
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2009

Revised: 8/2025



Big Meadows
Shenandoah National Park

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Big Meadows
Resource Classification:	Component Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	300117
Parent Landscape:	300115
Inventory Status:	Complete

Park Information

Park Name:	Shenandoah National Park
Alpha Code:	SHEN
Park Organization Code:	4840
Park District:	SHEN
Region:	Northeast
Restricted:	Yes

Landscape Description:

Big Meadows is one of four original multi-use developments constructed along the 105-mile Skyline Drive, a National Historic Landmark (NHL) that winds along the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains through the length of Shenandoah National Park (NP) in Virginia. Shenandoah NP was one of two national parks in the southern Appalachians authorized by Congress in 1926 and established in the 1930s. The 440-acre Big Meadows site is situated at milepost 51 west of Skyline Drive. The site is covered with semi-wooded areas, wetlands, and a large open meadow, providing a variety of scenic landscape views. The property is comprised of five historic sub-areas arranged along an access road that include a wayside/visitor center area, picnic grounds, lodge/cabin area, campground, and maintenance area, and two non-historic sub-areas consisting of a wastewater treatment facility and employee residences. A series of spurs and interior loop roads also provide access to these areas. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) constructed the picnic grounds, campground, and maintenance area, including buildings, roadways, parking areas, trails, comfort stations, drinking fountains, log guardrails, boulders bollards, and fireplaces. More recent site furnishings have been introduced in the picnic grounds replacing original CCC work, including picnic tables and grills. The park concessionaire constructed the Big Meadows Lodge along with the Wayside building and guest cabins, following the rustic style developed by the National Park Service (NPS) to design and build structures that blend into the landscape using native materials and traditional construction methods. Additional buildings have been built since the period of significance (1931 to 1952), most notably the Byrd Visitor Center adjacent to the Wayside. Built as part of the NPS Mission-66 program, the Visitor Center is now the largest building at Big Meadows and features interpretive exhibits as well as other amenities. Construction since the period of significance also includes several employee residences and guest accommodations, an amphitheater, a wastewater treatment plant, and expanded camping facilities.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Prior to the establishment of Shenandoah NP, the area was inhabited by Native Americans and later settled by European immigrants beginning in the early 1700s and reaching its peak population in the nineteenth century. Homesteads were established where families raised a variety of crops and fruit trees and kept pastures for livestock/cattle grazing. A large portion of the Big Meadows site belonged to a family farm that used the land for a cattle range. Tenant families occupied the site and looked after the cattle and expanded the meadow by cutting down

timber for their own use (Reeder 1991:59).

During the early part of the twentieth century, several environmental disasters occurred, diminishing the economic livelihood of many area residents. The chestnut blight brought catastrophic change to the forest ecosystem, decimating chestnut trees that once made up twenty percent of the forest. Chestnuts were a food source for animals and could also be sold for cash. The bark was used for tanning, and the wood was used in the construction of telephone poles, railroad ties, wheel rims, and tools. In addition, the region experienced a severe drought in 1930 causing crops and the apple harvest to fail.

Limited recreational use of the mountains had begun as early as 1830 with the construction of Black Springs Hotel and the development of Stony Man Camp (later Skyland) in 1894. In 1924, the idea of establishing a national park in the region came about when the U.S. Secretary of the Interior formed the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee (SANPC), which recognized the potential of locating a scenic drive atop the Blue Ridge Mountains in northern Virginia with dramatic views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the Piedmont Plain to the east. In 1926, Congress authorized Shenandoah NP to provide a large, western-type park accessible from the urban centers of the East Coast. However, the act did not provide federal funding to acquire land for the park. Until the park was officially established in 1935, lands were acquired through private donations and funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The need to provide economic relief and jobs to the region, already suffering from the drought of 1930 as well as the Great Depression, provided an incentive to make the Shenandoah area more accessible by building a motor road. The construction of this road, Skyline Drive, began in 1931 during the Hoover Administration through the coordinated efforts of the NPS and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Public Roads. During the Roosevelt Administration, as part of the New Deal legislation, the CCC was established to help create jobs through natural resource conservation efforts on federal, state, and municipal properties. At Shenandoah, the CCC was involved in erosion control, planting trees and shrubs, and the construction of site amenities including trails, shelters, overlooks, parking lots, picnic tables, fireplaces, drinking fountains, and other site furnishings. Roosevelt also established the Public Works Administration (PWA) which later became a part of the Federal Works Agency. The PWA was involved with a comprehensive program for federal and nonfederal public works projects. The program's objectives were to reduce unemployment, increase consumers' purchasing power, improve standards of labor, and conserve natural resources. At Shenandoah, PWA funds were used for the construction of the Equipment Storage building at the Big Meadows site (Historic Resource Study 1997:73). Another agency established under the New Deal was the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which employed millions of people across the country to work on new buildings, roads, and utilities. At Big Meadows, the water and sewer system was constructed with WPA labor and funds (NHL documentation 2008:63).

Big Meadows was planned as one of four multi-use developments constructed by the park concessionaire to provide services to motorists along Skyline Drive. By 1937, the CCC constructed the main access road, the picnic grounds, and campground. During the same year, the Virginia Sky-Line Company secured the concessionaire contract, and soon after constructed the Wayside station, Big Meadows Lodge, and five guest cabins. Following design and planning principles promoted by the NPS, the Big Meadows development was sited to harmonize with the natural topography while also taking advantage of the panoramic views and vistas. Site amenities were organized in an east-west progression off of Skyline Drive taking advantage of views of the meadow to the east and views of the valley to the west. An access road, herein referred to as Big Meadows Road, intersected with Skyline Drive at a wye intersection with a Wayside station offering a filling station, lunch room and gift shop. Big Meadows Road then led past a maintenance area, campground, picnic grounds, to a cabin/lodge area offering over night accommodations. The CCC constructed landscape elements enhancing the rustic and naturalistic setting by using stone for drinking fountains and fireplaces, boulders for bollards, and logs for guardrails and signs. The CCC also completed construction of rustic style comfort stations within the picnic grounds and the campground and built trails throughout the site. CCC workers planted trees to define spaces at the campground and picnic area, provide shade, and as specimens at the Lodge and Wayside. In addition, the CCC established a nursery near their camp in the meadow in order to propagate native plants for installation throughout the park and Skyline Drive.

After the United States entered World War II in 1941, further development of the park temporarily ceased. Visitation to the park plummeted as fuel shortages curbed opportunities for leisurely drives and people were encouraged to conserve resources for the war effort, forcing the closure of concession facilities. After the war, the concession facilities re-opened, but business remained slow for a few more years. By the late 1940s, business began to improve at Big Meadows, and the park concessionaire expanded guest amenities by constructing two multi-unit cottages at the cabin/lodge area.

During the late 1950s, the NPS underwent a comprehensive expansion and development program in order to meet the dramatic increase in visitation at the parks and to update existing facilities. Referred to as "Mission-66," the program was planned to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the NPS in 1966. The Big Meadows campground was expanded with a new loop circulation and additional associated facilities, and new trails were constructed, such as the "Story of the Forest" Trail. Visitor centers were a major component of the Mission-66 initiative, envisioned as the center of the park interpretive program. At Big Meadows, the NPS constructed the Byrd Visitor Center, and associated parking lot, adjacent to the Wayside. The Visitor Center building was designed as a split-level structure with large plate glass windows overlooking the meadow. Additional housing for NPS employees was built at the maintenance area and concession employee residences were built nearby the cabin/lodge area.

New construction has continued through the 1990s, including an amphitheater at the picnic grounds, a wastewater treatment plant, and new overnight guest accommodations. Several buildings dating from the period of significance have been adapted for other uses, such as Cottages A through E, which are now used for storage. Some of the original CCC-built site features have been replaced with newer styles, including picnic tables and grills. Remnants of tennis courts, the former CCC camp, and nursery are evident along the edge of the meadow. Log guardrails have also been replaced with concrete wheel stops. Additional site furnishings have been installed, such as benches, an information kiosk, signage, site lighting, bicycle racks, and dumpsters and recycling bins. Two memorials have also been installed at the Byrd Visitor Center.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Big Meadows is located within the boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District, which was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) on October 6, 2008. Skyline Drive, with its adjoining overlooks, waysides, picnic areas, campgrounds, and developed areas, is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 1 and 4. The period of significance for the Skyline Drive Historic District is 1931-1952. Construction of Skyline Drive began in 1931 and occurred in three distinct phases, extending to 1952, which recognizes the small amount of work done to complete the guardwalls after World War II and some minor changes that were consistent with the 1930s master plans. Rapidan Road, which connected Skyline Drive and Big Meadows to President Herbert Hoover's summer retreat, Rapidan Camp, was also built in 1931. While construction of the Big Meadows developed area did not begin until 1935 as part of a park master plan, it shares the same areas and period of significance as the historic district.

For the purposes of this Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), the historic significance of Big Meadows is evaluated according to the National Register Criteria A and C which align with NHL Criteria 1 and 4, respectively. Big Meadows is nationally significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and politics/government for its association with Shenandoah NP as one of the first eastern national parks and is associated with the early twentieth century movement to accommodate the growing popularity of the automobile while also conserving natural and scenic areas. Skyline Drive was created as a recreational park road that provided motorists with a shifting panorama of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Shenandoah Valley, and the Northern Virginia Piedmont. Located off of Skyline Drive in the Central District of the park, Big Meadows offered motorists a place to stop and enjoy the views, obtain gasoline, have a meal, and/or stay the night. Big Meadows is also associated with federal government efforts to mitigate widespread unemployment during the Great Depression through work programs, most notably the CCC that constructed many of the site amenities along Skyline Drive and throughout Shenandoah NP.

Big Meadows is also nationally significant under Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture for its association with the rustic style developed by the NPS in the 1930s and 1940s. This style emphasized preserving existing landscapes and restoring landscapes altered by man to their original condition, using native vegetation. It also emphasized the incorporation of scenic views in the layout of buildings and circulation features and sited them to be as inconspicuous as possible. The NPS also encouraged the use of local materials and traditional methods in the construction of buildings, structures, and site furnishings. The overall layout of the Big Meadows developed area harmonized with the existing topography as much as possible and highlighted the views of the Shenandoah Valley and the meadow. Parking areas were integrated with the vehicular circulation which curved and looped through the site to blend with the topography. Trails also meandered through the site linking parking areas to the picnic grounds and the Lodge. Trees were planted for screening at the campground, and in clusters at the picnic grounds to provide shade and spatial definition. In addition, specimen trees and foundation plantings were installed around the Big Meadows Lodge and the Wayside. Existing trees were also preserved, when possible, in order to enhance the naturalistic setting. Lawns were also established around the Wayside to maintain views of the meadow beyond, as well as views to and from Skyline Drive. Buildings, structures, and other site furnishings were constructed of wood and stone from the area.

Big Meadows, and specifically Rapidan Road, is also nationally significant under National Register Criterion B for its association with Herbert Hoover. The road provided access to Hoover's summer retreat, Rapidan Camp, and was built as part of an appropriation for Skyline Drive. The significance of Herbert Hoover and Rapidan Camp is addressed in a separate CLI.

ANALYSIS/EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

The physical integrity of Big Meadows is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1931-1952) with current conditions. Many of the site's historic characteristics and features remain unchanged. The site's historic layout is still intact and features distinct areas grouped by function that include the wayside/visitor center, picnic grounds, lodge/cabin accommodations, campground, and maintenance facilities, and all which are connected by a primary access road. The historic rustic design is evident through the surviving circulation layout, materials, and vernacular building techniques reflecting the philosophy of a romanticized natural environment that was executed through the 1930s and 1940s. Pathways, access roads, and parking areas remain much as they did during the period of significance. The Wayside, Big Meadows Lodge, guest cabins, and several comfort stations retain integrity in their overall exterior design with subsequent treatments using similar materials and/or workmanship. More extensive alterations have occurred inside the buildings in order to accommodate new uses and repairs. Historic viewsheds of the meadow and the valley to the west have been maintained, further emphasizing the historic setting of the site. The use of local resources in the design of site amenities, such as native plants, rock work, and wood, to harmonize with the natural surroundings can be seen in the landscape today. Historic small-scale features include boulder drinking fountains, boulders used as bollards, and remnants of the CCC camp and nursery.

Since 1952, the most significant changes to the Big Meadows site have been the construction of the Byrd Visitor Center adjacent to the Wayside, several new buildings for overnight guest accommodations and employee housing, an addition to the campgrounds, a wastewater treatment plant, and an amphitheater. Some of the small scale features constructed by the CCC, including the picnic tables, fireplaces, and entrance signs, have been replaced with more contemporary fixtures. New site elements have been added over time, including information kiosks, flagpoles, bicycle racks, fire hydrants, recycling bins, dumpsters, and new wooden planters. The overall impacts of these additions on the landscape have been minimal and do not detract from the site's historic setting.

The condition of the Big Meadows landscape at the time of this report's completion is evaluated as "good." The vehicular circulation system has been well maintained through repaving and some adjustments to traffic flow for safety. The original pedestrian paths in the picnic grounds have also been well maintained. The original campground circulation system and layout are also intact. The views toward the valley to the west and the meadow to the east have also been retained for the most part through ongoing management of the vegetation. In addition, the trees that were originally planted at the picnic grounds, campground, and cabin/lodge area have matured and are well maintained. Although some vegetation has encroached upon the meadow, measures have been taken to mitigate this intrusion, and the meadow's historic character remains evident.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

Big Meadows is one of nine component landscapes of the Skyline Drive landscape. They include, Dickey Ridge, Elkwallow, Lewis Mountain, Piney River, Pinnacles, Skyland, Simmons Gap, and South River Picnic Grounds. Shenandoah National Park includes four other landscapes and three component landscapes:

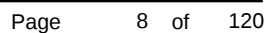
- Rapidan Camp landscape
- Headquarters landscape
- Mt. Vernon Iron Furnace landscape
- Appalachian Trail landscape with component landscapes: Appalachian Trail North District, Appalachian Trail Central District, and Appalachian Trail South District

Site Plan. Plan 1 of 4 for Big Meadows (OCLP, 2008).

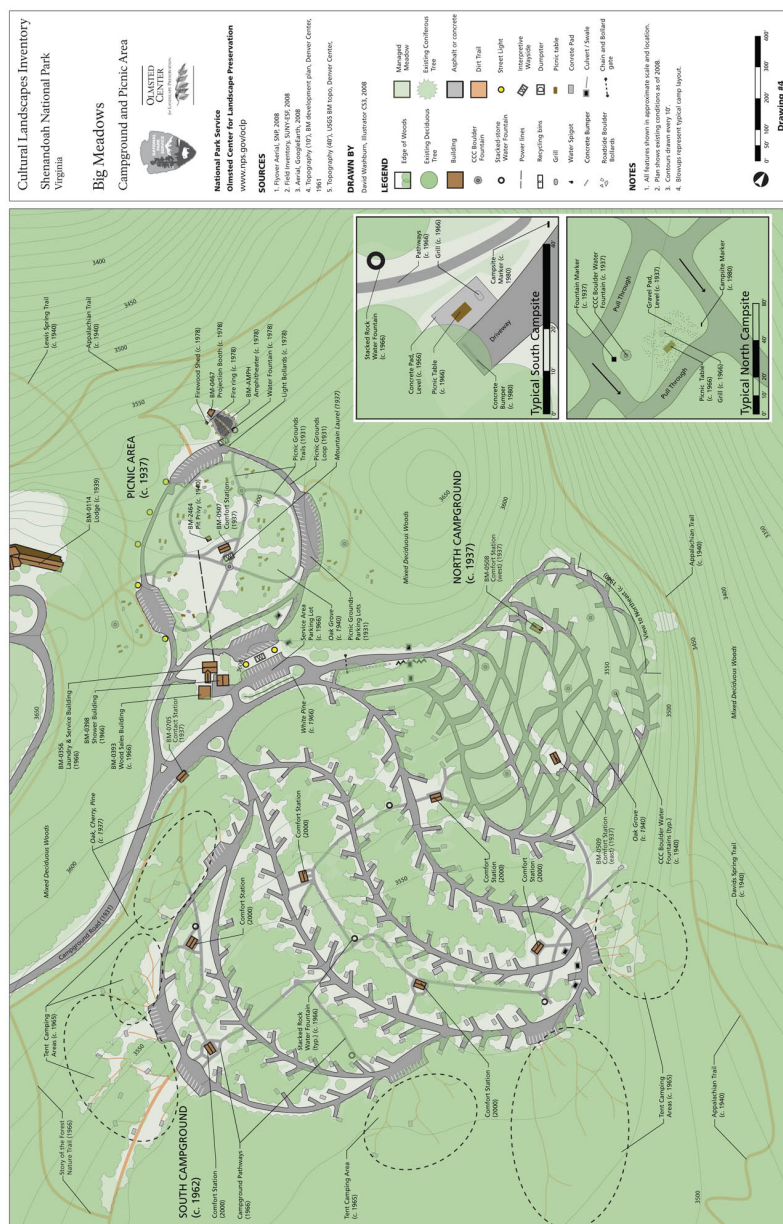


Site Plan. Map 2 of 4 for Big Meadows (OCLP, 2008).

