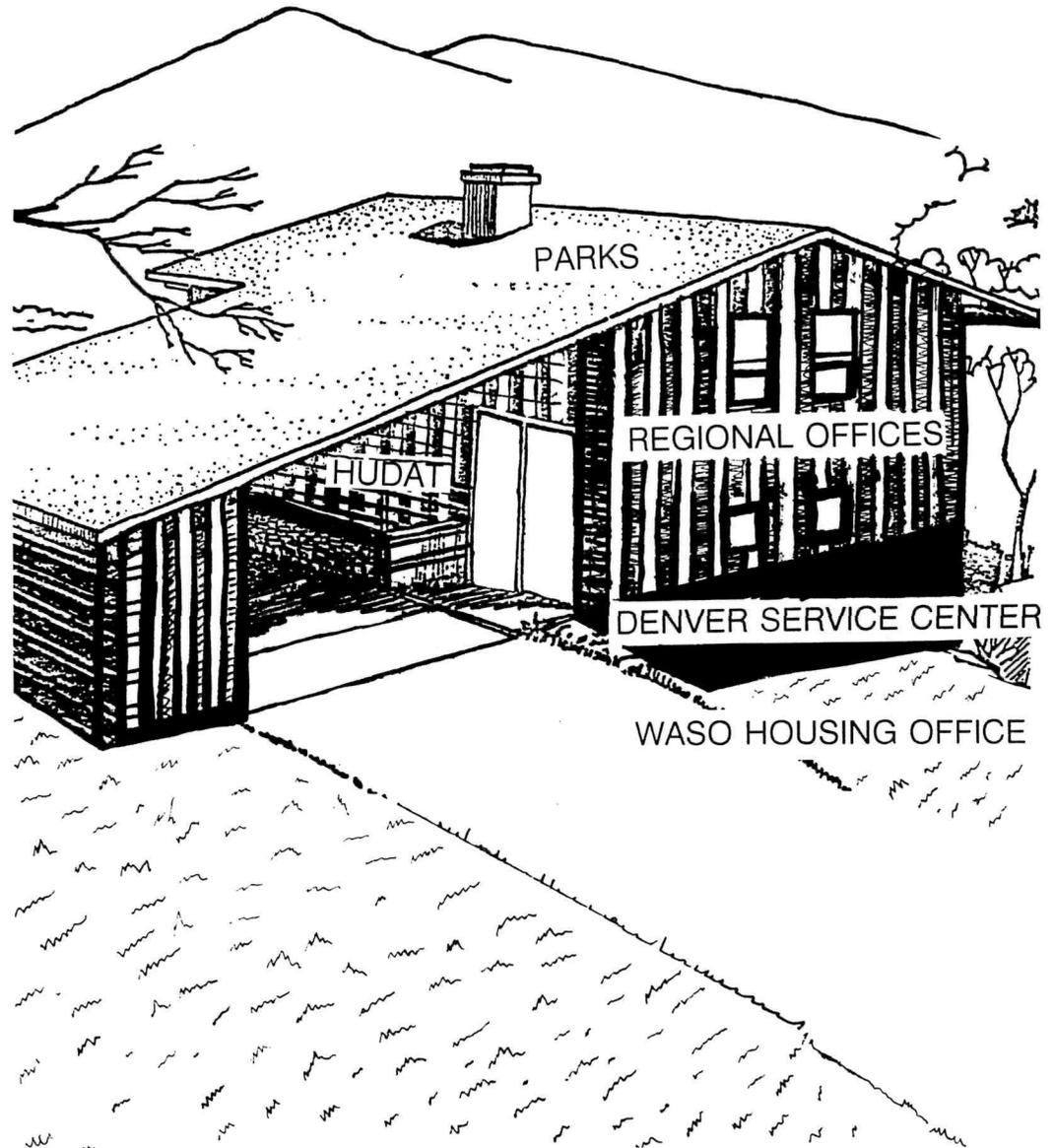
PARKS are the roof. They shelter, protect, provide the setting that fashions a house into a home. They determine the occupant, required occupancy, maintenance, rental rate adjustments, housing data, and safety and sanitation.

HOUSING UNIT DESIGN ASSISTANCE TEAMS (HUDAT) is the electricity. They exchange information, provide guidance, and offer professional help. They are the technical and management advisory group.

The regional administrative view of park housing interprets the regional offices as the framework of the housing program. All of us recognize that it takes various offices working together to form a good housing program.

The regional administrative process plays a key role. Rates are set, maintenance carried out, and financial management

needs taken care of. The regional office obtains information from various reports to help the superintendent make park housing decisions. Good management revolves around good planning documents, housing management plans, required occupancy plans, justifications for new/replacement housing, maintenance reports, general management plans and teamwork to obtain funding sources. Each region is unique. Each park is distinctive. Coordination between each office, park, committee, and tenant keeps the lines of communications open



and helps everyone involved get what they need.

The regional office helps do what has to be done to assure the occupancy of government housing by park employees. Keeping an NPS *presence* in the parks helps protect the resources, provide visitor protection, maintain all the necessary services, and strengthen security in the parks.

The regional office also gives out information, provides specific directions, and actively listens in order to encourage problem solving, decision-making, and harmonious communications. It offers support, resources, and ideas.

The Housing Program is a high priority, a critical issue, and a strong competitor with other programs in the regional office. As budget dollars shrink, regional offices have to prioritize how their money is spent. They do this by collecting all available data program data. Where housing is concerned, they

collect information justifying major rehabilitation of existing housing, replacement of substandard housing, and construction of new housing.

All housing actions in the parks follow from steps taken in the regional office to assure the operation, performance and development of good housing. The regional office serves as the primary communications link between WASO, Denver Service Center, HUDAT, and the parks. It gives procedural guidance, program direction, technical assistance, and, most of all, support.

The framework of the housing program is the regional office.

Carm Cronin is Chief, Branch of Property Management and Office Services, Rocky Mountain Region.

Minding Your Own Business

Thinking about operating a home business? The temptations are certainly there. Set your own hours? Spend more time with the kids? Be your own boss? Sounds great, doesn't it? But if you live in NPS housing, there are some restrictions.

First, all businesses in parks must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Once you're sure you've got those things straightened out, you can grab a "Home Business Permission Form." This one-page sheet should be available from your superintendent's office. It'll ask what type of business you want to go into. Give a brief description. All that's left is signing your name. Simple, right? But wait, before you sign, you might want to think about some of the restrictions that apply.

A home business is one that operates for-profit or not-for-profit on a continuing basis. One-time or infrequent events, such as garage sales, are not considered home businesses. Home businesses of the following nature may be permitted:

- businesses where the product produced in the home is sold outside the park;
- businesses where goods or services are provided to employees and others living in the park without door-to-door solicitation (e.g. selling housewares or cosmetics, giving music lessons, conducting small appliance repair, and providing child care, in-house nursing, or similar services done on a regular fee-for-service basis);
- businesses conducted by telephone or mail.

