

We welcome your comments on the future use of Cascade Cottages

Comments can be submitted online by visiting: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/romo>

Written comments can also be sent to: Superintendent
Rocky Mountain National Park
1000 U.S. Highway 36
Estes Park, CO 80517

Comments are welcome and will be most useful if received by April 23, 2018.

Stay informed

For updates and information about Cascade Cottages, press releases, newsletters and planning documents, please visit our website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/romo>

Rocky Mountain National Park
1000 U.S. Highway 36
Estes Park, CO 80517

**Rocky Mountain National Park
Colorado**

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Help Us Determine the Future of Cascade Cottages

Newsletter
March 2018

Background

In March 2017, the 42-acre Cascade Cottages property was acquired by Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). For many decades Cascade Cottages was a seasonal lodging establishment. Honoring the wishes of the family patriarch, the family approached RMNP in 2009 offering to sell the property to the park. With assistance from the Trust for Public Land, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, and many donors, including the Estes Valley Land Trust, Larimer County, and the Town of Estes Park, RMNP was able to acquire the property. RMNP is now in the process of determining how the property should be used and/or preserved.

Description

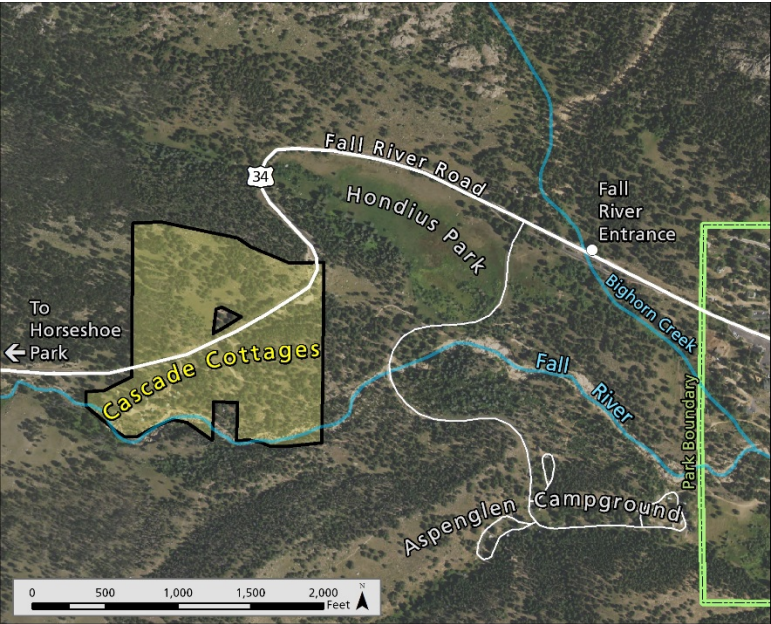
The Cascade Cottages property is bordered on the south by Fall River, and is named for a series of cascades on the river. The property is bisected by Fall River Road (U.S. Highway 34), and is located approximately 1 mile inside the Fall River Entrance to RMNP (please see the sidebar map).

Prior to acquisition by RMNP in March 2017, Cascade Cottages was a 42.28-acre private inholding within RMNP. Kansas school-teachers L.V. and Hazel Davis bought the property in 1941 and the family operated a seasonal lodging business that extended from Memorial Day through Labor Day. In addition to the office, there were 12 rustic cabins that were available for lodging (please refer to the map in this brochure).

The habitat is montane ponderosa pine woodland. Only the south half of the property is developed. The north half remains in its natural state.

The cabins and associated infrastructure lie very lightly on the land. The cabins are built on stone or concrete piers, and water lines run above ground. There is no well or permanent water system. Water was hauled to the site and stored in above ground tanks, and propane was delivered to the site. The only externally provided utilities are power and telephone.

The rustic cabins are generally 1 – 2 bedroom and have a kitchen with a stove, refrigerator and microwave oven. They are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



Preliminary Options

No decision has been made on the future use of the Cascade Cabins Property. Some preliminary options have been developed to initiate discussion. These preliminary options are listed below.

Youth Conservation Corps Seasonal Housing

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy (the friends group for RMNP) funds a youth conservation corps every summer. The corps perform projects within the park such as trail reconstruction. Some of the existing cottages could be renovated and minor site improvements completed to provide housing that would only be occupied by the corps during the summer months.

Youth and Volunteer Outdoor Education

Some of the cabins could be renovated and minor site improvements completed to provide a rustic lodging and outdoor education facility for youth or park volunteers that have limited experience with the outdoors. Not as outdoorsy as camping, the rustic cabins could provide an outdoors experience without all the comforts of home.

Mothball the Structures

RMNP would terminate all outside services (power and phone), and would secure each building from entry using plywood coverings over windows and doors. While left unused, the buildings would not receive routine maintenance.

Remove the Structures and Restore the Site

The structures and infrastructure would be removed and recycled to the extent feasible. The ground would be scarified to break up compacted soil, and the area replanted with native grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees. The goal would be to place all disturbed areas on a trajectory where they would be restored to natural conditions in a matter of a few decades.