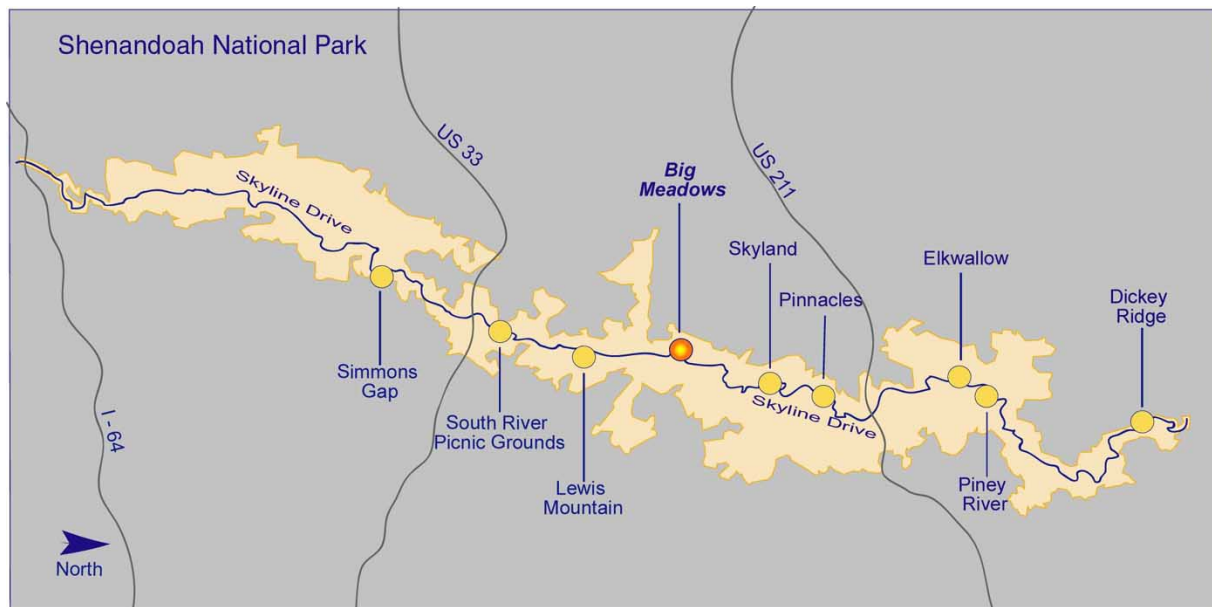
Cultural Landscapes Inventory



Cultural Landscapes Inventory



Hierarchy Description Graphic:



Hierarchy Description. Illustration of the Skyline Drive component landscapes and the location of Big Meadows.

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	08/06/2009

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Field work for a Level 1 Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) was completed in the fall of 1999 by the National Park Service (NPS), Philadelphia Support Office. In 2000 a draft was completed by N.J. Brown, M. Tull, C. Sams, and J. Hau. Park comments were addressed and entered into the CLI database.

Field work for an updated CLI for Big Meadows was completed in the summer of 2008 as part of the Landscape Preservation Field School at Shenandoah National Park. The six-week field school was organized by the Department of Landscape Architecture, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, State University of New York (SUNY) in Syracuse, New York, in partnership with the NPS, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation (OCLP), in Boston, Massachusetts. The field school was lead by Graduate Assistant David Washburn (SUNY) and included four other students: John Quattrocchi (SUNY), Laura Roberts (SUNY), Mark Simonin (SUNY), and Adrienne (Addy) Smith-Reiman (Cornell University). Faculty from SUNY and staff from OCLP served as project leaders on a weekly basis and included the following: John Auwaerter (SUNY), George Curry (SUNY), H. Eliot Foulds (OCLP), John W. Hammond (OCLP), Jeff Killion (OCLP), and Robert Page (OCLP). The field school also included lectures and presentations by NPS professionals and park staff. This draft was finalized by Allison Crosbie (OCLP) in the spring of 2009. The park's Cultural Resource Manager is Ann Kain. She can be reached at 540-999-3500, x3435.

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Big Meadows
Shenandoah National Park

Shenandoah National Park concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for Big Meadows including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

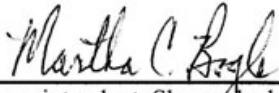
CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for Big Meadows is hereby approved and accepted.



Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park

8/6/09

Date

Park concurrence form, August 6, 2009.

Big Meadows
Shenandoah National Park

Wayside/Visitor Center Area
Visitor Center Parking Lots
Housing Area
Spur to New Housing Area
Wastewater Treatment Plant Area
Spur to Sewage Treatment Plant

Buildings and Structures

Cabin/Lodge Area
Can Storage (BM-0382)
Double Top Cottage (BM-0118)
Rapidan Cottage (BM-0344)
Crescent Rock (BM-0397)
Employee Quarters (BM-0319)
Employee Quarters (BM-0320)
Employee Quarters (BM-0326)
Employee Quarters (BM-0327)
Employee Dorm (BM-0396)
Storage & Service Building (BM-0385)
Blackrock Cellular Relay Station Building (BM-0462)
Fire Hose Storage Shed (near Petersburg Cabin) (no #)
Flammable Materials Storage Shed (near Lynchburg Cabin) (no #)

Picnic Area
Amphitheater (BM-AMPH)
Projection Booth (BM-0467)
Pit Privy (Picnic Area) (BM-2464)

Campground Area
Comfort Stations Campground (3) (BM-0541, 0542, 0543)
Comfort Stations Campground (3) (BM-0551, 0552, 0553)
Laundry & Service Building (BM-0356)
Wood Sales Building (BM-0393)
Shower Building (BM-0398)
Pit Privies (Campground)(2) (BM-2422, 2423)

Wayside/Visitor Center Area
Byrd Visitors Center (BM-2302)
Service Station (BM-0374)
Wayside Ice Storage (BM-0381)
Wayside Garbage Storage (BM-0390)

Maintenance Area
Apartments (BM-0725)
Apartments (BM-0726)
Tackroom-Office (BM-0321)
Stables (BM-0379)
Office / Ranger's Quarters Shed (no #)
Tool Shed behind Warehouse / Storage (no #)

Housing Area

example, the NPS List of Classified Structures inventory includes structural features of cultural landscapes, but the CLI takes a more encompassing approach to the properties, inventorying all above-ground features in each park in which the NPS has a legal or mandated interest.

Big Meadows is within the boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District in Shenandoah NP. On October 6, 2008, the district was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) under NHL Criterion 1 and 4, with the period of significance extending from 1931 to 1952. The areas of significance were identified as community planning and development, conservation, entertainment/recreation, politics/government, social history, architecture, engineering, and landscape architecture. Previous to the NHL designation, resources within the Skyline Drive Historic District were documented in the National Register of Historic Places on April 28, 1997 and through two boundary increases on September 19, 1997 and December 5, 2003. Contributing resources located within the areas of Big Meadows situated to the northwest and southeast of Skyline Drive, as listed in the September 1997 and December 2003 boundary increases, were included in the NHL boundary, but not specifically enumerated.

Big Meadows was not included in the original boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District in the April 1997 documentation, pending future survey and evaluation. However, Rapidan Road, which is within the boundaries of the Big Meadows area, was identified as a contributing structure.

Resources in five developed areas in the park were added to the historic district through a boundary increase on September 1997, including those in the Big Meadows developed area situated northwest of Skyline Drive at milepost 51. Significance was identified under Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and politics/government, and Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture, for the period 1931-1952. In this documentation, both the picnic grounds and campgrounds at Big Meadows were identified as contributing sites. Other contributing buildings, structures, and objects include the Lodge (BM-0114), Office/Ranger's Quarters (BM-0214), Stables (BM-1158), Equip. Shed/Workshop/Repair/Garage (BM-0410), Maintenance/Vehicle & Equip.Storage (BM-0411), Blacksmith Shop/Storage Shed (BM-0412), Storage Shed (Rangers Office) (BM-0413), Carpenter Shop/Storage Building (BM-0414), Warehouse Sub. HQ/Storage (BM-0415), Gas/Oil Building (BM-0416), Wayside (BM-0113), Campground Contact Station (BM-0705), Employee Cottage "A" (BM-1156), Employee Cottage "B" (BM-1157), Cottage "C" (BM-0314), Cottage "D" (BM-0315), Cottage "E" (BM-0316), Linen Storage (BM-0324), Petersburg Cottage (BM-0149), Bridesburg Cottage (BM-0153), Blacksburg Cottage (BM-0152), Lynchburg Cottage (BM-0155), Mountain View Cottage (BM-0154), Piedmont Cottage (BM-0115), Blackrock Cottage (BM-0116), Hawksbill Cottage (BM-0117), Campground Comfort Station (east) (BM-0509), Campground Comfort Station (west) (BM-0508), Picnic Area Comfort Station (BM-0507), Big Meadows Road, Wayside Loop/Parking, Campground Loop, Picnic Loop, Spur to Maintenance Area, Spur to Campground, Parking Area/Loop Road from Lodge, Campground Water Fountains (5), and Picnic Grounds Water Fountains (3).

Additional resources in the park were added to the historic district through a second boundary increase on December 2003, including the historically significant meadow situated to the southeast of Skyline Drive from which Big Meadows derives its name. Significance was identified under Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and politics/government, Criterion B for Herbert Hoover, and Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture, for the period 1931-1952. The documentation identifies the historically significant Rapidan Road, which borders Big Meadows and accessed Rapidan Camp, a designated NHL listed under the name Camp Hoover. Rapidan Road was built as part of an appropriation for Skyline Drive to provide a second access to Rapidan Camp. The documentation notes that although the road has a slightly disparate history, it is worthy of National Register designation due to its omission from the camp's NHL nomination form. Contributing resources for this area include, open meadowland, rock outcroppings, vegetation, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp building foundations, stone retaining walls, culvert, roadbed, CCC hedges/flowerbeds, and the old transmountain highway roadbed.

Also in the September 1997 documentation, the Mission 66-era Byrd Visitor Center was evaluated as a noncontributing feature. In May 2000, the building was reevaluated in the context of Mission 66 design as part of the proposed renovations. Several visitor centers associated with Mission 66 at other parks have already been determined eligible for the National Register, such as Cape Cod National Seashore, Rocky Mountain National Park, and Sitka National Historical Park (Allaback 2000, appendix IV). In a letter dated June 20, 2000, your office concurred that the building continued to fail to meet the criteria needed for inclusion in the National Register.

According to findings in this CLI, several of the site's features within the historic district boundaries are not adequately documented in the National Register and NHL. These include several culvert systems, stone gutters, the pitch tar storage retaining wall, boulder bollards, a service road, Blackrock Trail (portion), a horse trail, as well as vegetation and specific views and natural features.

For the purposes of this CLI, the historic significance of Big Meadows is evaluated according to National Register criteria A and C, which align with NHL Criterion 1 and 4, respectively. Big Meadows is nationally significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and politics/government for its association with Shenandoah NP as one of the first eastern national parks and is associated with the early twentieth century movement to accommodate the growing popularity of the automobile while also conserving natural and scenic areas. Skyline Drive was created as a recreational park road that provided motorists with a shifting panorama of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Shenandoah Valley, and the Northern Virginia Piedmont. Located off of Skyline Drive in the Central District of the park, Big Meadows offered motorists a place to stop and enjoy the views, obtain gasoline, have a meal, and/or stay the night. Big Meadows is also associated with federal government efforts to mitigate widespread unemployment during the Great Depression through work programs, most notably the CCC that constructed many of the site amenities along Skyline Drive and throughout Shenandoah NP.

Big Meadows is also nationally significant under Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture for its association with the rustic style developed by the NPS in the 1930s and 1940s. This style emphasized preserving existing landscapes and restoring landscapes altered by man to their original condition, using native vegetation. It also emphasized the incorporation of scenic views in the layout of buildings and circulation features and sited them to be as inconspicuous as possible. The NPS also encouraged the use of local materials and traditional methods in the construction of buildings, structures, and site furnishings. The overall layout of the Big Meadows developed area harmonized with the existing topography as much as possible and highlighted the views of the Shenandoah Valley and the meadow. Parking areas were integrated with the vehicular circulation which curved and looped through the site to blend with the topography. Trails also meandered through the site linking parking areas to the picnic grounds and the Lodge. Trees were planted for screening at the campground, and in clusters at the picnic grounds to provide shade and spatial definition. In addition, specimen trees and foundation plantings were installed around the Big Meadows Lodge and the Wayside. Existing trees were also preserved, when possible, in order to enhance the naturalistic setting. Lawns were also established around the Wayside to maintain views of the meadow beyond, as well as views to and from Skyline Drive. Buildings, structures, and other site furnishings were constructed of wood and stone from the area.

Big Meadows, and specifically Rapidan Road, is also nationally significant under National Register Criterion B for its association with Herbert Hoover. Rapidan Road connected Skyline Drive and the Big Meadows area to President Herbert Hoover's summer retreat, Rapidan Camp, and was constructed as part of an appropriation for Skyline Drive. The significance of Herbert Hoover and Rapidan Camp is addressed in a separate CLI.

The period of significance for the Skyline Drive Historic District is 1931-1952. Construction of Skyline Drive began in 1931 and occurred in three distinct phases, and extended to 1952, which recognizes the small amount of work done to complete the guardwalls after World War II and some minor changes that were in keeping with the 1930s plans. Rapidan Road was also built in 1931. While construction of the Big Meadows developed area did not begin until 1935 as part of a park master plan, it shares the same areas and period of significance as the historic district.

The CLI fully evaluates the cultural landscape, particularly the associated landscape characteristics and features, and finds that the overall the Big Meadows landscape retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance. The landscape characteristics and features that date to the period of significance should be preserved since they contribute to the historic character of the property. As noted previously, numerous features on the property compiled on the attached lists have already been evaluated. A total of seventy-eight features have been identified in this CLI related to natural systems and features, circulation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, and small-scale features that contribute to the significance and historic character of the Big Meadows project area.

We call your particular attention to the Landscape Description, National Register Information, Statement of Significance, and Analysis and Evaluation Summary in the enclosed CLI. Based on the CLI, we seek your confirmation of previous evaluations:

- The Big Meadows landscape is nationally significant under National Register criteria A, B (for the association of Rapidan Road with Herbert Hoover), and C.
- The site is significant in the areas of architecture, entertainment/recreation, landscape architecture, and politics/government, and for Herbert Hoover.
- The Skyline Drive Historic District, and therefore the site's period of significance is 1931-1952.

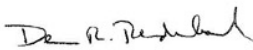
We also seek your concurrence on the following:

- The property retains landscape characteristics and associated features that contribute to the site's historic character (see enclosed lists).
- The cultural landscape retains integrity to the period of significance.

If you concur with our categorization of the landscape resources and features at Big Meadows at Shenandoah NP, as contributing, noncontributing, and undetermined, enumerated on the enclosed list, we ask that you please sign on the space provided and return this letter to Jeff Killion, CLI Coordinator, National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 15 State Street, 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02109. We would appreciate your response within thirty days. Thank you for your attention to this report. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Killion at 617-223-5053, or by email at jeff_killion@nps.gov. Upon your concurrence, a copy of this letter will be sent to the National Historic Landmark Program.

(DHP File No. 2009-127B)

Sincerely,

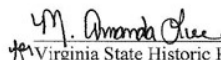


Dennis R. Reidenbach
Regional Director
Northeast Region

Enclosures

cc:
Superintendent, Shenandoah NP

I concur with the National Park Service categorizations of the Big Meadows landscape resources and features at Shenandoah National Park as contributing, noncontributing, and undetermined.


for Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer
M. Amanda Lee, Historic Preservationist

31 August 2009
Date

Please provide two (2) bound copies of the final report to our office, once the final report is available. Should you have any questions, I may be reached via email at amanda.lee@dhr.virginia.gov or by phone at 804-367-2323 x122.

Big Meadows Shenandoah National Park

NPS Cultural Landscapes Inventory – Big Meadows
Shenandoah National Park
List of Contributing and Non-Contributing Landscape Features
July 2009

Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

The following landscape characteristics and associated features contribute to the property's historic character, though not all are considered countable resources according to the National Register of Historic Places. Those marked with an * have been documented on the National Register.

Natural Systems and Features

Cabin/Lodge Area
 Blackrock
Picnic Area
 Wooded area around Picnic Area
Campground Area
 Big Meadows Swamp (portion)
Big Meadow / Rapidan Road Area
 * Rock Outcroppings
 Hogcamp Branch (portion)

Circulation

 * Big Meadows Road
 Appalachian Trail (portions)
 Skyland – Big Meadows Horse Trail (portion)
Cabin/Lodge Area
 * Parking Area / Loop Road from Lodge
 Service Road
 Blackrock Trail (portion)
Picnic Area
 * Picnic Loop
 * Picnic Grounds Path System
Campground Area
 * Spur to Campground
 * Campground Loop (1937)
 * Campground Paths (1937)
Wayside/Visitor Center Area
 * Wayside Loop / Parking
Maintenance Area
 * Spur to Maintenance Area
Big Meadow / Rapidan Road Area
 * Rapidan Road (for Criterion B)

Big Meadows
Shenandoah National Park



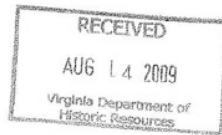
IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30 (NER-HPPC-OCLP)

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Northeast Region
United States Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

AUG 07 2009



Dr. Ethel Eaton
Office of Review and Compliance
Department of Historic Resources
Commonwealth of Virginia
2801 Kensington Ave.
Richmond, VA 23221

Dear Dr. Eaton:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) for the Big Meadows landscape located within Shenandoah National Park (NP). We seek your confirmation on previously evaluated resources and concurrence on the status of resources and features identified in this CLI previously unevaluated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The report has been prepared by a team of historical landscape architects with the National Park Service (NPS) Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. The CLI program and the enclosed report continue the NPS efforts to update our cultural resource inventories.

Through the CLI program, the NPS is currently in the midst of a nationwide effort to inventory its cultural landscapes. The CLI is conducted in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). It is an inventory of baseline information for all historically significant cultural landscapes within the National Park System, and it examines multiple landscape features that contribute to the significance of historic properties. The CLI process includes gathering information from existing secondary sources and conducting on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the property's overall significance. For landscapes found potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the evaluation describes their character-defining features and assesses the landscape's overall historical integrity. It also raises questions about the landscape that need further study.

It is important to note that the CLI reports are not intended as comprehensive inventory reports for any one property, although for some properties they provide fuller documentation than for others. For example, the reports do not include a full architectural description of structures, but document structures as elements of the overall landscape, and similarly documents other characteristics such as vegetation, spatial organization, and views and vistas. The CLI is one component of the NPS inventory effort that also includes cultural resource inventories for historic structures, archeological sites, ethnographic resources, and museum objects. For

SHPO concurrence letter, August 31, 2009 (11 pages).