NPS employees, their family members, and non-family members who live in NPS housing may not engage in the following:

- businesses that interfere with the NPS mission by endangering resources, impacting visitor use, hindering employee duties, competing with a concessioner, or being a "visitor service";
- businesses that conflict, create an appearance of conflict or are inconsistent with the Department of Interior Regulations or Employee Responsibilities and Conduct (see CFR 43, Parts 1 through 7);
- businesses that are a nuisance or visual impairment (e.g. parking problems, noise);
- businesses that involve the use of government housing as a store or outlet where the general public may come to transact business;
- businesses that involve the use of government housing as rental space for overnight accommodations or involve the sublease of government housing;
- businesses that involve door-to-door solicitation in the park or any form of visitor solicitation;
- businesses that involve advertising, signs or notices in park areas.

As far as restrictions are concerned, that's all there is to it. Once approved by your superintendent or site manager, your home business permit is good for three years, and may be renewed at a later date. If permission is denied, reason(s) will be stated. Denials may be appealed to the regional director.

So now that you understand, go ahead and sign the form.

Debbie Dortch

HUDAT KNOCKIN' AT YOUR DOOR?

"Beam me up, Scotty!" commanded Captain Kirk of *Star Trek* fame. He did not request the medical officer or the communication officer to perform these services. He wanted the technician responsible for this specific function to be on hand to carry out his request. Obviously, members of the Housing Oversight Committee had the same thing in mind when they were developing the housing guidelines and special directives. They wanted the people responsible for regional and park housing to review the drawings, planning and compliance documents, housing inspection checklists and new housing design standards.

A group name was the first order of business. Several recommendations were made, but none of them stuck. Finally a guest attended one of the Housing Oversight Committee group meetings, and a seasoned member asked "who's that?" Out of that innocent question we formed our name. HUDAT became the acronym for the regional Housing Unit Design Assistance Teams.

The major objective of the housing program is quality—well designed, long-term housing with full life-cycle cost considerations. Think of all the resources the NPS preserves and maintains. NPS employees should be at the top of that list, because, without them, the nation's treasures would not fare as well as they do. To demonstrate that employee needs are being heard, one of the Service's top priorities is quality employee housing.

Each region's HUDAT is composed of architects, landscape architects, engineers, and management representatives from the regional office and park. HUDAT members comprise a technical and management brainstorming group offering on-site assistance to parks. However, parks with a significant number of housing units and a professional staff usually benefit from appointing their own park HUDAT, as has been done at Yosemite, Yellowstone, and Grand Canyon.

Early on, the importance of Service housing required the development of a series of training sessions for HUDAT groups practicing the "whole house" concept. These were held during 1988 and 1989, with time scheduled to visit park housing located within driving range. The housing seen by the trainees ran the gamut from poor and obsolete to good. No storage, poor kitchen layout, poor site locations, rodent and insect damage, no separation between living and dining area, and the desire for exterior decks or porches were just a few of the concerns the HUDAT people heard. Certainly, a tremendous effort must be made before these and other housing problems are solved; however, the HUDAT groups are involved and they are listening in the hope that future housing designs can more effectively meet employee needs.

Regional HUDAT groups have a variety of responsibilities. In the beginning, they assist park managers in the initiating and completing of Form 10-373 (NPS Justification for New and/or



"Mr. & Mrs. N.P. HUDAT," the hardworking Bob Lopenske and Pat Smith.

Replacement Housing). Prior to approval of Form 10-373 and signature by the Hudat chairperson, a thorough review commences by the HUDAT committee. The committee addresses park design theme, structural soundness, livability, economic analysis, and asbestos. As the process evolves, the HUDAT team continues to assist park management to apply the new housing design standards; complete or help to complete housing inspection checklists and cost estimates; review planning and compliance documents that affect housing; help develop and review plans, specifications, and bidding documents for housing rehabilitation projects; and evaluate the results of all new housing and housing rehabilitation projects.

The regional HUDAT groups originally intended to appoint personnel well informed on design concepts and housing conditions. Some regions eventually appointed park personnel living in park housing (i.e., wives, superintendents, seasonals) and



regional office design staff because these individuals understood the real issues that most concerned employees. Now, if Captain Kirk were to lead a HUDAT group, he would have at his command the very people who best know the needs of the park plus those who also know how to implement them. It's a combination of talents that's working effectively for the National Park Service.

Ted Hillmer is the Midwest Region's chief of maintenance. Ron Bishop is an architect for the Southeast Region.

Housing Unit Design Assistance Teams

Alaska – Ray Martinez (8/907-257-2673), Brad Richie, Sanford Rabinwitch, Jack O'Neale

Mid-Atlantic – Dale Wilking (8/597-5349), Dick Dretsch, Dave Schmidt, Keith Everett

Midwest – Ted Hillmer (8/864-3423), Mark Chavez, Keith Krueger, Mark Mitts, Ellen Croll, Jerry Banta

National Capital – Don Filsoof (8/202-619-7060), David Brown, Darwina Neal

North Atlantic – Fred Bentley (8/223-5042), George Stephen, Marjorie Smith, Barkev Kaligian

Pacific Northwest – Dick Engle (8/399-1006), Laurin Huffman, Gaylen Cawfield

Rocky Mountain – Terry Gess (8/327-2620), Les Siroky, Wayne Gardner

Southeast – Ron Bishop (8/841-4290), Billy Garrett, Steve Sherwood

Southwest – Butch Abell (8/476-6366), Sara Quirarte, Barry Sulam, John Parks

Western – Irv Dunton (8/484-3946), Dave Brouillette, Terry Rehak, Patricia Quintero

HUDAT group in conference at Bandelier NM.

What Are We Doing? Here's A Few Examples

Alaska—At Glacier Bay NPre, two single-family housing units have been rehabilitated with new plumbing, wiring, insulation and interiors. A Denali NP & Pre trailer has been replaced with a new four-bedroom single-family residence.

Mid-Atlantic—Valley Forge NHP has seven historic houses completed rehabilitated with new paint, plumbing, and electrical fixtures, as well as asbestos removal.

Midwest—Herbert Hoover NHS has had two historic homes rehabilitated, which included the foundation walls, exterior siding, windows and interior finishes. Construction of three new duplexes at Isle Royale NP for Mott Island residences has taken place.

National Capital—C&O Canal NHP has an upgraded lockhouse, with repaired floor, electrical replacement, site work and bathroom relocation.

North Atlantic—Gateway NRA has improved sub-standard housing by reroofing four structures, replacing windows, and completing roof repairs on another seven structures.

Pacific Northwest—Crater Lake NP constructed eight duplexes to replace trailers at Sleepy Hollow.

Rocky Mountain—Bryce Canyon NP replaced two trailers with two two-bedroom apartments.