Other Alternatives

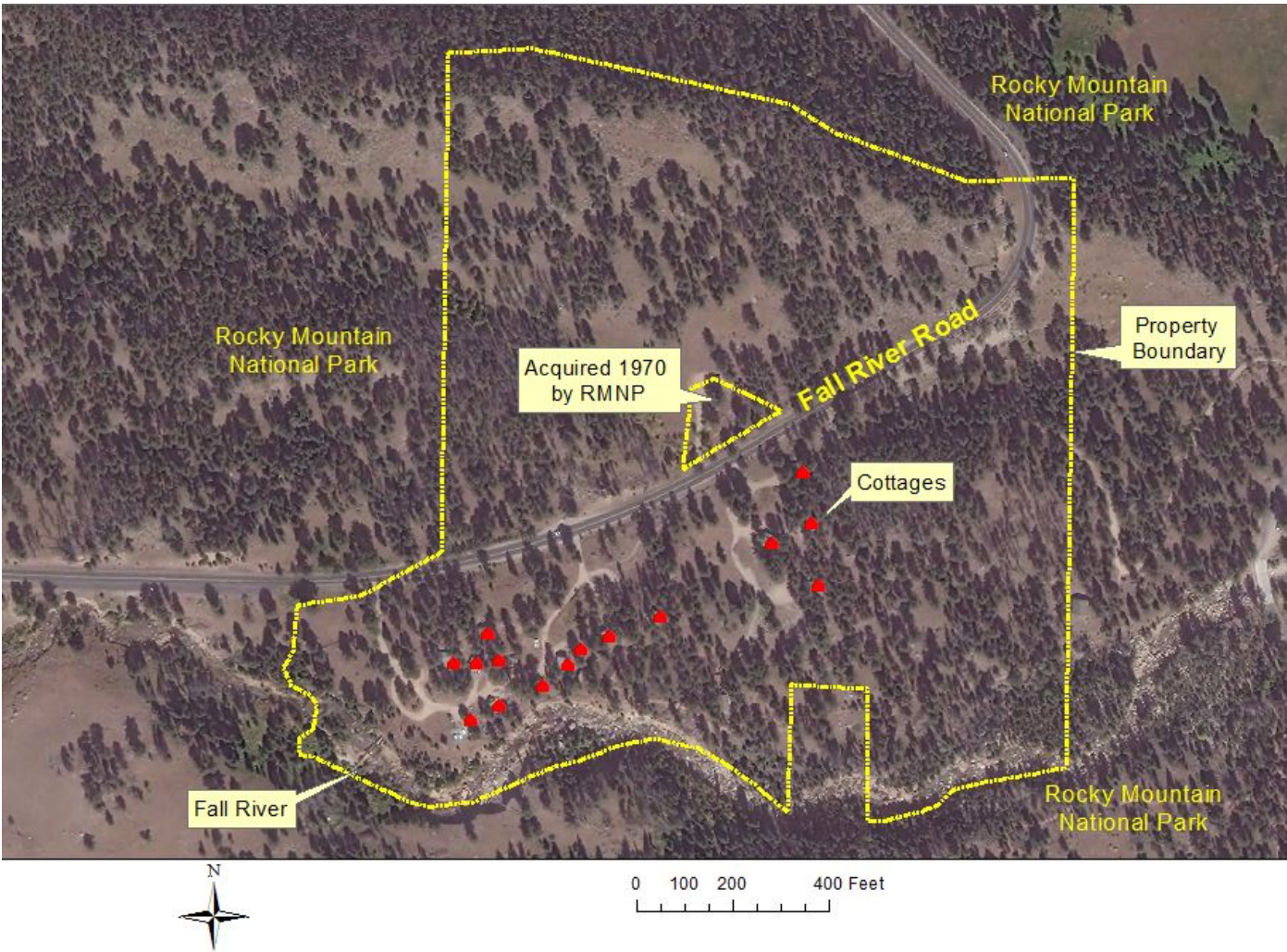
If you have an idea for the future of Cascade Cottages that is compatible with the mission of the National Park Service, and does not require federal funding, please share your idea with us!



NPS File Photo



© Boulder Daily Camera



The Mission of the National Park Service

The mission of the National Park Service is to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system, for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

The Purpose of Rocky Mountain National Park

Is to preserve the high-elevation ecosystems and wilderness character of the southern Rocky Mountains within its borders and to provide the freest recreational use of and access to the park’s scenic beauties, wildlife, natural features and processes, and cultural objects.

Future use of Cascade Cottages must be compatible with the above

Development or use of the property in the future must be compatible with the mission of the National Park Service and the purpose of RMNP. For example, a coffee shop, restaurant, a lodge or other retail use would not be compatible. Removing the cottages and restoring the land, or a use focused on outdoor or environmental education would be compatible.