Big Meadows
Shenandoah National Park

Buildings and Structures

Big Meadows Road Culvert Systems
Big Meadows Road Gutters

Cabin/Lodge Area

- * Lodge (BM-0114)
- * Petersburg Cottage (BM-0149)
- * Bridesburg Cottage (BM-0153)
- * Blacksburg Cottage (BM-0152)
- * Lynchburg Cottage (BM-0155)
- * Mountain View Cottage (BM-0154)
- * Linen Storage (BM-0324)
- * Piedmont Cottage (BM-0115)
- * Blackrock Cottage (BM-0116)
- * Hawksbill Cottage (BM-0117)
- * Employee Cottage "A" (BM-1156)
- * Employee Cottage "B" (BM-1157)
- * Cottage "C" (BM-0314)
- * Cottage "D" (BM-0315)
- * Cottage "E" (BM-0316)

Picnic Area

- * Picnic Area Comfort Station (BM-0507)

Campground Area

- * Campground Contact Station (BM-0705)
- * Campground Comfort Station (west) (BM-0508)
- * Campground Comfort Station (east) (BM-0509)
- Spur to Campground Culvert System (no #)

Wayside/Visitor Center Area

- * Wayside Building (BM-0113)

Maintenance Area

- * Equipment Shed / Workshop / Repair / Garage (BM-0410)
- * Maintenance / Vehicle & Equipment Storage (BM-0411)
- * Blacksmith Shop / Storage Shed (BM-0412)
- * Storage Shed (Ranger's Office) (BM-0413)
- * Carpenter's Shop / Storage Building (BM-0414)
- * Warehouse Sub HQ / Storage (BM-0415)
- * Gas / Oil Building (BM-0416)
- * Stables (BM-1158)
- * Office / Ranger's Quarters (BM-0214)
- Pitch Tar Storage Retaining Wall

Big Meadow / Rapidan Road Area

- * Rapidan Road Stone Retaining Walls (for Criterion B)
- * Rapidan Road Culverts (for Criterion B)

Vegetation

Turf along Shoulders of Historic Roads

Cabin/Lodge Area

- Lodge / Cabin Area Lawns
- Trees around Lodge
- Trees around Guest Cabins
- Circular Drive Island Grove
- Picnic Area
 - Picnic Area Lawns
 - Oak Grove
- Campground Area
 - Campground Area Lawns
 - Oak Grove
- Wayside/Visitor Center Area
 - Lawns
 - Remnants of CCC Plantings Along Edge of Meadow
- Maintenance Area
 - Foundation Planting Beds
 - Row of Red Oaks (behind Equipment/Storage Building)
 - Remnant Pasture
- Big Meadow/Rapidan Road Area
 - * Open Meadowland Vegetation
 - * CCC Hedges / Flowerbeds
- Views and Vistas*
- Cabin/Lodge Area
 - View West to Valley from Lodge
 - * View West to Valley from Rapidan Cottage and Double Top Cottage
 - View West to Valley from Blackrock
- Campground Area
 - View North to Valley from Campground
- Visitor Center/Wayside Area
 - * View East to Meadow from South Side of Wayside Area
- Small-scale Features*
- Picnic Area
 - * Picnic Grounds Water Fountains (3)
 - Boulder Bollards
- Campground Area
 - * Campground Water Fountains (5)

Non-Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

- Circulation*
 - Pedestrian Pathway (parallel to Big Meadows Road)
 - Story of the Forest Nature Trail (portion)
- Campground Area
 - Campground Loop (1962)
 - Campground Paths (1962)

- Residence (BM-0269)
- Residence (BM-0270)
- Residence (BM-0271)
- Residence (BM-0272)
- Storage for Quarters (BM-4107)
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Area
 - Wastewater Treatment Plant (BM-1724)
 - Sludge Storage (BM-4127)

Vegetation

- Wayside/Visitor Center Area
 - Raised Perennial Bed near Visitor Center
 - Shrub Massings near Gas Station
- Housing Area
 - Housing Area Lawns
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Area
 - Wastewater Treatment Plant Lawns

Small-scale Features

- Bollards
- Fire Hydrants
- Trash Cans and Dumpsters
- Recycling Containers and Signs
- Interpretive Wayside Exhibits
- Signs (wood and metal)
- Bike Racks
- Cabin/Lodge Area
 - Black Metal Site Furniture
 - Concrete Wheel Stops
 - Playground
 - Wood Fencing
 - Parking Lot Lamp Posts
- Picnic Area
 - Picnic Tables
 - Metal Grills
 - Sign Kiosk
 - Parking Lot Light Posts
 - Trash Receptacles
 - Concrete Wheel Stops
 - Wood and Metal Benches
 - Fire ring by Amphitheater
 - Outhouse
- Campground Area
 - Fire Pits / Grills
 - Stacked Rock Water Fountains (5)
 - Telephone Booths

- Metal Bench
- Camp Site Markers
- Directional Signs
- Chain and Bollard Gates
- Bear-proof Storage Boxes
- Wayside/Visitor Center Area
 - Flagpole
 - Statue
 - Memorial Plaque and Boulder
 - Stacked stone water fountain
 - Big Meadows sign
 - Wood Benches
- Maintenance Area
 - Air Quality Station (BM-4117)
 - Kennels (4) (BM-2705, 2706, 2707, 2708)
 - Aviary (2) (BM-2717, 4121)
 - Propane Tank
 - Gas Tanks
 - Generator
 - Clothes Line

Undetermined Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

Circulation

- Lewis Springs Trail

Buildings and Structures

- Cabin/Lodge Area
 - Blackrock Storage Tank Reservoir (no #)

Vegetation

- Maintenance Area
 - Mountain Laurel at Carpentry Shop

Small-scale Features

- Split Log Benches
- Cabin/Lodge Area
 - Stone Tree Wells

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory
CLI Updates Certification Form
2025**

Shenandoah National Park

Big Meadows
Headquarters
Piney River
Pinnacles Picnic Grounds
Rapidan Camp
Skyland

Shenandoah National Park certifies the CLI updates for Big Meadows, Headquarters, Piney River, Pinnacles Picnic Grounds, Rapidan Camp, and Skyland, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good – Big Meadows
 Good – Headquarters
 Fair – Piney River
 Good – Pinnacles Picnic Grounds
 Good – Rapidan Camp
 Good – Skyland

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI updates for the sites listed above at Shenandoah National Park are hereby approved and accepted.

JAMES STAKELY Digitally signed by JAMES STAKELY
Date: 2025.08.28 10:01:21 -04'00'

Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park

Date

Park concurrence form, August 28, 2025.

Revision:

Revised By	Type of Revision	Revision Date	Revision Narrative
Jeff Killion	CLI Update	08/28/2025	Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2025 update to the Big Meadows CLI has been conducted at a Level C effort. See Landscape Documents in CRIS-CL for correspondences with park.

Geographic Information

State and County:

State	County
Virginia	Madison County
Virginia	Page County

Size (Acres): 440

Land Tract Number(s)

- 139 (portion)
- 141 (portion)
- 143 (portion)
- 145 (portion)
- 148a (portion)
- 181 (portion)
- 191 (portion)
- 372 (portion)
- 420 (portion)

Boundary Description:

Big Meadows is located off milepost 51 on Skyline Drive. For the purposes of this Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), the boundaries of the site encompass the site's major developed areas that are situated to the northwest of Skyline Drive and also lands to the southeast. To the northwest, the boundary encompasses the historic wayside area, maintenance area, campground, picnic grounds, lodge and guest cabins; and the non-historic housing area and the wastewater treatment plant. To the southeast, the boundary encompasses the open meadow (to the tree line) and continues 125 feet on either side of the centerline of Rapidan Road to its junction with Rapidan Camp Entrance Road. A portion of both Skyline Drive and the Appalachian Trail pass through or adjacent to the study boundary. These resources and their associated features, including those at Lewis Springs, are discussed in this report as they relate to the history of the site, and have been, or will be, evaluated in other CLIs.

The boundary of this inventory unit is generally consistent with those established in existing National Register documentation. In the September 1997 boundary increase for the Skyline Drive Historic District, the developed portions of Big Meadows site located to the northwest of the drive were added, the boundary of which was described as extending 125 feet on either side of pre-1950 roads, and specifically all roads shown in 1930s-era master plans. In places where the boundary falls within or immediately adjacent to the buildings, the buildings are included in the boundaries, as indicated on a sketch map for the site. This boundary did not include the new housing area or wastewater treatment plant, which contain noncontributing resources physically removed from historic resource areas. In the 2003 boundary increase for the Skyline Drive Historic District, the areas historically associated with the Big Meadows and Rapidan Camp to the southeast of Skyline Drive were added. The boundary described in the 2008 National Historic Landmark documentation includes the developed areas and lands added in the two boundary increases. However, it appears to overlap with a portion of the National Historic Landmark boundary of Rapidan Camp (specifically, along the entrance road).

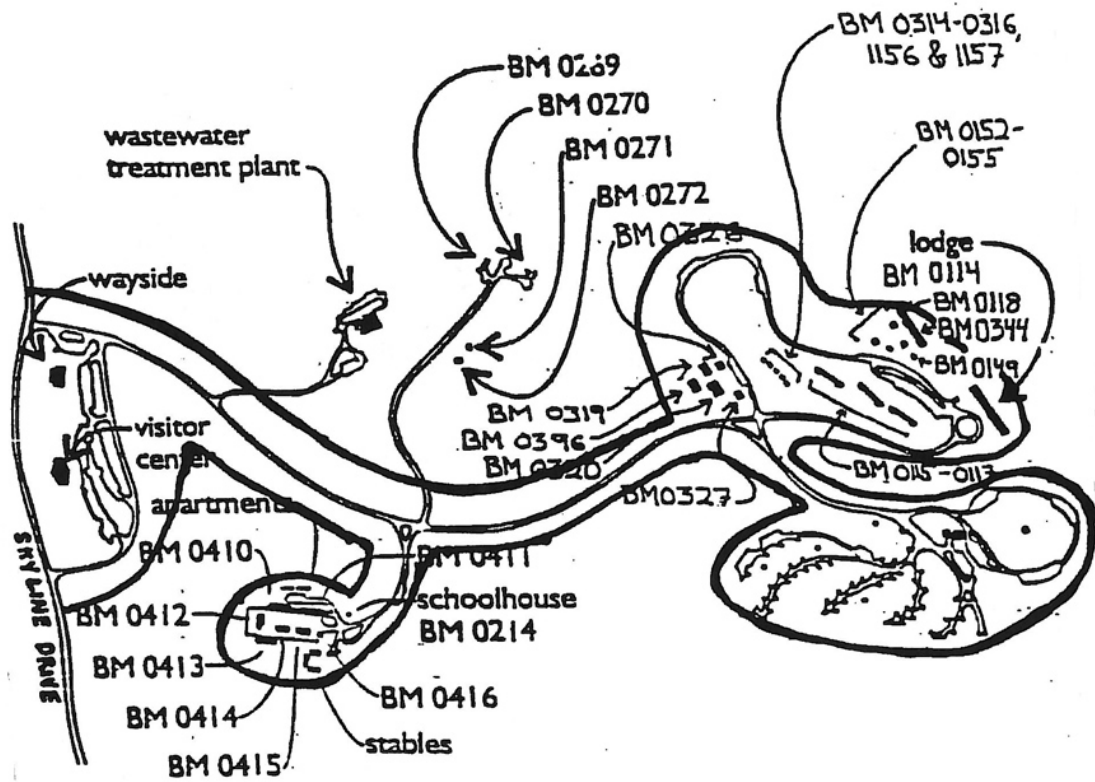
Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	-78.4404263082562	38.5149727507191	

Location Map:



Location Map Information. Shenandoah National Park is located in northwest Virginia (Map courtesy of GORP, Great Outdoor Recreation pages).



Location Map Information. Sketch plan showing boundary increase around Big Meadows for Skyline Drive Historic District (National Register 9/1997, 104).

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Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

Within Shenandoah NP, recreation is the primary cultural use. In the surrounding region, tourism is a significant industry. Agriculture, particularly chicken production, is the primary industry to the west, with north-south access via Interstate 81. Suburban development from Washington D.C. dominates the east, with east-west access via Routes 7 and 66.

Type of Context: Political

Description:

Big Meadows is located in Madison and Page Counties, in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is located within Shenandoah NP, authorized on May 22, 1926, and fully established on December 16, 1935.

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Big Meadows is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains on a large and generally flat plateau with a maximum an elevation of about 3600 feet. The site offers panoramic views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 08/06/2009

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

Big Meadows falls within the management category "Must Be Preserved and Maintained" because it is nationally significant as defined by National Historic Landmark (NHL) criteria. The site is within the boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District, which was designated as a National Historic Landmark on October 6, 2008. The district meets NHL criteria 1 and 4.

Management Agreements:

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative:

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

Big Meadows is located within Shenandoah National Park (NP) and is surrounded by a vast, forested area of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Big Meadows is located in the Central District of Skyline Drive on a plateau rising roughly 3600 feet. Adjacent lands to the west that encompass the Shenandoah Valley and the mountains beyond are critical to the visitor experience at Big Meadows. The site's cluster of guest lodgings facilities, which also included a dining room, were purposely sited to take advantage of the panoramic views of the Shenandoah Valley to the west. A similar view can be found from the original section of the campground. Further development of industry, housing, roadways would negatively impact these historic views. The secondary effects of development – increased air pollution from industry and additional vehicles – also impact the ability to enjoy the views that draw visitors to this site.

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: Entered Inadequately Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

Big Meadows is within the boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District in Shenandoah National Park (NP). On October 6, 2008, the district was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) under NHL Criterion 1 and 4, with the period of significance extending from 1931 to 1952. The areas of significance were identified as community planning and development, conservation, entertainment/recreation, politics/government, social history, architecture, engineering, and landscape architecture. Previous to the NHL designation, resources within the Skyline Drive Historic District were documented in the National Register of Historic Places on April 28, 1997 and through two boundary increases on September 19, 1997 and December 5, 2003. Contributing resources located within the areas of Big Meadows situated to the northwest and southeast of Skyline Drive, as listed in the September 1997 and December 2003 boundary increases, were included in the NHL boundary.

Big Meadows was not included in the original boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District in the April 1997 documentation, pending future survey and evaluation. However, Rapidan Road, which is within the boundaries of the Big Meadows area, was identified as a contributing structure.

Resources in five developed areas in the park were added to the historic district through a boundary increase on September 1997, including those in the Big Meadows developed area situated northwest of Skyline Drive at milepost 51. Significance was identified under Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and politics/government, and Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture, for the period 1931-1952. In this documentation, both the picnic grounds and campgrounds at Big Meadows were identified as contributing sites. Other contributing buildings, structures, and objects include the Lodge (BM-0114), Office/Ranger's Quarters (BM-0214), Stables (BM-1158), Equip. Shed/Workshop/Repair/Garage (BM-0410), Maintenance/Vehicle & Equip. Storage (BM-0411), Blacksmith Shop/Storage Shed (BM-0412), Storage Shed (Rangers Office) (BM-0413), Carpenter Shop/Storage Building (BM-0414), Warehouse Sub. HQ/Storage (BM-0415), Gas/Oil Building (BM-0416), Wayside (BM-0113), Campground Contact Station (BM-0705), Employee Cottage "A" (BM-1156), Employee Cottage "B" (BM-1157), Cottage "C" (BM-0314), Cottage "D" (BM-0315), Cottage "E" (BM-0316), Linen Storage (BM-0324), Petersburg Cottage (BM-0149), Bridesburg Cottage (BM-0153), Blacksburg Cottage (BM-0152), Lynchburg Cottage (BM-0155), Mountain View Cottage (BM-0154), Piedmont Cottage (BM-0115), Blackrock Cottage (BM-0116), Hawksbill Cottage (BM-0117), Campground Comfort Station (east) (BM-0509), Campground Comfort Station (west) (BM-0508), Picnic Area Comfort Station (BM-0507), Big Meadows Road, Wayside Loop/Parking, Campground Loop, Picnic Loop, Spur to Maintenance Area, Spur to Campground, Parking Area/Loop Road from Lodge, Campground Water Fountains (5), and Picnic Grounds Water Fountains (3).

Additional resources in the park were added to the historic district through a second boundary increase on December 2003, including the historically significant meadow situated to the southeast of Skyline Drive from which Big Meadows derives its name. Significance was identified under Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and politics/government, Criterion B for Herbert Hoover, and Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture, for the period 1931-1952. The documentation identifies the historically significant Rapidan Road, which borders Big Meadows and accessed Rapidan Camp, a designated NHL listed under the name Camp Hoover. Rapidan Road was built as part of an appropriation for Skyline Drive to provide a second access to Rapidan Camp. The documentation notes that although the road has a slightly disparate history, it is worthy of National Register designation due to its omission from the camp's NHL nomination form. Contributing resources for this area include open meadowland, rock outcroppings, vegetation, CCC camp building foundations, stone retaining walls, culvert, roadbed, CCC hedges/flowerbeds, and the old transmountain highway roadbed.

Also in the September 1997 documentation, the Mission 66-era Byrd Visitor Center was evaluated as a noncontributing feature. In May 2000, the building was reevaluated in the context of Mission 66 design as part of the proposed renovations. Several visitor centers associated with Mission 66 at other parks have already been determined eligible for the National Register, such as Cape Cod National Seashore, Rocky Mountain National Park, and Sitka National Historical Park (Allaback 2000, appendix IV). In a letter dated June 20, 2000, the Virginia SHPO concurred that the building continued to fail to meet the criteria needed for inclusion in the National Register.

According to findings in this CLI, several of the site's features within the historic district boundaries are not adequately documented in the National Register and NHL. These include several culvert systems, stone gutters, the pitch tar storage retaining wall, boulder bollards, a service road, Blackrock Trail (portion), a horse trail, as well as vegetation and specific views and natural features.

Eligibility: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 08/31/2009

Concurrence Narrative:

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources concurred with the categorization of the landscape resources and features at Big Meadows, Shenandoah National Park, as contributing, noncontributing, and undetermined, on August 31, 2009. The SHPO had no additional comments on the report.