Southwest—Big Bend NP and Bandelier NM replaced six trailers with well landscaped single-family residences.

Western—Grand Canyon NP had four existing units rehabilitated and six obsolete housing units replaced with three new duplexes.

(See page 33 for photos.)

ON NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HOUSING

..the first place—the North Rim of the Grand Canyon—was the most memorable for me. It was an old log cabin converted to seasonal housing...so small I had to wash my dishes in the bathroom sink. Later, when I moved to Alaska in 1981, no housing was available. Living on my GS-4 salary wasn't easy. That was one time I wished I was still a seasonal employee.



However, I do think the NPS is starting to emphasize housing more, and nobody is taking it for granted. There's a more professional approach....Some basic needs are being addressed—like storage and lay-out of homes. And, we're finding out that we can't put a box structure in every park, because it just doesn't work.

Amy C. Robertson
Administrative Officer
Virgin Islands NP, VI

Working for the Park Service has been a pleasant experience. I'm glad my daughter had the opportunity to be a child in a place where there is wildlife right outside the backdoor. I have seen improvements at Acadia, but there's more that needs to be done...the rent in Bar Harbor is extraordinary in the summer months. I don't know how an NPS family could live outside the park.

Christine Carlise
Dispatcher
Acadia NP, ME

I remember sitting in my apartment one night. The wind chill was -100 F when the power went off—for six hours. All I could think was, "What can I burn?", though I knew there were no trees because this is a coastal plain.

...housing has come a long way since 1981 when this site was established. The new housing is excellent...I live in an apartment above an old general store, and it is probably one of the better old units. I think, however, that housing is the key when attracting people to the Service. People need to be comfortable at home...

Dave Mills
Management Assistant
Kobuk Valley NP, AK

The apartment I live in overlooks Lake Superior. The housing isn't the greatest, but when I sit on my splintery, unprivate balcony, I can see the water rolling in and out of Lake Superior. That makes up for the not-so-great stuff...Yes, I've seen some changes in park housing. Our site received money so we could build six condo units. Everybody loves them. But the improvements just aren't coming fast enough. Last year, for example, we had a new electrician come here. He stayed about a week, then left. A big part of his decision was based on housing. We need good housing if we want to keep people.

Kay Ross
Isle Royale NP, MI



Most memorable times in park housing? Lawn parties in front of the apartments in 120-degree weather. Scorpions falling from vents in the ceiling.

Lori Tuttle
Procurement Clerk
Death Valley NM, AZ

My feelings have changed over the years because we've seen a lot happen. It used to be that a good staff member would not return because housing was so bad....Today, I could not accurately represent how fine the facilities here are. It's so different and so wonderful. It began with improvements to permanent facilities and now with seasonal facilities...it is pleasant to go home at night.

We used to have rustic dwellings constructed during the 30s...They just weren't built for the kinds of conditions here. The wallpaper would fall off...the linoleum would curl. They were mice infested. But we did it because it was part of living in the mountains. My wife and children had a tough time. I moved out of the old housing about three or four years ago. Up till then, there was one kitchen, one bathroom, and five or six single people in them. The wiring was bad. We would have power outages. The food would spoil. The mice would chew the chairs and walls. Six layers of wallpaper would show through. Now the park has really constructed beautiful quarters.

Tom McDonough
Teacher & NPS Seasonal
Crater Lake NP, OR

I've got quite a few memories of park housing. First day at the Grand Canyon...I arrive at my new trailer...I discover a dog sitting inside. As I make my way down the hall to my room, the



dog jumps up, bites me on my leg and then runs out....Then there were...termites in the tub...Waking in the morning, we would find small piles of sawdust and wood shavings in the bath tub from the termites eating the wood during the night. I often wondered if one day when I stepped in the tub, it would fall through the floor onto the ground.

I've been a seasonal since 1985, this being my 8th season. The housing I've been assigned to has consisted of Mission 66 houses, double and single wide trailers. The houses and double wide trailers were in satisfactory condition. But the other trailers were at least ten years old, in various states of condition.

Dave Yim
Seasonal Ranger
Death Valley NM

...special memories of bringing our three daughters home from the hospital after delivery...community spirit and security. Living in quarter years round, that were designed for summer use, when the outside temperature reached 40 degrees below zero...the concrete slab floor in the bathroom the same temperature, and you learn literally to do everything with your feet two inches off the floor...



Keith Butler
Roads & Trails Foreman
Death Valley NM, AZ

In 1984, I left my comfortable home in Elkhart, Indiana to venture out west to the Grand Tetons for my first seasonal park ranger job. Never in a million years did my naive, midwestern mind imagine living in a little cabin where squirrels were a commonplace in the living room, the view from my bedroom window was glacier-covered Mt. Moran, where the elk bugling at night was the eeriest sound I'd ever heard and my roommates practiced climbing techniques on the outside of our log cabin.



From there, it was down to the Everglades where the views from both my front and back screened-in porches was the Florida Bay—almost a picture perfect sunset, silhouetted by palm trees every evening. I can't complain about living at Seawall campground in Acadia NP either, where the rocky Maine Atlantic coastline was only 500 yards away and the sea smoke (fog) rolled in almost daily. Today, I'm living in a boathouse on the Sinepuxent Bay with the salt marsh and all the mosquitoes that come with it at my backdoor, and the Atlantic Ocean a mere 200 yards away...

I encourage others to experience living in the park and having this opportunity. I think it's a very positive experience. I've got seasonals right now living in a beach house with a million-dollar view. If housing is available, take a gamble and get the

most out of it that you can. I would never give up the experiences I've had and am still having just from living in park housing.

As for new housing, just since I've been here at Assateague, I've seen four new units go up, two of which are permanent housing, one a brand new seasonal dorm, and another new seasonal dorm on the way. I remember when finishing up my second season in the Grand Tetons that there were many changes being made in the housing area. They were raising snow roofs for many of the existing trailers and building log cabins to replace many of the old, condemned trailers. The same went for Acadia—a whole new housing complex.... Housing improvements are definitely on the up and up. I'm sure everybody thinks they could be doing it better but really if you stand back and take a look at it, we've come a long way.

Jennifer R. Yeoman
Supervisory Ranger
Assateague Island NS

Most of us take for granted that living in national parks means living close to nature—often too close. Whether it's wolf spiders in the Everglades or ants in Glacier, I always seem to be



plagued with something. The most memorable was in the mid-80s in Grand Teton NP. I lived in a small, one room log cabin. Previous residents had used the park newspaper to plug the spaces between the logs, but there were lots of spaces left. Bats found these little nooks and crannies perfect habitat and set up residence. Aside from the occasional squeaking noises they made, it seemed co-existence would be possible. One night, however, the bats discovered the "great indoors." All night long they flew around the inside of the cabin, making touch-and-go landings on the headboard of my bed. During the next few weeks, maintenance spent time recaulking the openings.

While this may not be a typical situation, it illustrates a common trend in seasonal housing. Much of it is old. In the mountain parks it's exposed to extreme environmental conditions, and in many cases does not receive the same attention that year-round housing does. During the last few years there's been a lot of talk about upgrading seasonal housing. On the down side I've heard maintenance workers say that since new housing is planned they won't be spending much money on existing facilities. On the other hand, the Housing Initiative identified my current housing location as the number one priority for improvement in Glacier NP, and the new Swiftcurrent housing is under construction. By next summer we should have four new apartments replacing two substandard trailers.

Bill Hayden
Park Ranger
Glacier NP

Every morning I stand at the foot of my tent and watch the sun hit the mountains in front of me. You gotta appreciate what you have right at your doorstep. [At 88, Carl Sharsmith lives in

Yosemite in a double-wall tent that he says could easily accommodate a family.]

In the forward part there is a stove and a table, and if you're lucky, you'll get some shelves. The canvas sometimes rots. One time my tent flooded because the canvas was so rotten. But, they do stir up some new canvas now and then.



At the peak of the tent there's a gooseneck lamp. It's good that it's there because it's the only light in the tent and it's a 25-watt bulb. We have a pretty good shower house. It's about a three-to-five minute walk from the cabins. And it's quite new. It's about four years old. But, you have to wrap mosquito net around the faucets, else there would be a tremendous pressure. The tents are about 50 feet apart and there are about twelve tents there. There are a few families, but not as many as there used to be. Mostly college students. Years ago when more men followed the Park Service, they brought their families, their children. But it's not like that anymore.

The worst thing about park housing? Well, I'll tell you...I never had a decent stove. All I wanted was a decent stove. You can put the best wood in it, but you have to wait a long time for your water to boil, if it even does. You have to get that thing roaring or you won't have enough heat and you'll have to go to bed if you want to keep warm.

The beds are better than they were. You see, they used to be mattresses with a net of wires underneath them for a frame. The net would hook in the sides of the bed. But, those hooks would always fall out and as soon as you would sit on that bed, the whole thing would fall through. We used to tie them with hay wire to keep them together. I must have boosted 50 of them.

Some seasonal employees share their tents with others, I insist I don't want a young kid there. You get a young punk in there and he can't wash dishes; he can't clean up after himself; and then he brings his girlfriend in there and they whoop it up till midnight.

When you live in a tent, you survive. You wish things were better sometimes, but you do what you have to.

Carl Sharsmith
Seasonal
Yosemite NP

Housing: A Different Perspective

Every park has its own history and rationale for using—or not using—housing. Often that history has virtually no relationship to policy or guideline for providing housing, but is interesting nevertheless. Like much of NPS infrastructure, expediency often drives the creation of government housing.

At Channel Islands NP, I've discovered one unusual GFQ scenario. We provide some island employees with *Conex Boxes* (i.e. shipping containers normally used by freight companies on ships, rail cars or semi-trailer trucks), affectionately known as "the ranger in the box." Unusual, but effective in responding to a need, these boxes are easy to transport, sturdier and more weather tight than trailers, and, once appliances, furnishings, doors and windows are added, fairly comfortable—much more so than the rusting military quonset huts and tents they replace. As housing money becomes available, this housing will be replaced with more permanent, functional units. Without them, however, most park islands would have no available living space.

I was part of another great housing story in 1979 when I moved to Kotzebue, AK, as the first employee—and first superintendent—of the Northwest Alaska Areas. I arrived with a pack full of field gear, an old manual typewriter and a key to an office the NPS had leased before my arrival. The NPS owned nothing in the Eskimo village of 3,000, where prices were astronomical and waiting lists for rentals were years long (no realtors). So, I moved into the seven-room office. I borrowed a chair and table (for the typewriter) from the local cafe, slept on the floor, and ate out of my pack or in the cafe full-time for two months, then off and on for ten more.

The NANA Museum of the Arctic was located downstairs. It had a restroom and a shower for the dancers—which I used at night when no one was around. The heat, when it worked, was the Arctic standard of as-hot-as-possible. So the windows were open all the time—letting in snow, mosquitoes, or the noises of children playing through the night during the months of the mid-night sun. Occasionally, the plumbing froze—I do admit to spending a few nights in the hotel when I was desperate.

Eventually, I found a house to buy. The office was furnished (even filled with employees), and we built an employee bunk-space in a leased quonset hut. We even bought some government housing after a few years (a dentist's office, two log cabins and a hardware store), which are all subjects for stories in their own right. The point is, when *you* need employees and *they* need living space, you do what you must simply to keep the park operating. With time and innovative management, you may even provide housing that meets standard, meets park and employee needs, and is affordable.

And no, I didn't charge myself rent for staying in that office!
Mack Shaver

TOP TWELVE QUESTIONS ABOUT HOUSING

Q: What is a "nearest established community" and how is it determined?

A: The nearest established community is the nearest population center (metropolitan statistical area or the incorporated or unincorporated city or town) having a year-round population of 1,500 or more (5,000 in Alaska), provided it has minimum essential medical facilities (i.e. at least one physician and one dentist) available to the occupants of employee housing. Population determinations are based on the most recently published decennial census. Each park area is responsible for determining its nearest established community. The distance measured should be the shortest distance from park housing to the nearest shopping district, or to the center of the business community in town, whichever is closer. All communities are subject to review by the WASO Housing Office and/or the Department for compliance with existing regulations.

Q: When will the parks be able to change their nearest established community designation based on the 1990 census?

A: All changes will be based on final (not preliminary) census data, which will not be available before mid-August. At the direction of the Department, the NPS will review and change community designations as soon as information is provided by the Department. At this time, the 1990 census data is still preliminary, and *no changes to community designations are to be made.*

Q: What is the status of OMB Circular A-45?

A: OMB Circular A-45, Policy Governing Changes for Rental Quarters and Related Facilities, has been reviewed governmentwide. OMB informed the Department that it will be in the *Federal Register* in July 1991, for a 60-day comment

period. We encourage all housing managers and housing residents to review and comment on the circular.

Q: How are rates set for a single-family dwelling used by several unrelated tenants (dorm style)? How does this differ from the dorm rate?

A: Rental rates for all dwellings are established according to the construction design of the unit and not its various uses. Thus, rental rates for a "single family dwelling" use the rental charts and charges for utilities, appliances, furnishings and services according to the appropriate regional survey. If the park area is going to use this housing unit for unrelated individuals, the rental charge is divided equally among the occupants. At the beginning of each season, the park must determine the number of planned occupants for the dwelling. There is no change in the rental charge to the individuals if the number of occupants decreases during the season. The dormitory rate applies only to those units that have been specifically constructed or modified for use as dormitories/bunkhouses. These units typically lack either a living room or kitchen, or have common baths and kitchens serving several people. Many also have multiple bunk beds in large ward-like rooms. The Department establishes all dorm/bunkhouse rental rates for each survey region. For more details, review the regional survey pertinent to your park.