Significance Level: National

Contributing: Contributing

Classification: District

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

Shenandoah NP was one of the first and largest national parks established in the eastern United States, and raised national and regional awareness of the importance of the government's role in preserving large portions of the environment for public recreation and enjoyment. From the park's early history, a key feature has been Skyline Drive, designed and constructed primarily from 1930 to 1942, which traces the mountaintop ridges and offers panoramic views of the Piedmont to the east and the Shenandoah Valley to the west. As stated in the National Historic Landmark (NHL) documentation, Skyline Drive, with its adjoining overlooks, waysides, picnic areas, campgrounds, and developed areas, is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 1 and 4:

"Because of the pivotal role that the Skyline Drive Historic District played in the history of the national park system and the evolution of park road design, federal policies in conservation and recreation, and the employment of relief measures of the New Deal, Skyline Drive is nationally significant under the NHL theme Transforming the Environment. For its exemplary expression of the principles and practices of National Park Service road design, landscape naturalization, and rustic architectural design and as a showcase of the landscape conservation work of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the park road and its associated features are also nationally important under the theme Expressing Cultural Values (planning, landscape architecture, and architecture)."

The NHL documentation identifies the period of significance for Skyline Drive Historic District as 1931-1952. Construction of the road began in 1931 and occurred in three distinct phases, and extended to 1952, which recognizes the small amount of work done to complete the guardwalls after World War II and

some minor changes that were in keeping with the 1930s plans. While construction of the Big Meadows developed area did not begin in earnest until 1935, the site is within the boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District, and therefore shares the same areas and period of significance.

For the purposes of this CLI, the significance of the landscape is evaluated according to National Register Criterion A, which corresponds to NHL Criterion 1, and National Register Criterion C, which corresponds to NHL Criterion 4. As such, Big Meadows is nationally significant under Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and politics/government, and nationally significant under Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture. Big Meadows, and specifically Rapidan Road, is also nationally significant under National Register Criterion B for its association with Herbert Hoover. The road provided access to Hoover's summer retreat, Rapidan Camp, and was built in 1931 as part of an appropriation for Skyline Drive. The significance of Herbert Hoover and Rapidan Camp is addressed in a separate CLI.

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION A

Big Meadows is nationally significant under Criterion A for its association with Shenandoah NP. The park is significant in part as one of the first eastern national parks, and is associated with the twentieth century movement to develop national parks for public enjoyment and to conserve natural features and scenic areas as public parks. The park was one of two national parks in the Southern Appalachians authorized by Congress in 1926 and established in the 1930s through the acquisition and donation of land by the states in which they were located. Shenandoah NP is also associated with efforts of the federal government to provide economic relief in the form of employment for both skilled and unskilled labor during the Great Depression. These efforts included a special allocation in 1931 for drought relief funds for road construction in national parks, and the extensive economic relief programs of the New Deal era (1933 to 1942) which included the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Public Works Administration (PWA), and Works Progress Administration (WPA), and Emergency Relief (FERA). The programs not only promoted economic stability but also reflected the social-humanitarian purposes of the New Deal by advancing the conservation of natural areas and expanding the recreational resources of the nation, while creating employment for thousands of skilled and unskilled workers. PWA funds were used for the construction of the Equipment Storage building at the maintenance area, and the site's water and sewer system was constructed with WPA labor and funds. Big Meadows typifies the work of CCC laborers who were employed to install trees and other plantings and construct site amenities including log comfort stations, pathways and trails, fireplaces, picnic tables, wood signs, and drinking fountains. The park also represents the increasing popularity of recreational motoring in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s and the evolving design of national park facilities to attract and accommodate increasing numbers of visitors who were visiting the parks by automobile. Big Meadows was one of several developed areas constructed at regular intervals along Skyline Drive that offered visitors the opportunity to buy gasoline and food, use restrooms, or just stop to relax and enjoy the scenery. Big Meadows retains sufficient integrity to convey the site's significance to the entertainment/recreation and politics/government themes.

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION C

Big Meadows is nationally significant under Criterion C for its association with the rustic design style developed by the National Park Service (NPS) from the time of its creation in 1916 and the early 1940s, coalescing from a variety of trends and points of view regarding conservation, recreation, landscape architecture, and planning. These trends were based on nineteenth-century English gardening ideas further developed by Andrew Jackson Downing and Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., and others, and continued to be developed by E. P. Meinecke of the United States Forest Service. This style emphasized preserving existing landscapes and restoring landscapes altered by man to their original condition using native vegetation. It also promoted the incorporation of scenic views in the layout of buildings and circulation features and sited these to be as inconspicuous as possible and to blend into their surroundings. The NPS also encouraged the use of local materials in the construction of buildings, structures, and site furnishings. As a component to Skyline Drive, Big Meadows is representative of scenic road construction advanced by the NPS in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. The drive with its overlooks, gently curving alignment, and carefully balanced cut and fill sections, is representative as a work of naturalistic landscape architecture and as a scenic park road. Big Meadows is one of the wayside stations incorporated at regular intervals along Skyline Drive and typifies the naturalistic aesthetic established throughout

Shenandoah NP at this time.

Big Meadows retains a high level of integrity required to convey the site's significance to the architectural and landscape architectural themes. Resources that illustrate the initial park-related development at Big Meadows include the Wayside, Big Meadows Lodge, the five 1939 cabins, three comfort stations from the late 1930s, the seven maintenance buildings built in 1939, the 1941 and two 1946 multi-unit cottages, the Ranger's Quarters (former Hoover School), circulation features, and site furnishings. The landscape at Big Meadows illustrates the NPS design philosophy through the layout of buildings and structures as well as circulation, which were integrated with the site's natural topography and took advantage of views of the Shenandoah Valley and the expansive meadow. Vehicular access roads were designed to curve and loop through the site to blend into the landscape. Trails meandered through the landscape providing connections to parking areas and amenities. Buildings and structures were constructed with local stone and wood using vernacular building details. In addition, trees were planted to provide screening at the campground and guest cabins, to add spatial definition to the picnic grounds, and as specimens around the Lodge and Wayside. Original remaining site features, such as the boulder water fountains and boulder bollards, also reflect the naturalistic design values advocated by the NPS.

National Register Significance Criteria:

Significance Criteria A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Significance Criteria C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

Significance Criteria B - Associated with lives of persons significant in our past

National Register Criteria Consideration:

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: CE 1931 - CE 1952

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Creating Social Institutions and Movements	Recreation	General Recreation	
Developing the American Economy	Transportation by Land and Air	Carriage Roads, Touring Roads and Parkways	
Expressing Cultural Values	Landscape Architecture	The 1930's: Era Of Public Works	
Transforming the Environment	Conservation of Natural Resources	The Great Depression And Conservation	

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Entertainment - Recreation

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Landscape Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Politics - Government

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

NRIS Information:

NRIS Name: Big Meadows Site
NRIS ID: 97000375
Primary Certification Date: 10/06/2008

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number: 69-0234
Name: Skyline Drive Historic District (Boundary Increase)
Listed Date: 07/02/1997
Narrative: Big Meadows is located within the Skyline Drive Historic District.

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? Yes

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

World Heritage Site? No

Category:

WHS ID:

WHS URL:

Date:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
BCE 900 - 1600	Established	First human habitation in Blue Ridge Mountains takes place about 11,000 years ago as seasonal encampments.
CE 1000	Established	Native American use of the mountains is mainly for game hunting (Resource Management Plan 1998: 23). The Manocan and Manahoac tribes inhabited the area (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
CE 1669	Explored	Dr. John Lederer, from Germany, is the first European to record exploration in this area of Blue Ridge Mountains, describing a forest full of game and a large open area believed to be Big Meadows (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
CE 1700 - 1799	Settled	Immigrants from Tidewater area come to Piedmont region and from Pennsylvania to Shenandoah Valley, leading to the disappearance or departure of Native Americans from the area (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
CE 1716	Explored	Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, leads a party across the Blue Ridge to try to extend the boundaries of Virginia and promote trading to the west (Historic Resources Study 1997:7).
CE 1750 - 1830	Settled	Settlers move from lower elevations into mountain hollows, where they pursue farming, grazing, timbering, and hunting game (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13). The Big Meadows area is used by early European settlers as summer pastureland. There were also stands of chestnut trees on the site as well (NHL documentation 2008:10).
CE 1830 - 1839	Established	Recreational use of the mountains begins with the opening of Black Rock Springs Hotel south of Skyline Drive (Historic Resources Study 1997:41).
CE 1870	Ranched/Grazed	The Big Meadows area belongs to a Shenandoah family who use the land as cattle range (Reeder, 1991:59).
CE 1894	Built	George Freeman Pollock establishes Stony Man Camp, later named Skyland (Lambert 1979:i).
CE 1921	Planned	Benton MacKaye proposes Appalachian Trail, a continuous trail along mountain crests of the eastern United States.
CE 1924	Established	The Secretary of the Interior assembles Southern Appalachian National Park Committee (SANPC) to study the issues regarding establishing a national park (SHEN website, Historical Overview).
CE 1925	Established	On February 21, Congress passes legislation allocating \$20,000 for survey and evaluation of Shenandoah and other parks (SHEN website, Historical Overview).
CE 1926	Established	Congress first authorizes Shenandoah National Park (NP) on May 22, but without funds for land purchases.
CE 1927	Built	Potomac Appalachian Trail Club is organized, and construction of Appalachian Trail begins in Shenandoah NP.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1931	Built	On June 21, Albert Brothers of Salem, Virginia, is awarded the contract to construct graded roadbed for Sections 1-A and B of Skyline Drive, from Thornton Gap to Big Meadows (NHL documentation 2008:17).
CE 1931	Built	On June 29, the West Virginia Construction Company is awarded contract to construct graded roadbed for Section 1-C of Skyline Drive from Big Meadows to Swift Run Gap and included five miles of Rapidan Road leading to Rapidan Camp (NHL documentation 2008:17).
CE 1931	Built	July 18 marks the official groundbreaking of Skyline Drive at Thornton Gap, heading south to Swift Run Gap (NHL documentation 2008:8).
CE 1933	Established	In December, President Franklin Roosevelt establishes the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and six CCC camps are set up in Shenandoah, including one at Big Meadows, called NP-2 or Camp Fechner (SHEN website, Historical Overview and National Register 9/1997:Section 8, 50).
CE 1933	Established	The NPS designates Big Meadows as a national soaring (gliding) site to accommodate growing popularity of recreational activity. The CCC also constructs a runway and temporary hangar (Historic Resource Study, 1997:100). By the 1940s, the park discourages soaring in the park (Historic Resource Study citing Lambert, 134).
CE 1934	Established	On September 15, the Central District portion of Skyline Drive opens to the public (Historic Resource Study 1997:51).
CE 1935 - 1942	Planned	The first Shenandoah National Park Master Plan is produced, with revisions occurring each year, except for 1941. Final plans call for four multi-use developments, including Big Meadows, Skyland, Loft Mountain, and Dickey Ridge (Engle 2006:118-119).
CE 1935 - 1942	Built	At Big Meadows, and throughout the park, the CCC builds maintenance buildings, picnic areas, campground, trails, and water/sewer systems; provides labor for Skyline Drive; relocates portions of the Appalachian Trail impacted by the drive; clears dead/dying chestnut trees and uses wood for construction; and plants trees/shrubs to revegetate area.
CE 1935	Established	A nursery is established at NP-2 to re-stock vegetation in the park (Engle; EWW; page 86).
CE 1935	Established	On December 26, Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes, accepts title to Shenandoah National Park (National Register 4/1997:Section 7, 4).
CE 1935 - 1936	Built	The NPS completes grading on the main entrance road and spur to the guest cabins at Big Meadows.
CE 1936	Built	Water and sewer systems are installed using Works Progress Administration (WPA) labor and funds (NHL documentation 2008:63).
CE 1936	Established	On July 3, Franklin Roosevelt dedicates Shenandoah NP in a ceremony at Big Meadows.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1937	Established	A revised master plan shows a wayside area and a sub-headquarters development area. Two comfort stations have been laid out and a carpenter shop is under construction (National Register 9/1997:Section 8, 79, citing Report of Harvey P. Benson, February 20 to March 20, 1937).
CE 1937	Established	NPS awards a contract to Virginia Sky-Line Co., Inc., to become the park concessionaire and be responsible for planning and designing most of the facilities within the park (SHEN website, Historical Overview).
CE 1937	Established	The CCC completes the construction of the campground at Big Meadows, the first in the park, (National Register 9/1997:Section 8, 52). Two comfort station are in place.
CE 1937	Built	The CCC constructs a comfort station at the picnic area (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 17).
CE 1938 - 1939	Built	Virginia Sky-Line Company constructs Wayside station with parking for 16 cars, offering lunch, gas and souvenirs (National Register 9/1997:Section 8, 80).
CE 1939	Built	Virginia Sky-Line Company builds Big Meadows Lodge from designs by Marcellus Wright, Jr., comprising a restaurant with seating for 150 and twenty-six guestrooms along with a lobby and lounge.
CE 1939	Built	Virginia Sky-Line Company constructs several guest cabins designed by Wright, including Petersburg, Blacksburg, Bridesburg, Lynchburg and Mountain View Cabins.
CE 1939	Built	The NPS constructs several buildings at the maintenance area, including the Equipment Shed/Garage, Maintenance Vehicle & Equipment Storage building, the Blacksmith Shop, the Storage Shed, Carpenter Shop, Warehouse/Storage, Gas/Oil building, and employee garage (now a stable) (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 22-23).
CE 1939	Built	The CCC constructs six stone drinking fountains at the campground.
CE 1939	Built	A campground contact station is constructed (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 16).
CE 1941	Built	Virginia Sky-Line Company constructs Piedmont Cottage at the cabin/lodge area.
CE 1941	Established	Secretary Ickes designates a rock formation at Big Meadows as a memorial to honor the late Robert Fechner, the Director of the Emergency Conservation Work (later CCC) (NHL documentation 2008:43).
CE 1942	Abandoned	The CCC program is disbanded after the U.S. enters World War II, and the CCC camps are closed. Park concessions also close, including Big Meadows Lodge because of low visitation (Lambert 1979:ii; National Register 9/1997:Section 8, 73).
CE 1945	Moved	A building originally constructed as a school and called Hoover Mountain School, is moved to the maintenance area and adapted for use as a ranger's quarters (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 24).

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1946	Built	Virginia Sky-Line Company constructs Blackrock and Hawksbill Cottages at the cabin/lodge area, designed as multi-unit cottages by the firm Louis Ballou and Charles C. Justice (National Register 9/1997:Section 8, 76).
CE 1950	Moved	NPS move Cottages "A" to "E" to Big Meadows from Swift Run Gap for employee residences.
CE 1951	Built	Mileposts are installed along Skyline Drive (National Register 4/1997:Section 8, 91).
CE 1952	Built	Guardrails are completed in South District, marking official completion of Skyline Drive (NHL documentation 2008:6).
CE 1959	Built	Virginia Sky-Line builds Doubletop Cottage at the cabin/lodge area, designed as a motel (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 21).
CE 1959	Built	New stables and a tackroom-office are constructed at the maintenance area (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 24-25).
CE 1962	Altered	As part of Mission-66, NPS expands south campground loop, converting all sites to trailer use; one third was originally part of a CCC campground used for tent sites (Engle 5/11/2000, interview).
CE 1960 - 1966	Built	Mission-66 projects at Big Meadows include construction of two apartments for employee housing, the Story of the Forest Trail, campground laundry, and service building.
CE 1961	Built	A can storage building is constructed adjacent to the Lodge (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 19).
CE 1961	Built	A new service station is constructed at the wayside area (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 5).
CE 1963	Built	Virginia Sky-Line builds Rapidan Cottage at the cabin/lodge area, designed as a motel (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 21).
CE 1966	Built	Construction of Byrd Visitor Center is completed as part of Mission-66.
CE 1971	Built	Two storage buildings for ice and garbage are constructed adjacent to the wayside building (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 15).
CE 1971	Built	An addition is constructed at the southwest portion of the Lodge.
CE 1978	Built	NPS constructs an amphitheater near the picnic area.
CE 1978	Built	The NPS constructs a wastewater treatment system off of a new spur north of Big Meadows Road.
CE 1980	Altered	The porches of Piedmont, Blackrock, and Hawksbill Cottages are replaced (LCS).
CE 1980 - 1983	Built	The NPS constructs a pedestrian pathway north of and paralleling Big Meadows Road.
CE 1986	Built	The Virginia Sky-Line Company constructs Crescent Rock Cottage at the cabin/lodge area.
CE 1987 - 1990	Built	The NPS constructs seasonal employee housing off of a new spur on Big Meadows Road.
CE 1998 - 2001	Restored	Big Meadows Lodge is restored.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1999	Restored	NPS restores campground Contact Station and campground comfort stations.
CE 2000	Built	Six new comfort stations are constructed at the campground.
CE 2000	Restored	At the maintenance area, the Equipment/Storage building, Maintenance/Vehicle & Equipment building, and Warehouse are restored (LCS).
CE 2000	Restored	The NPS begins controlled burn of meadow to control vegetative growth.
CE 2000	Built	A statue of a CCC worker is installed by the main entrance to the Byrd Visitor Center.
CE 2001	Restored	Carpenter Shop at maintenance area is restored.
CE 2002	Restored	Gas/Oil building and Blacksmith Shop at maintenance area is restored.
CE 2004	Restored	At the maintenance area, the Ranger's Quarters (former Hoover School) is restored (LCS).

Physical History:

9000 BC TO 17TH CENTURY: NATIVE AMERICAN USE

This area of the Blue Ridge Mountains was known and used by Paleo-Indians for many centuries, with the first human habitation taking place about 11,000 years ago, sometime after the last ice age. The Paleo-Indians were hunters and gatherers who used the mountains for seasonal camps. With the development of farming in the valleys by 1000 AD, Native American use of the mountains focused on game hunting (Resource Management Plan 1998:23). The Manocan tribe settled in most of the Piedmont region and portions of the Blue Ridge Mountains while the Manahoac tribe inhabited the area east of the Blue Ridge Mountains and along the Rappahannock River (<http://indians.vipnet.org/tribes/monacan.cfm>). Throughout the area, clearings, also called balds, were created by Native Americans as hunting camps, including Big Meadows (National Register 4/1997:Section 7, 11).