Q: What is HUDAT and NPS-76?

A: HUDAT stands for Housing Unit Design Assistance Teams. Each region has appointed an architect, landscape architect, engineer and management representative to comprise their regional HUDAT, which serves as a technical and management support group to provide on-site assistance to parks. Some of the larger parks that have a significant number of housing units have their own HUDAT. HUDAT teams help ensure that all housing rehabilitation and construction projects comply with NPS-76, Housing Design and Rehabilitation Guideline, which establishes the parameters for rehab/repair and construction of housing units throughout the park system. Minimum standards have been developed and are being incorporated into NPS-76. This guideline has been given to all parks and is a good tool to use in all phases of upgrading and/or replacing housing units.

Q: A park has just acquired property and a house. How does this acquisition become approved for use as employee housing?

A: If acquired with the idea that the area will be restored and the house removed, it shouldn't be used for employee housing. It's important to know if the seller has been willing or reluctant. The General Management Plan will have informa-

tion on the land acquisition program for the park.

But if the structure has been identified as employee housing, then prepare Form 10-373, Request for New or Replacement Housing, which requires coordination between the park, regional housing office and regional HUDAT. A full condition assessment should be performed on the structure prior to the park submitting the request to the region, as well as an economic analysis, performed in conjunction with the regional HUDAT, to ensure maximum life span and assess the full cost of the unit, site work, etc. The unit must comply with NPS-76 also. Once approved by the region, the request is forwarded to WASO for review and recommendation to the director for approval.

Q: What is the Housing Consumer Price Index (CPI) and why is it used?

A: Housing CPI is the percentage change in the CPI for rental housing as issued by the Department of Labor. It is not the CPI for consumer goods reported monthly/annually by the news media. This adjustment reflects annual fluctuations in the private rental market and is applied annually in the interim years between regional surveys. The percentage change is applied to the original monthly base rental rate established by the survey. Utility charges, charges for appliances, furnishings and services provided by the government are also reviewed and adjusted, if necessary. The above procedure is in accordance with OMB Circular A-45, Departmental, and NPS Regulations.

Q: When can a park use obsolete units as employee housing?

A: The definition of an obsolete unit is one that is beyond economic rehabilitation. These housing units must be vacated and removed immediately. The vast majority of obsolete units are trailers. Funds cannot be spent on any obsolete trailer unit. *Obsolete units are not to be used as employee housing*, except in extreme emergencies. If any obsolete units are used to house employees, approval for use must be submitted to WASO for the Director's approval.

Q: Why is the regional survey method used for establishing rental rates, and how often do we do a regional survey?

A: The regional survey method is used to establish the rental rates for all NPS employee housing in the system, including Alaska, Hawaii, and the Caribbean. It is used by all Interior bureaus, and many other government agencies with civilian employee housing. The purpose of the rental survey is to determine reasonable rents derived from the analysis of typical

rental rates of comparable private year-round housing in established communities nearest to the government housing. Some of the recognized advantages of the regional survey are that it is cost-effective and administratively simple to implement. It provides a uniform methodology systemwide, as well as a standard system for all survey regions. It provides a logical and consistent rental structure throughout each survey region. These advantages make it the preferred method for establishing rental rates by OMB. A regional survey must be conducted at least every five years for all areas.

Q: Where does rental income go? Is it used for permanent and seasonal housing?

A: All rental income goes back into park housing, both permanent and seasonal housing. This is in accordance with Public Law 98-473, approved October 12, 1984, stating that collected housing rental income must be deposited in a special fund, and will remain available until used for maintenance and operation of the housing of that agency (park). Rental income funds may be carried over.

Rental income, as well as routine and cyclic maintenance funds must be used to maintain and improve park housing. Rental income, generally speaking, will not maintain a park's housing stock, and this is particularly true of seasonal housing. Park housing is a necessary management tool, and we all know that much of the money collected from permanent housing must go into seasonal housing. The goal is to improve all housing as quickly as we can with funds from a number of sources.

Q: What is the Service's policy on trailers?

A: Trailers may not be purchased for use as park housing. Parks may continue to house employees in trailers currently in use until they are replaced with permanent structures.

Q: Why has my rent gone up more than my pay?

A: This question is asked more than any other. Housing is not a part of personnel compensation, but a very separate issue. Housing is not and should not be considered as compensation in any way for work performed. Regulations do not allow establishment of rents and other charges to provide a housing subsidy, serve as inducement in recruitment or retention, or encourage occupancy of existing government housing. To simplify—rent is rent and pay is pay. One does not relate to the other.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: HUDAT DISCUSSES PARK HOUSING

THE FUTURE

A discussion of park housing is not precisely what one would expect to be doing in Santa Fe in the spring, but, for those dedicated to improving these structures, sitting in a hotel to talk about housing hopes for the future is one of the most important things they possibly could do. What follows is a discussion among Billy Garrett, Rich Giamerdine, Irv Dunton, Bob Lopenske, Butch Abell and others involved in the housing program.

GARRETT: We're going to be talking about some things that will influence the future of the housing program. To begin with, let me ask how you see the idea of planning for park housing being reinforced?

GIAMBERDINE: One of the fundamental aspects of the old program was the loss of continuity with earlier, more historic designs. We were short changing ourselves by dotting the landscape with trailers. The problem was we just didn't have the money to come up with quality residential housing. We've learned from that.

GARRETT: Park design theme requires that parks should look like parks and that there should be some degree of architectural consistency. Are you working that into your programs for the future?

ABELL: In the Southwest Region, we've struggled with not mimicking the historic features of a park, but coming up with compatible designs. We didn't want the housing to look like the Hubble House, or the first trading post, or the first adobe structure. It's a real accomplishment to come up with a design that's compatible with the park theme.

DUNTON: There's another way to look at this—building more traditional family housing, as at El Portal. Another good move was made at Great Basin. All the new administrative areas are going to be outside the park.

GARRETT: One thing that is very important to the housing program is the breadth of its concerns. It's more than shelter for people. It looks at the whole

house. How do you think this whole house concept will be applied in the future?

LOPENSKA: We want to make sure we don't invest a lot of money in houses that aren't worthy of being carried into the future. We look at the whole implication of what fixing up an existing house will be, knowing all the complications up front before we commit to its rehabilitation. With new designs, we want to make sure they're done in a comprehensive way—putting a house in context with the other houses around it, examining the level of privacy, looking at park design theme, taking advantage of energy efficiency and protecting our employees and the environment from harmful materials.

GARRETT: How successful would you say the whole house concept is at this point?

LOPENSKA: I think everybody is running into the problem of what to work on next. That's where our assessment program ties in very successfully. We plan to do more assessments to help prioritize how we do our rehabilitation work. Looking at the whole picture, we can see the full implications of rehabilitation.

DUNTON: In reality, there are so many safety implications that have to be taken care of we find ourselves correcting ten electrical systems first, simply because they're dangerous. Safety practices end up taking precedence over the whole-house concept. And, of course, we always have to deal with the restraints of funding.

GARRETT: What should the quality of design be in parks?

LOPENSKA: We have the new initiative of environmentally responsible design. We're getting a lot of interest in doing things that are compatible and contribute in a positive way to the visual quality of the park and are more responsible to the environment. I'm sure we'll be looking very closely at the types of materials we specify for use in park housing, because we don't want to be responsible in any

way for exposing park visitors and employees to unhealthy materials. I think we'll be dealing with healthier architecture. In our existing structures we have task forces addressing lead paint, asbestos, and radon. We're looking at a lot of plastics, the adhesives used for bonding or laminating, and the polyvinyl chlorides that outgass. Healthy architecture is a new frontier and we need to be there on the front line demonstrating how things should be put together in a more responsible way.

DUNTON: If we're using lower quality wood products to build with, we're more efficiently using the timber.

LOPENSKE: That's right. We have to look at both ends. We can't be out there using redwoods or rainforest products because we're demanding solid timber.

GIAMBERDINE: We need to be leaders in demonstrating that we can live in this shrinking global environment.

GARRETT: Livability is one of the primary concerns, too.

GIAMBERDINE: There's been a change of attitude about quality design, whether it's park design theme or the quality design that goes into rehabilitated housing. I think we're addressing this as an amenity for our people. The fact that they need private space, screens, outdoor gardens... Why not provide shade? Why not provide amenities? I think we've been too embarrassed to provide public employees with such things. We've got to remember that the whole thing is about the future. What kind of people do we want to attract? Wouldn't you like to see a new generation come in and continue the legacy?

ENGLER: Snow has always been a big factor at Crater Lake and people have wanted housing that let in a little more light. This works now because the living areas are upstairs and the bedrooms are downstairs, where windows are often covered with snow. This way people can enjoy some daylight even when they're snowed in.

GARRETT: Do you think housing in the future will affect the retention of employees?

SMITH: Absolutely. Even now, people take a look at available housing and then refuse to accept a position. They're thinking about their families first.

ABELL: The new houses at Big Bend caused concern among park employees because the houses were superior in quality to others in the park. However once occupants moved in, employ-

ees realized that the quality had gone up many times more than the rent.

GESS: We're rehabbing a house in Arches. It's a Mission 66 house to which we're adding a two-car garage, a family room, larger bathrooms, and a larger kitchen. The difference in rent is only \$20 more per pay period.

FILSOOF: At National Capital Region, we recruit at the GS-5 level, but we have a lot of trouble retaining the people we hire because of an absence of affordable housing. We really need to work on getting housing that will help retain people around urban areas. Housing doesn't only affect remote areas. It's an urban issue too.

GARRETT: I'd like to put some of what we've discussed into historical perspective. As we all know, the NPS inherited some of its buildings from the military. Then, a little later, it enjoyed a kind of golden age at a time when park housing reflected



Drawing by Rich Giamberdine

the native character of the area. After World War II, NPS employees started taking a different approach to park design. They started thinking along Mission 66 lines. The Service produced buildings that looked like tract housing elsewhere in the country. Park housing went through a period of decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s where the prototypical house was the trailer. The NPS moved further and further away from the relationship between the house, the employee, and the park. Paralleling that change was a change in park employees also—hiring shifted from seasonal maintenance workers with rural backgrounds at the turn of the century to people who came from suburban or urban environments. Now there's an older workforce in place, with very different expectations than those of their predecessors. These employees view their jobs differently. They view parks differently. The housing initiative is trying to work with these changes to tie together the idea that parks are laboratories and quality environments both for the people who come to visit the resources and the people who work in the parks. We've taken the idea that it doesn't matter where you live and are focusing it into a multi-faceted program that affects all parks and the global environment.



NAME: Robert Lopenske, senior architect, Denver Service Center

WHY HOUSING:

- started working summers in a residential architect's office after freshman year of high school, and continued there through college, gaining house design experience ranging from tract subdivisions to high-end custom homes;
- following up on an early exposure to residential design, 1970 architectural thesis centered around pre-fabrication of quality designed housing;
- in 1986, while serving as DSC senior consultant architect, asked to address topic of what constituted good housing at training session on housing management, and, in doing so, discovered the scarcity of good examples existing in the parks, became exposed to just how deplorable the majority of Service housing was;
- became offended at the double standard where housing received none of the comprehensive planning/design or construction/maintenance prioritization that all other park facilities received.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- helped prepare Congressional briefing document on NPS housing that outlined the special design considerations and cost factors, and estimated the cost of bringing all housing into good-to-excellent condition;
- served as co-chair of former Director Mott's Housing Oversight Committee, consisting of Servicewide representatives charged with drafting policies and guidelines for the NPS housing initiative;
- headed technical group to draft NPS-76 Housing and Rehabilitation Guidelines;
- served as instructor for training of region

and park-based housing unit design assistance teams (HUDAT);

- provide on-call technical assistance to the WASO housing office;
- coordinate annual status report to Congress on housing initiative accomplishments.

KEY ISSUES:

- keeping the enthusiasm for the housing initiative alive by 1) communicating accomplishments of the initiative to employees, managers, and designers as well as to Congress, and 2) keeping Congress aware that we've only just begun, that the funding to date is only a fraction of the need, and that our condition assessments, community planning, and design guidelines put us in a position to obligate higher levels of housing funding each year;
- keeping control over quality of housing improvements, and not allowing quick fixes that exacerbate the maintenance backlog down the road, detract from the visual quality of the park, or do little to improve the quality of life for employees and their families by 1) requiring HUDAT review for all housing decisions and 2) implementing minimum livability standards for all new or rehabilitated housing; and, finally,
- addressing the multitude of health hazards plaguing built environments by 1) issuing health hazard bulletins to all employees living in park housing to alert them to potential risks and symptoms and 2) providing technical advisors to assist in the detection/mitigation of hazardous conditions.

PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE TRENDS:

- park employees will have to receive higher pay if the agency is to recruit and retain quality personnel and bring salaries in line with similar duties performed in the private sector; this may make employee investment in private sector housing more feasible;
- more development along park boundaries may make more private sector housing alternatives available;
- NPS will lead in demonstrating how to put development in concert with local and global environments; this will require a higher degree of sensitivity in 1) how we place buildings on a site and in harmony with the environment; 2) the selection of less environmentally destructive materials, and 3) the use of recycled and recyclable materials.

SUMMARY COMMENTS:

- Working on the improvement of park housing has been the most important and

rewarding assignment of my career. It has been a pleasure working with the highly dedicated professionals in the Washington Housing Office, on the park/regional HUDATs, in the maintenance divisions, and at the Service Center.