1669 TO 1923: EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

Dr. John Lederer, a German immigrant, was the first European to record exploration of this area of the Blue Ridge Mountains in 1669, describing the woods as wild and full of game. In 1716, Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, led an expedition across the Blue Ridge Mountains to encourage settlement and to extend the boundaries of the colony. The crossing place was probably Swift Run Gap or the Big Meadows area (Lambert 1989:32-33). The land Spotswood claimed was soon obtained by investors, but disputed ownership claims led to court cases that went unresolved well into the early nineteenth century (Historic Resources Study 1997:7-8).

Most of the first European settlers were English immigrants, followed by a large number of Germans and Scotch-Irish by the mid-eighteenth century (Historic Resources Study 1997:9). Settlers moved from the Tidewater area to the Piedmont region, and from Pennsylvania to the Shenandoah Valley. Even before European settlement started here, local Native Americans were dying of introduced diseases, and by 1800 they had disappeared completely or moved away (Lambert 1989:21-22; Resource Management Plan 1998:23). As the better farming land was taken, new settlers moved into the mountain hollows where they developed a subsistence life reliant on hunting, farming, grazing, and timbering that led to extensive clearing of the land (Resource Management Plan 1998:23 cited in Skyland CLI).

In 1830, the first recreational use of the area occurred in what is now the South District of the park. A resort called Black Rock Springs Hotel touted seven mineral springs with curative powers. The resort became a popular regional tourist destination and maintained operation until 1909 when a fire destroyed most of the buildings (Historic Resources Study 1997:41-42). Industrial use also developed in some areas, such as the Mt. Vernon Iron Furnace and the Stony Man Mountain Tract, where copper was mined and charcoal produced for smelting occurred from 1845 to 1850 (Engle 1994:1).

By the mid-1850s, large farms developed in the region, typically cultivating tobacco for a few years, followed by corn crops and then left fallow to recover. Smaller scale farms also existed in the area and were mainly subsistence farms including small gardens with corn, rye, and other vegetables, and small orchards. Other land uses included cattle grazing, and lumbering that provided material for rebuilding after the Civil War and for railroad expansion. A large portion of the Big Meadows site belonged to a Shenandoah family who used the land for a cattle range. Mountain families, who occupied the land as tenants, tended the cattle and expanded the meadow by cutting down timber for their own use (Reeder 1991:59). Tanneries were another important industry, utilizing chestnut bark for the source of tannin in the leather making process (Historic Resources Study 1997:13-15). The chestnut blight that began in the United States around 1904 put an end to local reliance on the chestnut tree which at one time made up twenty percent of the Appalachian forest (<http://www.virginiaplaces.org/natural/chestnut.html>). Stands of dead chestnut trees covered areas of the Big Meadows site during the early twentieth century.

In 1894, George Freeman Pollock built a popular resort north of Big Meadows, initially called Stony Man Camp and later renamed Skyland. It was a destination and summer residence for the middle and upper middle classes mostly from Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Philadelphia. Pollock was known as a showman who held theatrical events, such as bonfires, Indian "pow-wows," and medieval jousts for guest entertainment (Lambert 1979:i and Uhler <http://www.shenandoah.national-park.com/info.htm>). Pollock strongly supported the establishment of a national park in the area and would play a key role in this effort (Historic Resources Study 1997:44).

1924-1952: PARK DEVELOPMENT

Shenandoah National Park:

In 1924, Hubert Work, the United States Secretary of the Interior, assembled a five-member Southern Appalachian National Park Committee (SANPC) to study the issues regarding establishing a national park in the region, authorized by Congress. The Committee distributed a questionnaire to gain public input into suggested sites for a new national park (SHEN website, Historical Overview). Pollock filled out the questionnaire with the aid of several colleagues, not surprisingly promoting the establishment of a park near Skyland. Pollock personally met with the members of the SANPC, and his enthusiasm and persuasive manner convinced the committee of the merits of his proposal (Historic Resources Study 1997:46).

In February 1925, Congress passed legislation allocating \$20,000 for survey and evaluation of proposed parks, including Shenandoah. It also stipulated that the Commonwealth of Virginia purchase the land and present it to the federal government for such a purpose (SHEN website, Historical Overview). However, it would take ten more years for the park lands to be acquired. Obstacles involved lawsuits resulting from land condemnation for the park, resettlement requirements for former residents, and funding (Historic Resources Study 1997:45). In April 1926, Virginia Governor Harry F. Byrd established the Commission on Conservation and Development, headed by William Carson, to take over management of funds collected for the park's creation. On May 22, Congress authorized Shenandoah National Park (NP), but without funds for land purchases. Continued land owner resistance caused conflicts and court challenges, delaying the clearance of deeds (NHL documentation 2008:6 and SHEN website, Historical Overview).

In 1927, Pollock helped organize the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) in Washington D.C. in order to develop and maintain the Appalachian Trail in the mid-Atlantic region. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy had been formed two years earlier by Benton MacKaye, a forester for the U.S. Division of Forestry (a forerunner of the Forest Service), with the aim of establishing a continuous recreational route along the mountain crests of eastern United States. One of Pollock's underlying goals in forming the PATC was to further promote the establishment of Shenandoah NP (NHL documentation 2008:30). Members of the PATC constructed a trail on weekend visits during the next four years, with much of the trail traversing property that was later developed for Skyline Drive.

By 1929, Carson successfully promoted the merits of the Blue Ridge Mountains to President Herbert Hoover, convincing him build a fishing camp and retreat on a 164-acre site along the Upper Rapidan River on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge, south of Big Meadows. After losing his bid for re-election, Hoover donated the Rapidan Camp to the federal government in 1933 and this would later become part of Shenandoah NP.

Skyline Drive and the New Deal:

In 1930, a severe drought hit the Piedmont region of Virginia, drastically reducing the agricultural livelihood of many farmers and farm workers (SHEN website, Skyline Drive History). Coinciding with the drought disaster were the effects of the Great Depression caused by the stock market crash of October 1929. As economic conditions remained bleak, it became more imperative to bring jobs to the area. Virginia's William Carson promoted a plan to both create jobs and make the Shenandoah area more accessible by building a road. As described in the report of the SANPC dated June 30, 1931: "the greatest single feature...is a possible skyline drive along the mountaintop, following a continuous ridge and looking down westerly on the Shenandoah Valley...and commanding a view [to the east] of the Piedmont Plain...Few scenic drives in the world could surpass it (Engle, 1999:15)." That same year, President Hoover authorized drought relief funds to finance the work of building Skyline Drive, provided that much of the labor be accomplished by locals using traditional hand tools and farm implements (HAER 1996:1).

Construction of the major roads in national parks at this time was carried out cooperatively by an interbureau agreement between the National Park Service (NPS) and the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), combining the expertise of BPR's civil engineers with NPS standards for protection of natural scenery in parks. NPS staff selected the route of Skyline Drive and located

the scenic overlooks and recreational waysides. BPR personnel oversaw the surveying, awarding of contracts, and actual construction. Road builders were required to fit the roadway into the surveyed route, and the grade was not to exceed eight percent or the curves to have radii less than 200 feet (NHL documentation 2008:15).

The official groundbreaking of Skyline Drive, at Thornton Gap heading south toward Swift Run Gap, took place on July 18, 1931, and work continued through the summer. Construction of the road occurred in three phases starting with Central District, then North District followed by South District (NHL documentation 2008:8). Project One was Central District, from Thornton Gap to Swift Run Gap and is the section where the Big Meadows developed area was eventually located. The Central District was constructed first because this section was located between U.S. Route 211(at Thornton Gap) and the recently completed U.S. Route 33 (at Swift Run Gap), which would provide immediate access to the drive. In addition, Central District included an access road to Rapidan Camp, the President's retreat (NHL documentation 2008:17). Project Two, or the second section phase of the construction, comprised North District, from Front Royal to Thornton Gap. Project Three comprised South District, from Swift Run Gap to Jarman Gap (NHL documentation 2008:6,16).

The Central District was constructed as projects 1-A and B, 1-C, and 1-D and F, totaling thirty-four miles of Skyline Drive. Section 1-A and B extended from Thornton Gap to Big Meadows, and Section 1-C continued from Big Meadows to Swift Run Gap and included five miles of Rapidan Road which led to President Hoover's camp. On June 21, 1934, Albert Brothers of Salem, Virginia was awarded the contract to prepare a graded roadbed for the twenty-mile Section 1-A and B. A second contract was awarded to the West Virginia Construction Company for Section 1-C, comprising roughly twenty-one miles (NHL documentation 2008:16-17). Final road paving began in the spring of 1934 and completed in August. Ralph E. Mills Construction Company of Kentucky was awarded the Thornton Gap to Big Meadows stretch, and Keeley Construction Company of Clarksburg, West Virginia was awarded the Big Meadows to Swift Run Gap section. Stone was quarried from three sites within the park, and then crushed and stockpiled at various points along the road for use in road paving (NHL documentation 2008:17).

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated as President of the United States. In March, one of his first presidential acts was to freeze all federal funding. Not until he visited the area in April did he release funding, and construction of Skyline Drive resumed (National Register 4/1997:Section 7, 7). As part of his New Deal legislation, Roosevelt initially established the Public Works Administration (PWA) as the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works under the authority of the National Industrial Recovery Act, and later became a part of the Federal Works Agency. The PWA was involved with a comprehensive program for federal and nonfederal public works projects. The program's objectives were to reduce unemployment, increase consumers' purchasing power, improve standards of labor, and conserve natural resources. The organization supplied funding and hired inspectors to ensure that projects were being constructed according to plans and specifications. The NPS received a substantial amount of funds from the program, and at Shenandoah, PWA funds were used for the construction of the Equipment Storage building at the Big Meadows site (Historic Resource Study 1997:73).

Roosevelt also established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), created to help relieve high unemployment and carry out a broad program of natural resource conservation on federal, state, and municipal lands. Six CCC camps were set up in Shenandoah NP, including one at Big Meadows, Camp NP-2, later named Camp Fechner in honor of Robert Fechner, the Director of the CCC who died in 1939. The camp, housing about 200 men, extended from Milam Gap to Fishers Gap and north to the present Big Meadows campground. Camp Fechner began as a group of surplus tents, field kitchens, and latrines but more permanent buildings were soon constructed, including barracks, an infirmary, administration buildings, a garage, and a recreation building (Figure 1). CCC workers who lived at the camp formed a recreational athletic team and called themselves the "Fechner Indians" due to the fact that the camp was located on a former Manahoac Indian hunting grounds (Nash 2001:5,6).

The CCC laborers undertook a wide range of projects including erosion control, removal of dead chestnut trees, planting trees and shrubs, the construction of trails, shelters, and picnic areas with

drinking fountains, tables, and fireplaces (SHEN website, Historical Overview). The CCC also established a nursery at the northeastern edge of the meadow to propagate native vegetation for use in stabilizing cut and fill slopes and blending them into their surroundings as well as reducing soil erosion. The plantings were also installed at the developments along Skyline Drive to enhance their natural settings (NHL documentation 2008:11). The nursery stock included Virginia creeper, trumpet creeper, bittersweet, arrowwood viburnum, rhododendron, dogwood, and sumac as well as pitch pine, red spruce, fir, and walnut trees (Engle, "Wilderness by Design?," SHEN website). Another agency established under the New Deal was the Works Progress Administration (WPA), funded under the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, which employed millions of people across the country to work on new buildings, roads, and utilities. At Big Meadows, the water and sewer system was constructed with WPA labor and funds (NHL documentation 2008:63).

As construction of Skyline Drive moved ahead, it became apparent that portions of the recently constructed Appalachian Trail conflicted with the proposed road alignment and would have to be relocated. At Shenandoah, CCC workers took on the task of rebuilding approximately eighty miles of the trail below the crestline and away from the new drive. By relocating the trail lower down the mountain slopes, hikers were able to enjoy panoramic views of the region (Schmeckebier 1930s:79). At Big Meadows, the Appalachian Trail traversed along the western edge of the site, including Blackrock where an overlook was constructed with views of the valley to the west.

During the early 1930s, Big Meadows was designated a national soaring, or gliding, site to accommodate the growing popularity of sailplanes as a recreational activity (Figure 2) (Historic Resource Study 1997:100). The CCC constructed a runway and a temporary hangar in the meadow for the use of the sailplanes, also called gliders. The sailplanes were towed and released at Big Meadows, ultimately drifting to the valley to the west (Shenandoah Overlook Summer 2009:4). In 1934, Big Meadows was the site of the National Glider Meet.

Development of Big Meadows:

The first Master Plan for Shenandoah NP was produced in 1935 through the collaboration of the superintendent, landscape architects, chief engineer, and sanitary engineer. Revisions occurred each year until 1942, with the exception of 1941. One of the overall aims of the master plan was to locate facilities at convenient intervals along Skyline Drive, providing picnic areas and overnight accommodation while offering visitors the opportunity to take in the natural scenery and surroundings of the park through a series of views and vistas. Preserving the existing landscape and restoring disturbed landscapes were also critical tenets in the development of the master plan and design guidelines (Historic Resources Study 1997:83). The design and layout of buildings were to blend in with the landscape, and groups of buildings shared a common architectural theme in order to create a unified and harmonious assemblage.

Initial plans for Skyline Drive had called for significant construction every eight miles, with fourteen major developments and eight picnic areas. Secretary Ickes expressed his concern that this number of developed areas would compromise the inherent natural character of the area and consequently encouraged a more modest approach to development (Engle 2006:119). In the end, four sites became multi-use developments, including Big Meadows, Skyland, Loft Mountain, and Dickey Ridge (Engle 2006:118-119). Big Meadows was the largest of these developments, consisting of 118 acres at the south slope of Blackrock Mountain with an elevation ranging from 3,570 feet to 3,720 feet. The site was named for the open meadows in the area that had been historically used for grazing (NHL documentation 2008:43). Besides the open fields, there were large stands of dead chestnut trees, also referred to as ghost forests that resulted from the chestnut blight, as well as several rock outcroppings and wetlands (Figure 3).

The earliest plans for Big Meadows in 1935 showed a lodge and a large number of guest cabins overlooking the Shenandoah Valley, connected to Skyline Drive via a curving road. In this plan, there was little planned along Skyline Drive and no campground or maintenance area (Figure 4) (National Register 9/1997:Section 8, 78). Additional facilities were proposed very soon after and incorporated into revised plans the following year, along with a reduced number of cabins. By the end of 1936, the CCC completed grading on the main entrance road, measuring about twenty feet wide and extending a mile west from Skyline Drive, to a proposed cabin and lodge area. A mortared, coursed stone

culvert system was constructed along the road as well to divert and drain stormwater runoff.

Later plans for Big Meadows indicated development of the site into five distinct sub-areas, organized by function and arranged along an access road (herein called Big Meadows Road) (Figure 5). The sub-areas were comprised of a wayside/gas station, lodge/cabin area, campground, picnic grounds, and a park maintenance area. The master plan located the wayside station along Skyline Drive near the intersection with Big Meadows Road. Accommodations in the form of guest cabins and a lodge were sited further to the west to take advantage of valley views. Between these two areas, a maintenance area was proposed that also included employee housing. The maintenance area was planned around the base of a knoll, out of view from Big Meadows Road as motorists drove westward toward the guest cabins and lodge.

As construction continued on Skyline Drive and plans were further developed for park amenities, the actual boundaries of the new park were still being established. In December 1935, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes accepted title to 176,419 acres, thus creating Shenandoah NP. Roosevelt officially dedicated the park on July 3, 1936 at a ceremony held at Big Meadows (Figure 6). The following October, another thirty-two miles of Skyline Drive opened to the public, encompassing North District from Thornton Gap to Front Royal.

In 1937, the CCC completed construction of the picnic grounds at Big Meadows. Accessed by a spur off of Big Meadows Road, the picnic grounds were organized around a one-way loop road with three parking areas along its perimeter, totaling thirty-five spaces. Footpaths led from the loop road to the center of the grounds, forming a cloverleaf pattern. The picnic sites were mostly located within the loop and included fireplaces and picnic tables. Four boulder drinking fountains were constructed, consisting of single boulders through which a pipe and bubbler were added (Figure 7). The CCC also planted clusters of trees for shade and spatial definition. In addition, the CCC built a comfort station, centrally located within the picnic grounds loop road. The building was constructed of squared logs joined by V-notches, and roofed with chestnut shake shingles (NHL documentation 2008:46).

The CCC also constructed a campground adjacent to the picnic grounds off of the same spur. The campground consisted of a major one-way loop road crossed by multiple one-way roads dividing the area into separate tiers (Figure 8). The resulting fan-shaped road system created five camping areas, containing fifty trailer sites and twenty tent sites. Most of the sites had parking areas spanning the width of the loop for the convenience of motorists towing trailers. This layout allowed cars with trailers to pull into the site and exit without backing up (NHL documentation 2008:44). Other sites had traditional pull-in spots. The design of the campground was modeled on concepts developed by E. P. Meinecke, a plant pathologist who promoted a theory for the design of campgrounds and picnic areas for the U.S. Forest Service, which heavily influenced the work done by the NPS. Probable influences on Meinecke's ideas include the work of Andrew Jackson Downing who advocated a naturalistic aesthetic, the rustic camp style architecture found in the Adirondacks beginning in the 1880s, as well as the Arts and Crafts Movement (Historic Resources Study 1997:60). Meinecke called for a circulation system of one-way loop roads and individual campsites each having a parking space defined by boulder or other barriers and vegetative screening, and include a tent clearing, fireplace, and table. At Big Meadows, all the campsites included wood picnic tables with metal supports and fire grates (Figure 9). The CCC built two comfort stations at opposite ends of the campgrounds, in a traditional log cabin style with pitched roofs covered in chestnut shingles. The CCC also constructed six boulder water fountains and installed trees and shrubs to create screening for privacy between campsites.