NAME: Andy Ringgold, superintendent, Cape Cod NS

NPS BACKGROUND:

- Sequoia NP park ranger 1967-72; Lassen Volcanic NP district ranger 1972-76; Petrified Forest NP chief ranger 1976-79, New River Gorge NR chief ranger 1979-84; WASO Branch of Ranger Activities staff ranger 1984-87; Chief of WASO Branch of Resource & Visitor Protection 1987-89; Cape Cod NS superintendent 1989-Present

WHY HOUSING:

- We all know how controversial and emotional a subject park housing continues to be for NPS employees and housing managers. Depending on individual perspectives and local conditions, rents may be considered too high or too low; the quality and frequency of maintenance reasonable or unreasonable; and residential settings bucolic or too far from amenities. Required occupancy may be a liability or a tax benefit to the employee. The debate rages on and will last as long as the NPS remains in the housing business.
- Like most NPS employees, I have developed strong personal and professional opinions about park housing. I spent the first half of my 24 years with the Service as a required occupant and the last half living outside park housing altogether. Given a

choice, I would choose the latter option under most circumstances. However, I'm now manager of a park located in a rather expensive resort environment. The park maintains a relatively large housing inventory because recruiting seasonal and even permanent employees depends on NPS ability to provide housing.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- When Pat Smith asked three years ago if I would be interested in working on the issue of required occupancy for the Servicewide Housing Committee, she put me in a real bind. On one hand, my job in WASO Ranger Activities was a full load. On the other hand, the issue was relevant to Ranger Activities, and Pat was offering the opportunity to incorporate at least some of my thoughts into a Servicewide policy document. How could I refuse? Pat's request led to the development of a special directive on required occupancy and to several years of participation on the committee, which I found challenging and rewarding. The Service is not yet where we ought to be with housing, but we've improved a great deal and, with the continued support of the Directorate and Congress, we have the opportunity to make major improvements in employee living conditions Servicewide.

KEY ISSUES:

- Where park housing is concerned, very few if any absolutes can be applied Servicewide. I believe that both the NPS and its employees are best served by housing management programs that provide and maintain options for employees—not just design alternatives but decision alternatives. Are we doing everything we can as an agency to give field employees the option of exploring the private housing market? Is required occupancy absolutely essential in all cases in which it is now imposed or could a more flexible approach based on response radius be applied in some cases?



NAME: Don Herring, Division Chief, Engineering and Safety Services, WASO

WHY HOUSING:

- Career NPS employees who have lived in parks tell many stories about the dwellings they have occupied. These stories often include the complexities of working for your landlord and the strain that inadequate quarters place on family members. My own experience with park housing started in a



one-room cabin at Grand Canyon NP where I was a sewage treatment plant operator in the early seventies. The mid-seventies found me in Sequoia and Kings Canyon NPs, living in an NPS trailer as well as other types of housing. Not a manager at the time, I learned that employees had little control over employer-owned housing, which could be woefully inadequate.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- In 1978, when I came to WASO, my years as an occupant of park housing came to an end. However, my managerial involvement was just beginning. Today my responsibilities include directing the management of the housing program. My park experience convinces me that housing is a critical management tool. It provides opportunities to increase (or decrease) employee effectiveness. It influences our recruitment ability. And, when managed well, it helps us to protect the resources of our national parks.

KEY ISSUES:

- The NPS housing operation in Washington has evolved from a basic rate-setting program in 1980 to today's complex housing management program. This program now provides direction on rental rates and special funding for housing improvements. It helps fund design, construction and maintenance of park housing as established in NPS-76. The Housing Branch continues to improve park housing through: 1) rehabilitation or repair of existing housing units; 2) replacement of obsolete houses; 3) NPS-76 compliance for quality construction and minimum standards; and 4) communication with park employees concerning housing program status. In

managing these issues, WASO works closely with other offices and branches, creating special task forces made up of park managers, design professionals, and park employees to work on specific issues.

PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE TRENDS:

- The Housing Initiative Program is reducing the large maintenance backlog on park houses. Management and employees are communicating on housing needs and designs. In fact, everyone wants to build on this foundation as the 21st century approaches. Future projects include developing standards for quality construction and environmentally sensitive housing, as well as exploring housing alternatives in isolated locations. To do this, the NPS must continue to dedicate dollars, energy, and other resources to providing safe, attractive, comfortable employee housing.



NAME: Pat Smith, Housing Officer, WASO

WHY HOUSING?

- Why maintenance or law enforcement, interpretation or any other program? Housing is a management tool, supporting the mission of the Service, as well as a sensitive issue that requires understanding of management and employee needs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- I became the NPS housing officer in 1983, and the housing program has gone from rent-setting to a complex multi-faceted program in eight years;
 - as part of the overall housing program,

we now have housing management plans, consistent rental rate program, data bases for both the housing inventory and required occupancy, guidelines on the management of all phases of the program, i.e. required occupancy, rehab/repair and construction standards, leasing, and relocation of employees in an emergency situation;

- Housing Initiative Program got underway in FY 1989; during the last three fiscal years, the Service has received \$26 million for housing improvements—a major accomplishment, but only a beginning.

KEY ISSUES:

- providing adequate housing for permanent and seasonal employees;
- upgrading housing with quality construction to eliminate the tremendous housing maintenance backlog;
- creating a fully automated housing program;
- eliminating trailers, improving communication between management and employees;
- establishing guidelines and/or procedures on health hazard issues relative to employee housing, i.e. lead paint, asbestos, and radon.

PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE TRENDS:

- Employee housing impacts morale, work attitude and productivity. Therefore, management must continue full commitment to improving and upgrading employee housing to carry out the Service's mission. Housing is a long-term investment in cost-effective quality construction, with emphasis on environmental harmony, resource conservation, and sensitive site planning.

SUMMARY COMMENTS:

- Much has been accomplished in the housing program thanks to the dedication of key people in WASO, Denver Service Center, regional and park offices, and the Department, and I say thanks to all of them.



NAME: Donna Compton, Housing Program, WASO

NPS BACKGROUND:

- Joined the National Park Service in 1980 and the WASO Housing Program in 1986.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Manages the Servicewide Housing Inventory, a database listing more than 5,000 units, and oversees the implementation of the

NPS regional surveys. Worked with the original Housing Oversight Committee, and continues to work with the HUDAT teams. Participates in special housing task force groups, most recently the Health Hazards Task Force chaired by Tim Hudson and the NPS-36 Task Force. Serves as the point of contact for the ten regional housing offices and fields questions from them on a daily basis. Handles the day-to-day aspect of the housing program and the diversity of issues associated with that, part of which has included maintaining open lines of communication with the field on various housing issues.



NAME: Merrie Hinson, housing manager, Yosemite NP.

NPS BACKGROUND:

- From a one-room rock cabin above timberline at \$3.50 a pay period in Rocky Mountain NP, I swept and cleaned my way through ten government housing units before becoming the housing manager at Yosemite NP. It was not until 1980 that I was added to NPS rolls, even though I had worked with park housing since 1960.