During the same year, the NPS awarded a contract to Virginia Sky-Line Company Inc. to become the park concessionaire, which included the responsibility of planning and designing most of the associated facilities within the park. Marcellus Wright, Jr., an architect from Richmond, Virginia, was hired by the Virginia Sky-Line Company to design all of the park concessionaire buildings. Wright's designs were inspired by the site's natural setting which resulted in long buildings comprised of smaller components that could be adjusted to the existing topography (Historic Resources Study 1997:106). Wright's ideas coincided with the overall NPS rustic style that was being advocated for all the buildings at Shenandoah where primacy was given to the landscape and local building styles and materials were employed to further blend in with the surroundings.

In 1938, the Virginia Sky-Line Company built five cottages at Big Meadows and began construction on the Lodge. The cottages were grouped in an informal circular arrangement south and west of the future Lodge, facing Blackrock, and were named Petersburg, Bridesburg, Blacksburg, Lynchburg, and Mountain View (Figure 10). Wright designed the cottages as simple wood frame T-shaped buildings with hipped roofs. Each cottage contained two separate housing units with a large stone chimney with hearths opening onto both main rooms. The buildings were faced with flitched-edge (wooden board with bark on the edge) wood siding, which became a recurring architectural theme at Big Meadows. Every housing unit had a separate walkway leading to the entrance. A linen storage building was also constructed adjacent to the cottages.

In July 1939, the Virginia Sky-Line Company completed construction of the Lodge. The building was located at the westernmost portion of the site to provide views over the Shenandoah Valley to the distant mountains beyond. The Lodge was accessed via Big Meadows Road, terminating at a circular drive in front of the Lodge. On the southwest side of the circle was a parking area that incorporated a segment of the road that eventually led back to Big Meadows Road. The parking area was edged with wood guardrails and divided by a wooded island (Figure 11). A service drive led to the west side of the building. Wright developed an elaborate massing for the 300-foot long, two-story Lodge, incorporating a number of component parts of different materials and with varying roof forms to fit the irregular hillside elevation and to follow the outer mountaintop ridge (Figure 12). The effect of the massing and the choice of materials created a village-like scale to the Lodge which housed a gift shop, dining room, a lounge, lobby, and second-story accommodations with twenty-six guest rooms (NHL documentation 2008:46). The exterior walls were of coursed stone masonry, quarried from nearby Massanutten Mountain, with wood siding. The dining room accommodated 150 guests and was oriented so that diners could enjoy views of the surrounding countryside. On either side of the main entrance were a single column of glass blocks, which Wright utilized in many of his designs. On the second floor, above the entrance doors, Wright designed a decorative wood balcony. The rear of the building, facing the valley, featured a flagstone terrace that extended most of the length of the building. Shade trees were planted along the front of the Lodge, and it appeared that mature trees at the site were preserved as well (Figure 13).

Wright also designed a Wayside building with a gas station at the intersection of Skyline Drive and Big Meadows Road. The building faced Skyline Drive with service and parking located in the rear to preserve the scenic view from the road. Motorists could access the area directly from Skyline Drive and pull up to the gas pumps, or enter off of Big Meadows Road (Figure 14). A parking lot with a planted island provided sixteen parking spaces. The Wayside building, consisting of wood siding and cross gabled sections, included restrooms as well as a coffee shop and gift shop. The coffee shop was located on the south façade of the building, offering diners views of the meadow while they had their meal. The CCC installed foundation plantings around the Wayside building as well as a number of trees and shrubs in the parking lot island.

Also in 1939, the NPS developed a maintenance area, with adjacent employee residences, off of Big Meadows Road (Figure 15). A spur curved around a knoll to the south, terminating at the service area. A smaller road led from the spur to employee housing to the west. Another small road provided access to the stable area to the east. Seven service buildings were designed as rectangular one-story frame buildings with concrete floors and footings. They included an Equipment Shed/Garage, Maintenance/Vehicle and Equipment Storage, Blacksmith Shop/Storage Shed, Storage Shed, Carpenter Shop/Storage Building, Warehouse/Storage, a Gas/Oil building, and stables that initially served as an employee garage. The buildings were all faced with vertical slab siding consisting of three- to four-foot half-round boards arranged in parallel rows (NHL documentation 2008:48). The buildings also had gabled roofs covered with wood shingles. The largest maintenance building, the Maintenance/Vehicle and Equipment Storage, was built by private contractors with PWA funds, and the other buildings were CCC work projects (NHL documentation 2008:48). The buildings were organized parallel or perpendicular to each other, forming a rectangular maintenance yard enclosed by a roughly six-foot high wooden palisade fence (Figure 16).

The layout and design of the maintenance area adhered to ideas advanced by Charles Punchard, who had worked in the early years of the NPS overseeing landscape issues in national parks. Punchard promoted the concept of grouping maintenance facilities as an ensemble of warehouses,

workshops, garages, storage and equipment sheds, and stables arranged for efficiency and located on side roads, away from park visitors (Historic Resource Study 1997:90-91).

Other CCC-related projects at Big Meadows included a Visitor Contact Station at the center of the campground. The Contact Station was designed as a rustic style log building with a stone and mortar foundation and a pitched roof covered with chestnut shakes. The walls were constructed with squared, V-notched logs and mortar chinking, and the south façade featured a large fieldstone chimney. The CCC also constructed a number of trails throughout the site including a bridle path from northeast to southwest roughly paralleling Skyline Drive and passed by a stable at the maintenance area. The Lewis Falls Trail was another CCC-built trail comprised of a winding three mile foot trail that began near the Lodge and wrapped around the west side of the mountain descending to Lewis Spring Falls, a picturesque waterfall descending into a gorge. In addition, the CCC constructed a variety of rustic wood signs throughout the Big Meadows site. The largest signs were typically constructed out of chestnut logs with wood panels hanging by metal straps (Figure 17).

In the early 1940s, the NPS developed designs for a recreational area located on the west side of Big Meadows Road between the maintenance area the cabin/lodge area. Plans from 1940 and 1941 included a tennis court, swimming pool with bath houses, and parking. Remnants have been found suggesting that at least the tennis courts and a fence were constructed, but further investigation is needed. In 1941, the Virginia Sky-Line Company constructed a new multiple-unit accommodation, designed by the firm of Ballou and Justice from Richmond, Virginia, and located south of the Lodge on the opposite side of the parking area from the guest cabins. The eight-unit structure, called Piedmont Cottage, was a wood frame building with cross gabled sections on either end and faced with vertical board-and-batten siding. A porch ran along most of the length of the building (NHL documentation 2008:46). Two walkways led from the parking lot to either end of the building. During the same year, Secretary Ickes designated a rock formation on the northeastern side of the meadow as a memorial to Robert Fechner who had directed the CCC until his death in 1939 (NHL documentation 2008:43).

World War II and Post-War Development:

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States entered World War II, ending most development in the park until after the war. As the country directed all its manpower toward the war effort, the CCC camps were closed by the end of March 1942 (Engle 1999:30). The park's workforce at this time shrank to 1/20th of its size (Lambert 2001:263). Some former CCC foremen and technicians remained at the park for a short time to help close down operations. Visitation at the park drastically declined with most resources, including fuel, directed to the war effort.

In July 1942, the Big Meadows Lodge closed and two months later all park concession facilities closed as well. In August, the Civilian Public Service (CPS) established a camp for conscientious objectors in Shenandoah NP, at former CCC camp NP-10. The CPS provided work for men unwilling to serve in the military based on religious upbringing or belief. At Shenandoah, the CPS took over fire and erosion control projects previously done by the CCC, continued the revegetation efforts, installed utilities, and built trails, roads, and park structures. They were also assigned to raze pre-park structures. CPS workers did not receive wages and were financially supported by their churches or families.

Other activity in the park during the war involved the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who established a camp at Big Meadows and constructed roads and bridges, and assembled water lines and machine gun nests in the park in preparation for the Italian campaign (Figure 18). Other federal agencies made use of the park for a variety of other purposes ranging from class work in geodetic control activities to mapping. In April 1944, for instance, over 3,000 men entered the park for a variety of defense-related training, using the abandoned CCC Camp Fechner facilities (Lambert 1979:296 cited in Historic Resource Study 1997:115).

In 1945, the NPS moved a building from the vicinity of Camp Hoover to the maintenance area at Big Meadows for use as a ranger's quarters. The building, originally constructed in 1930 by President

and Mrs. Hoover as a schoolhouse for local children, consisted of a frame, gable-roofed building with wood siding and concrete-block foundations. A small gabled porch covered the entrance. The building was expanded at both the front and rear, and interior partition walls were added (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 24).

By 1946, all concession facilities at the park reopened, including Big Meadows, but business was slow to return. The CPS camp also closed in June (Historic Resources Study 1997:100). Visitation at the parks began to rise by the late 1940s, generating a need for more guest lodging. The Virginia Sky-Line Company built two more multi-unit buildings, Blackrock and Hawksbill Cottages, located adjacent to the Piedmont Cottage and designed in the same style with cross gable sections and vertical board and batten siding.

In 1951, the Superintendent of Shenandoah NP renewed a twenty-year term contract with Virginia Sky-Line Company to help expand Skyland and Big Meadows' overnight capacity. During the same year, mileposts were installed along Skyline Drive, and in 1952 guardwalls were completed at the South District, marking the official completion of the drive (National Register 4/1997:Section 8, 91; NHL documentation 2008:6).

During this time, pressure was mounting from Washington to end segregation of NPS facilities at Shenandoah NP. Secretary Ickes mandated full desegregation in the parks. After several park-wide attempts to limit or end segregation, both blacks and whites were using the Lewis Mountain picnic area by October 1947. In 1950, a park planner from Washington visited the park and spoke with personnel as well as tourists. The planner reported back with the conclusion that the park was fully integrated (Lambert 1979:271-284, 305).

Around 1950, the NPS moved five small tourist cabins from Dickey Ridge and Swift Run to the area where the cabin/lodge loop road returned to Big Meadows Road. Referred to as Cottages A through E, the buildings were used as employee residences (National Register 9/1997:Section 7, 20-21). Four of the cottages were identical two-room cottages with an attached bathroom in the rear. All were side-gable structures with double entrances on the long side and either six-over-six or replacement one-over-one double-hung windows. The frame buildings had concrete-block foundations and were covered with horizontal wood siding, and featured small porches supported by thin posts. A fifth cabin, Cottage A, was similar to the other four cabins but had only a single room and bath. Both Cottages A and B were constructed prior to 1933, and the remaining cottages were constructed prior to 1939.



Figure 1. View of CCC Camp NP-2, later named Camp Fechner, at Big Meadows in the late 1930s (Shenandoah NP Archives).



Figure 2. View of sailplane aloft at Big Meadows in 1935 (Shenandoah NP Archives, Negative No. 826-I).



Figure 3. Stand of dead chestnut trees, also known as “ghost forests,” at Big Meadows development entrance off of Skyline Drive in 1936. The road in the foreground is Rapidan Road (Shenandoah NP Archives, Classification B 200-2, Negative No. P-438f).

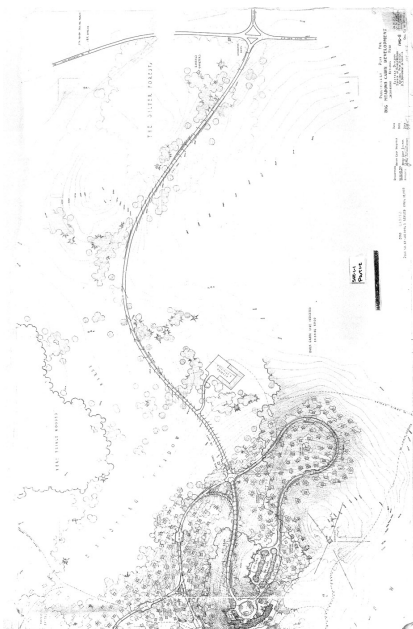


Figure 4. Preliminary development plan for Big Meadows in 1935 (SHEN 134-1046B, Doc. Id. 336205, Denver Service Center).

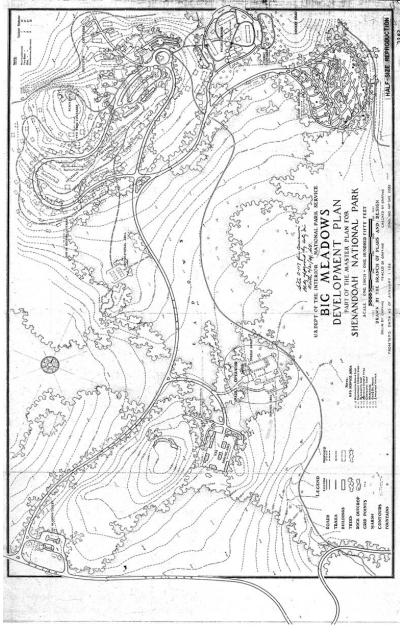


Figure 5. Master Plan for Big Meadows from the early 1940s (SHEN 134-2283, Doc. Id. 336486, Denver Service Center).



Figure 6. Dedication ceremony for Shenandoah National Park, held at Big Meadows, July, 1936. President Roosevelt is in the car in the foreground (Shenandoah website). Note the dead chestnut trees in the upper left hand corner.

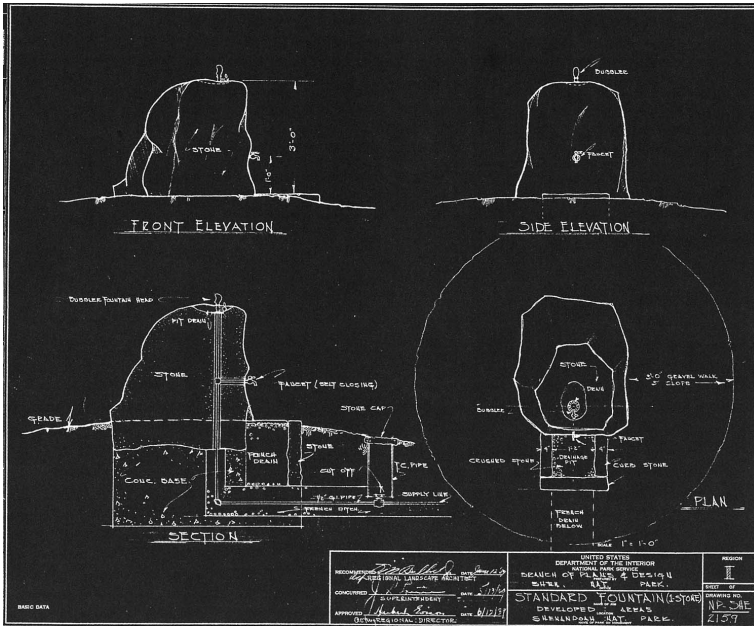


Figure 7. Architectural details for typical boulder drinking fountain installed at Big Meadows and other developments along Skyline Drive (Shenandoah NP Archives, scanned from "The Greatest Single Feature" by Engle, 2006:107).



Figure 8. Campground layout at Big Meadows in the late 1930s showing the tiered circulation system (Shenandoah NP Archives, Classification 0-97, Negative No. P-646e, undated).



Figure 9. Typical stacked stone grill constructed by CCC at the campground at Big Meadows in 1937 (Shenandoah NP Archives, Negative No. 665-5).

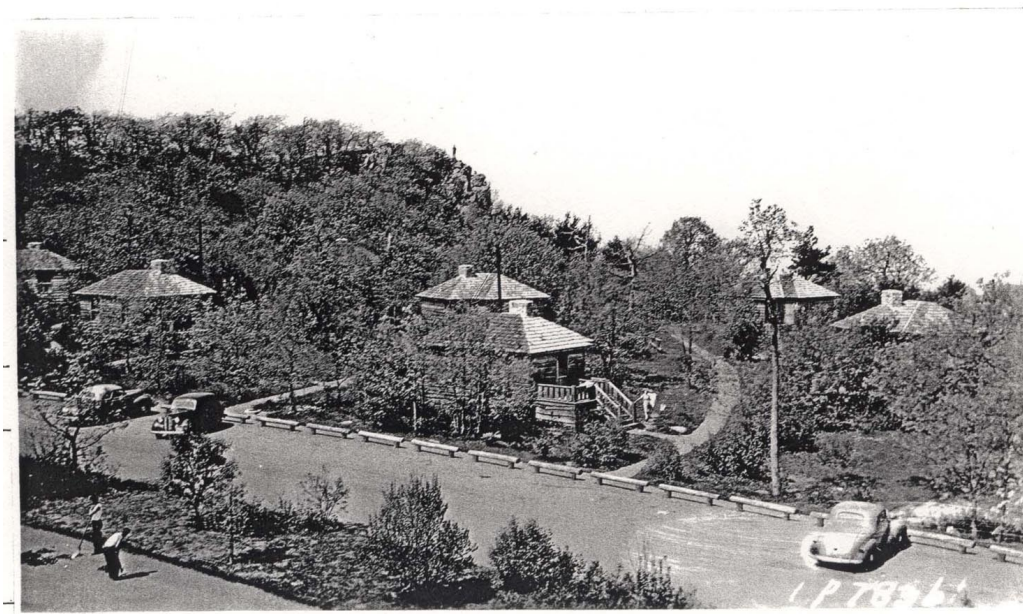


Figure 10. View from 1940 of cottages designed by Marcellus Wright, Jr. at Big Meadows, with Blackrock beyond. In the foreground is the parking area for the cabins and the Lodge, edged with log guardrails (Shenandoah NP Archives, Negative No. 613-7).



Figure 11. View of the Big Meadows Lodge in 1941 and driveway loop, with a parking lot in the foreground (Shenandoah NP Archives, Negative No. 665-5).

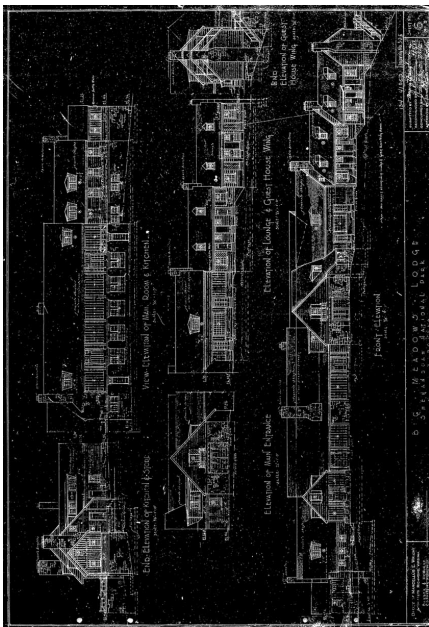


Figure 12. Elevations of Big Meadows Lodge designed by Marcellus Wright, Jr. in 1938 (SHEN 134-4105, Id. No. 335174, Denver Service Center).

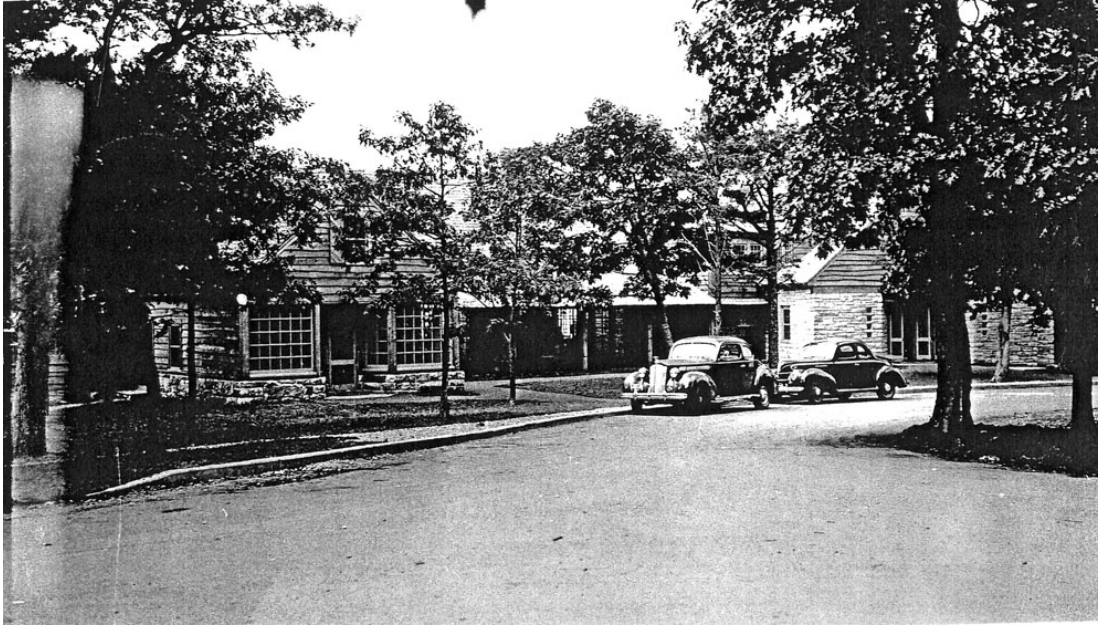


Figure 13. View of circular drive and entrance to Big Meadows Lodge in 1939 (Shenandoah NP Archives, Classification N-7-5, Negative No. 911-4).



Figure 14. View of the Wayside station along Skyline Drive at Big Meadows in 1938 with wooden sign by the road to the right (Shenandoah NP Archives, Classification N-7-5, Negative No. 911-4).



Figure 15. Plan of Big Meadows maintenance area from 1937 (SHEN 134-2057, Doc. Id. 336384, Denver Service Center).



Figure 16. View of maintenance area, looking from southwest, at Big Meadows in 1940 (Shenandoah NP Archives, Neg. No. P-782b).



Figure 17. Wooden sign at Big Meadows Wayside in 1938 (Shenandoah NP Archives, Classification P-9, Negative No. P-736d).



Figure 18. View of camp set up by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1942 for training activities during World War II (Shenandoah NP website).

1953 – PRESENT: LATER DEVELOPMENT / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ERA

In the mid-1950s, the NPS was planning “Mission-66,” an ambitious ten-year development program designed to upgrade facilities in the national parks to modern standards to accommodate increased visitation after World War II. The goal was to develop and adequately staff NPS facilities by 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the agency (Lambert 1979:314). The NPS gained Congressional funding

for the work in 1956. New facilities were designed in a contemporary modern style, contrasting with the rustic aesthetic that had been employed at Shenandoah and other national parks. Plans for Big Meadows under the Mission-66 initiative called for a new visitor center as well the expansion of the campgrounds and additional guest accommodations. At Big Meadows, the last of the former CCC camp buildings were also removed at this time (Nash 2001:10).

In 1959, the Virginia Sky-Line Company constructed a new multiple-unit guest accommodation at the cabin/lodge area, west of the existing cottages, called Doubletop Cottage. The building was designed in a typical motel style where each unit is reached by a single flight of stairs (NHL documentation 2008:48). At the maintenance area, the NPS constructed a new stable and tackroom. The stable was a wood frame structure with five stalls, and the tackroom was a narrow, rectangular concrete block structure.

In the early 1960s, additional construction projects expanded guest accommodation as well as employee housing. The NPS built three employee residences at the cabin/lodge area on the loop road after it curves back around to rejoin Big Meadows Road. The Virginia Sky-Line Company constructed another motel-style guest accommodation next to Doubletop Cottage, called Rapidan Cottage. Both of these buildings were constructed parallel to the edge of the slope, blocking views from the guest cabins to the west. A new filling station was constructed adjacent to the Wayside, composed of a concrete-block building with a shallow hipped roof and a front façade with four large, plate-glass panels and a single entrance. Immediately adjacent to the Wayside, new facilities were built to store ice, cans, and garbage. At the campground, an additional loop of campsites was added to the south of the original loop. The new loop was divided into four tiers and consisted entirely of sites with pull-in parking. Walk-in sites were located off the peripheral loop to the east and the south. This expansion produced a total of 200 tent sites and twenty recreation vehicle sites (NHL documentation 2008:45). Two new comfort stations were also constructed at the campground.

In 1966, the NPS completed construction of the Byrd Visitor Center east of the Wayside, one of two visitor centers in the park. The building was named after Virginia Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr., who had been instrumental in establishing Shenandoah NP. Visitor centers were a major component of the Mission-66 initiative, envisioned as the “hub of the park interpretive program... staffed by trained personnel . . . [to] help visitors understand the meaning of the park and its features, and how best to protect, use, and appreciate them.” The NPS hoped that the expanded orientation and education programs would also reduce vandalism and overuse in the parks (French www.mission66.com/documents/intro.html). The design of the Byrd Visitor Center departed from the traditional rustic style formerly employed at the park in the 1930s and 1940s (Figure 19). The building was designed as a contemporary split-level structure with a low pitched roof and large plate-glass windows. The east side of the building provided a wide view of the meadowland. The exterior stonework was of sandstone from the Massanutten Mountain to the west across the Shenandoah Valley. The Visitor Center was located prominently off of Skyline Drive with a new entrance drive to the east curving around to the west side of the building where two parking lots were laid out in a linear configuration.

Another Mission-66 construction project was the “Story of the Forest” Nature Trail, consisting of a 1.8-mile self-guided hike, with interpretive posts along the trail for about two-thirds of its length. The trail started at the Byrd Visitor Center and passed through a forest in various stages of succession. The trail ended at the Big Meadows Wayside, near the Visitor Center parking area. A laundry and service building was also built in 1966 at the campground, consisting of an L-shaped concrete block building housing a laundry and a store. Other new facilities at the campground included a shed for storing wood, and a shower building. At the maintenance area to the west of the complex, the NPS built two apartment buildings for employees with four apartment units in each building. The buildings were of concrete masonry with low gable roofs.

In the late 1970s, new construction included an amphitheater located north of the picnic grounds, near one of the parking areas and accessed by a footpath. The amphitheater was designed as a fan-shaped arrangement of benches facing a stage and screen structure. Two nearby sheds housed a projection booth and wood storage for a fire ring located west of the stage. In 1978, the NPS constructed a wastewater treatment area on a new spur west of Big Meadows Road, consisting of

two structures and a parking lot. The wastewater treatment building was a large concrete building faced with concrete blocks with deep vertical ridges. The second structure was an open metal structure secured to a concrete foundation that is used for open air drying of processed sludge from the treatment plant.

Around 1980, the concessionaire constructed additional employee residences on the loop road at the cabin/lodge area, opposite Cottages A through E. The buildings were of concrete block with low pitched asphalt-shingled roofs. Each building contained either four or six employee residences. Also in the early 1980s, an air quality station was built in the woods northeast of the maintenance area comprised of trailers and an antenna. These structures were meant to be temporary yet are still extant. In 1986, the Virginia Sky-Line Company constructed Crescent Rock Cottage, another multi-unit guest building adjacent to Hawksbill Cottage within the loop road at the cabin/lodge area.

In the early 1990s, four new buildings were constructed as seasonal ranger residences off of a new spur opposite the maintenance area. Three of the buildings are of ranch-style construction and the fourth is a two-story building. In 1998, a fire destroyed one of the CCC comfort stations at the campground, and was later restored. In 1999, the NPS restored the campground Contact Station. In 2000, six new comfort stations were also constructed throughout the campground. In addition, a playground was built west of the cottages at the cabin/lodge area and a statue was installed by the entrance to the Byrd Visitor Center to commemorate the work of the CCC. A series of restoration projects were also began in 2000 for several historic buildings, including Big Meadows Lodge, the seven original buildings at the maintenance area, and the CCC-constructed comfort stations.

In the spring of 2000, as part of a new landscape maintenance program, the park undertook a prescribed burn within the meadow, followed by mowing in the fall. Up until the 1970s, maintenance of the meadow primarily consisted of mowing, but trees and shrubs continued to colonize and encroach upon the large clearing. The size of the open meadow was shrinking as a consequence and losing its historic grass cover. The meadow was then burned for three more consecutive years to discourage woody re-growth and to promote the regeneration of herbs. This approach was judged successful and the meadow continues to be managed by using a rotation of burning, mowing, and fallow treatments (NPS Natural Resource Fact Sheet 11/2008:2).

In September 2003, Hurricane Isabel damaged the historic Ranger's Quarters (former Hoover School) at the maintenance area, including extensive water damage and damage to the roof by a fallen tree, necessitating its replacement. In 2004, the NPS completely restored the building.

Other changes in the landscape that have occurred at Big Meadows include the replacement of picnic tables and fire grates with more contemporary site furnishings. New features installed in the landscape include walkway and street lights, dumpsters, recycling bins, information kiosks, telephone booths, bicycle racks, flagpoles, wayside interpretive exhibits, directional signage, and memorials.

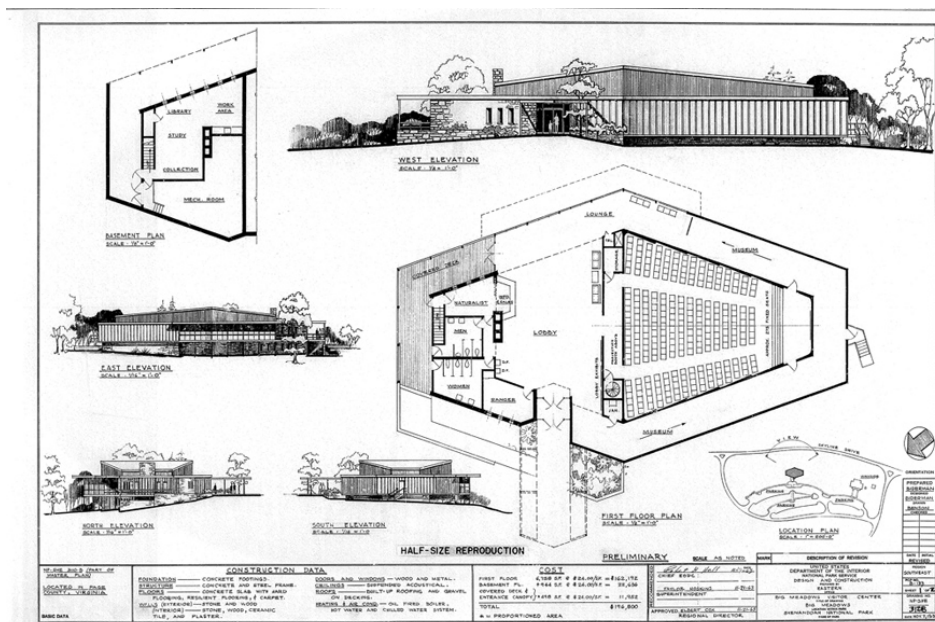


Figure 19. Architectural elevations for Byrd Visitor Center from 1963 (SHEN 134-3128, Doc. Id. 336126, Denver Service Center).

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Commerce/Trade	Business	Concession	Yes	Yes	No
Domestic (Residential)	Hotel (Boarding House)	Lodge (Inn, Cabin)	Yes	Yes	No
Domestic (Residential)	Multiple Dwelling	Multifamily (4+ Units)	No	Yes	No
Domestic (Residential)	Single Family Dwelling	Single Family House	Yes	Yes	No
Government	Government Office	Comfort Station (Latrine)	Yes	Yes	No
Government	Government Office	Maintenance Facility	Yes	Yes	No
Landscape	Leisure-Passive (Park)	Leisure-Passive (Park)	Yes	Yes	No
Landscape	Scenic Landscape	View	Yes	Yes	No
Recreation/Culture	Outdoor Recreation	Campground/Picnic Area	No	Yes	Yes
Recreation/Culture	Outdoor Recreation	Campground/Picnic Area	Yes	No	Yes
Recreation/Culture	Sports Facility	Tennis Court	Yes	No	No
Transportation	Pedestrian-Related	Hiking Trail	Yes	Yes	No
Transportation	Road-Related	NPS Class III Special Purpose Road	No	Yes	No
Transportation	Road-Related	Parking Area	Yes	Yes	No

Public Access:

Public Access: Other Restrictions

Public Access Narrative:

The Byrd Visitor Center is open April to the end of November. Big Meadows Lodge is open from May to the beginning of November. The picnic grounds, campground, and wayside are open from the end of March to the end of November. Portions of the site, including the maintenance area and the wastewater treatment plant, are posted as "employees only" areas.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

It is very likely that the meadow was used by Native Americans, including the Manocan and Manahoac, for over ten thousand years. In general, the inhabitants of the region were hunters and gatherers who used the mountains for seasonal camps. At the meadow, Native Americans created clearings called balds for use as hunting camps.

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Significant landscape characteristics identified for the Big Meadows landscape include natural systems and features, topography, spatial organization, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, small-scale features, and archeological sites. Many of these characteristics have associated with them features that contribute to the site's overall historic significance and identity, as well as features that do not contribute or are undetermined.

The physical integrity of Big Meadows is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1931-1952) with current conditions. Many of the site's historic characteristics and features are unchanged. The site's historic layout is still intact and features distinct areas grouped by function that include the wayside/visitor center, picnic grounds, lodge/cabin accommodations, campground, and maintenance facilities, and all which are connected by a primary access road. The historic rustic design is evident through the circulation layout, materials, and vernacular building styles reflecting the philosophy of a romanticized natural environment that was executed through the 1930s and 1940s. Pathways, access roads, and parking areas throughout the site remain much as they did during the period of significance. The original Wayside, Lodge, guest cabins, comfort stations, and maintenance area buildings retain integrity in their overall exterior design with subsequent renovations using similar materials and/or workmanship. More elaborate alterations have occurred inside the buildings to accommodate new uses and repairs. Historic viewsheds of the meadow from the wayside area and west of the cabin/lodge area have been retained, further emphasizing the historic setting of the site. The use of local resources in the design of site amenities, such as native plants, rock work, and wood, to harmonize with the natural surroundings can be seen in the landscape today. The original stone culverts and drainage systems built into the access road also remain. Historic small-scale features include boulder drinking fountains, boulders used as bollards, as well as remnants of the CCC camp, nursery and tennis courts along the edge of the meadow.

The picnic grounds have changed very little except for the replacement of some of the site furniture and the loss of the stone fireplaces. An amphitheater was constructed adjacent to the picnic grounds in 1978, but it is screened by trees and does not detract from the area's historic landscape character. The campground has been expanded with an additional loop road system, but its design is in keeping with the historic layout. New guest accommodations have been constructed at the cabin/lodge area, but the overall function and character of the area is also intact. The biggest changes have occurred at the wayside area with the construction of the Byrd Visitor Center, now the largest building at Big Meadows. While the design of the Visitor Center building is more contemporary, local stone was used for the exterior, creating a visual association to the historic buildings at the site. New parking lots were also built and the circulation system altered. The maturation of CCC-planted vegetation and natural succession have impacted the site but is in keeping with the historic design intent to encourage the landscape to return to a more forested environment. Non-historic features – bicycle racks, recycling bins, directional signage, new pathways, benches, and trash cans – are generally inconspicuous in the landscape.

INTEGRITY

Location:

The relationship between the Big Meadows developed area and its location off of Skyline Drive is still intact and evident. The development's location on a fairly flat plateau with views of the Shenandoah Valley and the meadow influenced the physical arrangement of buildings and structures and their connection to Skyline Drive. In addition, the location of the site within Shenandoah National Park (NP) has remained unaffected by any adjacent land uses. The principal buildings at Big Meadows that were present at the end of the period of significance remain in their original locations.

Design:

Design refers to the combination of elements that characterize the built landscape at Big Meadows, recognized today as the National Park Service (NPS) rustic style. The physical factors, such as natural features and Skyline Drive itself, which influenced where roads, pathways, buildings, and structures were located, are still evident. The Big Meadows Lodge, guest cabins, and the Wayside were designed in the rustic architectural style

based on vernacular traditions and the idea of blending into the natural surroundings as much as possible while also taking advantage of distant views. Although utilitarian, the service buildings at the maintenance area were also designed in a rustic style using a common palette of materials. The picnic grounds and campground also illustrate the concept of fitting into the natural landscape through the layout of pathways and picnic areas that harmonized with the natural topography. In addition, the planting of native trees to define spaces and to provide shade and the installation of site furnishings using native materials, such as wood and stone, further reflect the design principles of the rustic style.