WHY HOUSING?

- Each house to which we were assigned—from a temporary fifty-foot trailer to a Mission 66 house, three historic units, and various other homes—were special to me, my ranger husband, and our three children. We appreciated the opportunity to raise a family in the parks where others come to vacation.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Working with employees and their

housing needs has been gratifying. Pride is like a magnet. Occupants afforded clean, safe homes take personal pride in maintaining them well. We constantly scramble to provide the best possible home for employees, which means much more than simply providing a bed. We are dealing with a professional group of dedicated public servants who do not and should not choose to accept less than they might expect outside federal service.

KEY ISSUES:

- Adequate funding is difficult to come by, and rental monies do not begin to cover the costs of renovations and upkeep. Parks have to expect that they need to provide much more than the types of houses built thirty years ago. To compensate, however, we are looking at the bigger picture...energy efficient and cost effective housing, landscaping, storage and environmentally sound units, for a whole house concept...geared to be lived in and enjoyed by employees. Parks are making a Herculean effort to deal with health and safety factors, and correct deficiencies in such areas as plumbing, heating, and insulation. We balance these critical needs while responding to the mandates of environmental assessments and retention of historic houses.

PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE TRENDS:

- Transfer from Texas to California and your promotion is absorbed by the increased cost of living. Rent is 'of reasonable value' within the area of regional studies and appraisal surveys. But, what happens to the employee who relocates from one part of the country to another? The lack of available and affordable rental and purchase properties is causing a park like Yosemite to lose qualified personnel. Recruiting for entry level portions is a real problem in this highly visible, highly visited, but isolated park. Our future is our employees. Our goal is not where we stand with housing today, but where we are going.



NAME: John Reynolds, manager, Denver Service Center.

NPS BACKGROUND:

Born in Yellowstone NP, the son of Harvey and Lois Reynolds; served as superintendent of North Cascades NP; assistant superintendent of Santa Monica Mountains NRA; DSC chief of planning for Midwest/Rocky Mountain areas; landscape architect/planner for NPS offices in



Philadelphia, Washington, San Francisco, and Alaska.

WHY HOUSING?

- Housing is an issue that has a direct bearing on the Service's present and future employees. I support the housing program through the work of DSC staff intensively involved with the housing program.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- money to restore older housing stock, replace trailers, and provide for new construction;
- exciting new designs for employee housing;
- changing attitudes leading to a real search to improve conditions to benefit employees—trailers came into vogue as temporary housing solutions, but now the talk about removing them is serious; standard plans are giving way to those designed "with special reference to the landscape," the park's architectural theme, its climate, its community, and individual requirements of occupants. The timeless principles used in framing the Service's design ethic are now in vogue for housing.

KEY ISSUES:

- In many parks, the issue of community planning for park personnel needs more attention. Some first-cut schemes are being shaped by employee preferences. These include community centers, recreation, convenience shopping, and facilities integrated with the main park infrastructure. The amenity-enhanced cluster homes will be a key feature of these communities in the future. Properly designed, planned communities offer the benefits of integrated

housing plans with common open space, integrated trails, and recreational needs.

- Other issues demand our attention, among them the application of environmentally sensitive construction techniques; healthy architecture, using non-toxic materials.

PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE TRENDS:

- I believe the all embracing concept of sustainability should guide whatever we do in parks. I expect shortly to initiate such a program in a target park to define, research, and integrate environmental sustainability in design. In addition, we will learn from academic and private institutions to improve our effectiveness working with native conditions and to conserve valuable resources and energy. All our activities emerging from design and management decisions must achieve sustainability, maintain species diversity, and protect ecosystem integrity.



OTHERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

It's not only the Housing Program managers, architects, and engineers that make the housing initiative work. It also can be key people from program areas not ordinarily connected with housing.

In the Western Region, it's **Patty Neubacher**, the regional chief of budget. Patty shows a sincere concern for NPS employees and their families, in particular, those who live in sub-standard housing units. She's aware that the caliber of an employee's "castle" contributes positively or negatively to morale, quality of life, quality of work and, often, the amount of on-the-job effort. This can be reflected throughout a park in the work of rangers, resource managers, interpreters, maintenance people, and the other disciplines represented by the park.

So, in the Western Region, the housing contract is issued late in the year. It includes several fixed units, as well as several additives. As the year ends and, for various reasons, some contracts are not awarded, certain programs end up with positive balances. Patty gathers these funds together and works hard to make as much as possible available to replace substandard trailers and houses. Thanks to Patty, the lives of more than 50 park employees and families in the Western Region have been greatly improved.

DSC's **Larry Morrison** and **Christy Fischer** made their contributions in the publishing arena. Working under Dick

Morishige, Publication and Graphic Design branch chief, they produced NPS-76, the Housing Design and Rehabilitation Guideline.

For a guideline, it's hard to resist. Color-coded dividers make it an easy reference tool. A thoughtful quotation at the beginning sets the tone. Christy and Larry struggled within the traditional guideline format to create something that was a little different, a little more readable and easily understood than the usual documents of this kind.

"We were pleased with the end product," remembers Larry. "Christy had a better vision of it than I did. She worked with it, so that it didn't read like a guideline. It reads well and has visual interest."

Bob Lopenske, DSC's housing guru, was pleased also. For Bob, NPS-76 works well as a training tool—a textbook for all those interested in housing—and he uses it this way when he visits the parks.

Not only was NPS-76 a complex and lengthy document but it also had to be completed within the short span of several months. Considering that the manuscript came in piece by piece from the discipline experts, Christy's vision was critical. She determined when something was left out, when there was a hole, what the overall nature of the document should be. "And I'd never done a guideline before," she quipped.

Larry provided the graphic continuity. He spent three days in Washington, simply reviewing and making selections from among hundreds of images. Then he and Christy joined forces, Larry providing the visual interest and Christy the continuity.

How did they get involved with something this massive?

"Because we're *really* good," Larry declares.

But no, *really*, how did they get involved?

Actually, Larry had worked on the preliminary pamphlet that first laid out the complex issues connected with the housing initiative. It just seemed natural that he should take on NPS-76 as well. When Christy joined him as editor, the team was complete. Now when updates on the housing program are needed, it'll probably be Fischer and Morrison who'll go into action again, making a substantial contribution to the way the program is viewed by those inside the Park Service and outside of it as well.

So Larry had it right all along: they are *really* good, and the Service is lucky they are.

Modern Park Housing – What's Being Done Now



(1)



(2)



(3)

Step by step a new house becomes a reality at Isle Royale (1 and 2), while at Big Bend a spacious kitchen and comfortable garden area make employee housing a pleasure to return to after working hours (3 and 4). At Rocky Mountain the finishing touches are put on a new house (5).



(4)



(5)



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