Setting:

The setting of Big Meadows as a rustic NPS developed area along Skyline Drive remains intact. The development at Big Meadows was organized in a curvilinear fashion along a plateau following the natural terrain while also taking advantage of the views. The relationship between the wayside area, cabin/lodge area, the picnic grounds, campground, maintenance area, and Skyline Drive is still intact, along with the surrounding topography and viewsheds, with original pathways and access road, and spurs weaving these areas together.

Materials:

Extant original materials at Big Meadows include the boulder drinking fountains, and boulder bollards in the picnic grounds, and the flagstone terrace at the Lodge. Log guardrails have been replaced with concrete wheel stops at the lodge/cabin area and the picnic grounds parking areas. Few original materials remain on the roads and walkways and most have been repeatedly paved with asphalt. Historic vegetation also remains from CCC-period plantings that have matured since the historic period, including several groves of trees, trees for screening in and around the cabin area, and specimen trees around the Lodge and Wayside station.

Workmanship:

Workmanship refers to the physical evidence of the construction techniques at Big Meadows. The boulder drinking fountains exemplify the typical rustic style in which site amenities were constructed by the CCC during the period of significance. The CCC also built the original comfort stations at the campground and picnic grounds in keeping with the NPS rustic style tenets, utilizing V-notched corners, chestnut siding, and concrete shingles. The Big Meadows Lodge, guest cabins, Wayside station, and maintenance buildings also retain much of their original workmanship.

Feeling:

Big Meadows continues to provide visitor amenities for motorists along Skyline Drive. The presence of the Wayside, Lodge, and guest cabins, as well as the roads, pathways, and picnic areas, campground, and maintenance area combine to convey the historic character of Big Meadows. Trees planted by the CCC have matured to provide shade and woodland scenery, as well as accents by the Lodge and Wayside. Historic views have also been maintained, including views of the meadow from the wayside area and the views of the Shenandoah Valley from the cabin/lodge area.

Association:

The Big Meadows Lodge, guest cabins, Wayside station, and service buildings, as well as the historic circulation features and some of the small-scale features are still present to directly link the site to the creation of Shenandoah NP and construction of Skyline Drive, the work of the CCC, and the rustic architectural style used by the NPS and the Virginia Sky-Line Company's architect, Marcellus Wright, Jr. during the period of significance.

The section that follows presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1931-1952), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource. Items noted with an * are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For clarity, features are organized by the site's eight sub-areas.

Landscape Characteristic: Archeological Sites

The open area of the meadow forms one of Shenandoah's sites that was used by Native Americans as long as 10,000 years ago (General Management Plan 1998, 5). CCC Camp NP-2, Camp Fechner, is located at the east and north edge of the meadow. This site was the home of the CCC laborers who shaped Big Meadows from 1933 to 1942 (Engle 1999, 30). Their work is evident everywhere throughout the area and the park. Investigation of the site in July 1999 revealed remnant vegetation believed to survive from the time of the occupation of the camp.

A second remnant landscape was observed and documented during the July 1999 field survey, an old tennis court site located along Big Meadows Road between the turn off to the maintenance area and the intersection where the lodge loop drive splits from the drive to the picnic and camping areas. The tennis court is about two hundred feet to the west of the entrance drive, but is barely recognizable as tennis courts. Trees have encroached to the edges of the large, open rectangular area, which is covered in a near monoculture of short grass, clearly surviving on little nutrients. Further investigation would be necessary to determine the type of surface used on the courts. It is possible that the courts had a hard packed clay surface and that the grass has been the only successful colonizer or they could have been surfaced in asphalt and the grass cover could be surviving in a thin layer of decomposed leaf matter. Remnants of the fence that once surrounded the courts also remain. Along the south end of the courts, some of the galvanized steel posts, which once held the fence, are still standing. Along the west side of the area, some of the concrete bases for the posts still remain, but with no posts remaining.

An archeological survey in the summer of 2000 yielded remains of all CCC buildings and utility systems. The survey also identified a nineteenth century homesite (Park comments 2000, Level I). Several types of possible built features and artifacts were located at the campsite. The most distinct and significant feature located was a low dry-laid stone retaining wall approximately ten feet long and eighteen inches high along the east side of what was believed to be the trace of the camp entrance road. The wall was discovered under the low spreading boughs of a small group of hemlocks. Evidence was also found of a trash dumping site located along the far east edge of the site. Within the tree line beyond the east edge of the meadow the ground rises several feet amongst outcroppings of rock to form a rocky ridge which then drops sharply into a small ravine. Scattered among the rocks were bits of barbed wire, scraps of treated wood, and pieces of iron bands and pipe. As discussed under Vegetation, there are also plantings in the area that are believed to date from the CCC era at the edge of the meadow.

Other features were found in this area, including small chunks of broken concrete as well as stones which appeared to be arranged in rectangular patterns which could have acted as markers for the corners of small beds or as sleeper stones supporting the corners of camp structures. The stone and concrete remnants may date to the CCC camp period or after, when the Army Corps of Engineers occupied the site during World War II for training purposes. Further investigation of this area is needed in order to accurately identify and map features which may be of significance.

Landscape Characteristic: Natural Systems and Features

Historic and Existing Conditions:

The Big Meadows site is located on a plateau on the Blue Ridge Mountains. The area lies within a zone of Catocin Formation rocks characterized by dark green metamorphosed basalt with interbedded purple phyllite (Gathright 1976:Plate 1). Geologically, this formation comprises a "thick multilayered sequence of resistant and volcanic and sedimentary rock" of likely Precambrian age (Gathright 1976:19). Prehistorically, the greenstone or metabasalt found within this formation was utilized for the manufacture of a variety of small to large tools (Inashima 1997:3). These geological formations are especially evident in exposed rock outcroppings at the Big Meadow in an area

dedicated to Robert Fechner, and the cabin/lodge area at Blackrock. The weathering of geologic parent material of the Big Meadows plateau into mineral soil, and the admixture of organic matter from the growth and decay of plants in the presence of water made subsistence agriculture possible amidst mountainous terrain.

The Big Meadows landscape is comprised of a large meadow, approximately 130 acres, representing a high elevation grassland and shrub plant community resulting from thousands of years of human intervention perpetuating the growth of herbaceous meadow vegetation (Figure 20). The underlying landform and its comparatively level topography is what may have prompted Native American cultivation here and management of the landscape, and following that, the husbandry of European settlers. Some of the vegetation in the meadow area also shows the signs of the deer population. Deerberry and blueberry are shrubs that normally grow to a height of four to six feet, and at Big Meadows the deer have browsed most of them down to less than a foot. These plants now resemble groundcover rather than shrubs.

The Big Meadows area also contains two high altitude wetland basins, called mafic fens, one in the meadow and one in a forested wetland area extending from the south side of the campground to the east side of the maintenance area. The wetlands contain globally rare plant communities believed to be endemic to the park and support eight state rare plant species. The site also supports an abundance of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and insects, some of which are not found elsewhere in the park. A state listed snake, a rare insect, and several salamander and bird species are among the animals that occupy the Big Meadows wetland areas (Shenandoah NP website).

Each of the two wetlands is drained by tributaries of the Hogcamp Branch, which in turn flow into the Rose River to the east and ultimately into the Chesapeake Bay. Between the campground and maintenance area is the Big Meadows swamp. Two streams flow from springs below the crest of the plateau. Lewis Spring is located to the northwest of the Visitor Center, providing the water supply for the Big Meadows complex by means of a spring house and pump house. From its origin, it flows about 2000 feet to the northwest to Lewis Falls, an eighty-one-foot waterfall that is a popular hiking destination. The water then flows into Hawksbill Creek and then into the Shenandoah River. The second spring is Davids Spring located to the east of the campground, which flows to the north and then west to form Little Hawksbill Creek before it joins Hawksbill Creek. Although the two springs are located outside the historic district boundary, they contribute to the historic wetland character of the site. All of the park's streams are part of the hydrological system that forms the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

A century of tree cutting for lumber, tanbark, and firewood considerably reduced the previously dense mountain forest in the region. Although a few patches of old-growth forest existed when Shenandoah NP was established in 1926, as much as a third of the parkland along Skyline Drive, which traces the ridgeline through the park, was pasture. Wildfires ravaged the park during its early years up to 1941. Historic panoramic photographs and detailed vegetation maps produced for the park's fire control program and master plans frequently revealed mountainsides dotted with small, open farmsteads and grazing lands, burned-over areas, or vast skeleton forests of dead American chestnut trees, the region's most dominant tree (Historic American Engineering Record, 1996). Today, sections of Big Meadows are within a mature second-growth forest ecosystem that extends throughout much of Shenandoah NP.

As subsistence agriculture was no longer practiced under NPS management at the end of the period of significance in 1952, the meadow landscape was encroached by woody vegetation through the process of natural succession. A program of controlled burning and mowing was introduced in 2000 and has helped to reclaim portions of the meadow. The underlying geology and hydrology that pre-dated the park establishment have not been appreciably altered.

Items noted in the table below and listed with an * are entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Blackrock	137946	Contributing					No
Wooded area around Picnic Area	137948	Contributing					No
Big Meadows Swamp (portion)	137950	Contributing					No
Rock Outcroppings *	137952	Contributing					No
Hogcamp Branch (portion)	137954	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 20. View of the meadow at Big Meadows, from Skyline Drive (OCLP, 2008).

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Historic Conditions (through 1952):
Big Meadows was the first of four multi-use facilities developed in the park along Skyline Drive, offering visitors overnight accommodation, dining, and other amenities. Beginning in 1935, these facilities were planned as village-like clusters with overnight cabins, shops, a gas station, campsites, and lunchrooms. One of the planning principles for Shenandoah NP was the separation

of NPS facilities and concessionaire facilities. Big Meadows was therefore developed as five separate sub-areas, including a wayside station, a cabin/lodge area, a campground, picnic grounds, and a maintenance area all connected by a curving, one-mile long access road, referred herein as Big Meadows Road, with two spurs. Trails also meandered throughout the Big Meadows site, providing hiking and horseback riding opportunities.

The Wayside station was located prominently off of Skyline Drive adjacent to Big Meadows Road, and offered a lunchroom, gift shop, and filling station. The maintenance area was located off of a spur east of Big Meadows Road out of the view of passing motorists. The maintenance area contained a rectangular arrangement of service buildings, and a ranger's quarters was located to the east outside of the maintenance complex.

Further west along Big Meadows Road was a spur leading to a campground and picnic grounds. The campground was organized around a major one-way loop road subdivided by multiple one-way roads dividing the area into separate tiers, creating five camping areas. The design of the campground was based on ideas promoted by forest pathologist E. P. Meinecke who called for a system of one-way loop roads and individual campsites each having a parking space defined by boulders or other barriers, and included a tent clearing, fireplace, table, and vegetative screening. To accommodate the increasing popularity of trailer camping, the campgrounds at Shenandoah provided elongated, drive-through parking spurs so that cars pulling trailers could drive off and on the road without having to back up. The CCC also built two log comfort stations at the east and west ends of the campground. The picnic grounds at Big Meadows were one of six picnic areas built along Skyline Drive located between twelve (five miles, if Lewis Mountain were counted) and twenty miles apart. The spacing of the picnic areas at regular intervals along the motor road to serve the motoring public was an important characteristic of Skyline Drive's design. The Big Meadows picnic grounds were organized around a loop road with three parking areas integrated within the road. Site furnishings, including tables and fireplaces, were scattered within the loop with additional picnic sites to the east. A comfort station, built by the CCC, was located at the intersection of several footpaths in the center of the loop.

The cabin/lodge area was situated at the westernmost and highest portion of the site to take advantage of panoramic views of the Shenandoah Valley. Big Meadows Road led visitors to a circular drive with a drop-off at the main entrance of Big Meadows Lodge and continued to curve around to a parking lot to the south and adjacent cabins before completing its loop. A cluster of guest cabins were located south of the Lodge and were accessed by footpaths from the loop road. The loop road then completed its circuit by connecting back with Big Meadows Road.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Since the period of significance, the overall spatial organization of Big Meadows remains intact. The most notable changes in the landscape have occurred at the wayside area with the construction of the Byrd Visitor Center, parking lots, and redesign of the gas station, along with the expansion of accommodations at the cabin/lodge area and camping facilities. Two new sub-areas were also added off of two new road spurs from Big Meadows Road leading to a new wastewater treatment facility and seasonal employee housing.

The Harry F. Byrd Visitor Center, constructed in 1966 at the wayside area, is now the largest building at Big Meadows. The original vehicular circulation was modified to accommodate access to the building and its associated parking at the rear of the building. The gas station was also moved to the opposite side of the Wayside building, with pull-in access only off of Big Meadows Road instead of both Skyline Drive and the access road. Additional employee housing has been constructed at the maintenance area, and several new guest accommodations have been built at the cabin/lodge area, including multi-unit motel style buildings and apartments. At the campground, the most significant alteration has been the construction of a new loop system, expanding campground capacity to 200 tent sites. The NPS also constructed six new comfort stations at the campground to accommodate the additional number of visitors. Another new structure at Big Meadows is an amphitheater constructed in a wooded area adjacent to the picnic grounds and accessed by a footpath from the existing adjacent parking area.

Although a number of new buildings and facilities have been constructed at Big Meadows since the period of significance, the overall layout remains intact and retains its historic functions.

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

Historic Conditions (through 1952):

Big Meadows has historically been an open space surrounded by woods and wetlands. Early Native Americans may have cleared part of the land that is now Big Meadows to encourage animal grazing. Records of Shenandoah Valley town meetings showed interest in using the Big Meadows area for summer pasture as early as 1732 (Reeder and Reeder, 59). When Big Meadows became parkland two centuries later, it belonged to a Shenandoah Valley family that had used it as a summer cattle range. Other historical records indicate that early European settlers overgrazed the meadow with herds of beef cattle, particularly during the Civil War era.

During the period of significance, the meadow was the location of a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp, named NP-2 or Camp Fechner. The camp began as a group of surplus tents, field kitchens, and latrines but more permanent buildings were soon constructed, including barracks, an infirmary, administration buildings, a garage, and a recreation building. The CCC also established a nursery at the northeastern edge of Big Meadows to propagate native vegetation for use in stabilizing cut and fill slopes along roadsides and blending them into their surroundings as well as reducing soil erosion. The nursery stock was also installed at the developments to enhance their naturalistic settings. In 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt officially dedicated Shenandoah NP from the baseball diamond in the meadow adjacent to the CCC camp. The CCC was disbanded in 1942 during the early months of the country's entry in World War II, and the former camp became a training base for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Big Meadows site was developed beginning in 1935 as a visitor facility, along with a service area, located on Skyline Drive in the park's Central District. The development offered dining, picnicking, campsites, overnight lodging, as well as a gas station and a gift shop. The NPS constructed the access road, picnic area, campground, maintenance area, and hiking trails. The Virginia Sky-Line Company, the park concessionaire, developed the visitor service facilities, including the Wayside station, Big Meadows Lodge, and cabins. Recreational use at Big Meadows included a baseball diamond and glider field, and tennis courts. A series of hiking and horseback riding trails also weaved through the site, including a section of the Appalachian Trail.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Land use at Big Meadows remains essentially as it did at the end of the period of significance. The Lodge and guest cabins, Wayside, picnic grounds, and campground continue to serve visitors as intended (although the lunchroom inside the Wayside has been moved to the west side of the building). The maintenance area also continues to function as service facilities, although employee housing had been added. The picnic area has remained intact except for the replacement of site furnishings such as the picnic tables and fireplaces. The campground was expanded in 1962, doubling the site's capacity, but the original layout is still extant. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Virginia Sky-Line Company constructed several new motel facilities immediately south of the Lodge on the ridge adjacent to Blackrock. Concession employee housing was also constructed at the cabin/lodge area across the loop road from Cottages A through E. In 1978, another land use was introduced with the construction of a wastewater treatment area on a new spur west of Big Meadows Road, consisting of two buildings and a parking lot.

Starting in 2000, the NPS began implementing a new landscape maintenance program consisting of a controlled burn of the entire meadow in the spring, followed by mowing in the fall. The meadow was subsequently burned for three consecutive years to discourage woody re-growth and to promote the regeneration of herbs. This approach was successful and the meadow continues to be managed by using a program of burning, mowing, and fallow treatments. Since 1999, second growth trees and shrubs have been removed from over thirty acres of land. Big Meadow remains the largest open meadow within the Shenandoah NP boundary.

Currently, the land use of the Big Meadows site, for visitor and service amenities, maintenance area, and maintained open meadow, is consistent with that of the end of the period of significance, with the exception of the two new sub-areas, the wastewater treatment plant and the seasonal employee housing area.

Landscape Characteristic: Topography

Historic Conditions (through 1952):

Topography was a major factor in locating a park developed area at Big Meadows. The complex was located at a unique divide in the Blue Ridge, on a plateau or basin in the ridgeline. Elevations within most of the Big Meadows area ranged between 3,440 feet above sea level, to about 3,600 feet, the approximate elevation of the Lodge, the knoll above the maintenance area, and the peak of Stony Man Mountain. This allowed much of the site's development to be sited on nearly level to gently rolling ground. Blackrock Point is the highest point in the immediate area rising above the cabin/lodge area to a height of 3,720 feet. Sections of the Appalachian Trail and other trails in the area descend to lower elevations. A trail, the Lewis Falls trail, begins at the amphitheater and leads to a waterfall with a viewing platform northwest of the cabin/lodge area. The Lodge, guest cabins, and campsites were sited to provide views of the valley and mountains beyond. The Wayside was oriented to take in views of the expansive meadow. The Lodge and picnic areas occupied the largest area of land above 3,600 feet, with the campground located on slightly lower ground. Manipulation of the topography was limited to grading for drainage, circulation, and building sites.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

The overall topography of the historic landscape has not been significantly altered since 1952 except for the construction of several new buildings and parking areas, including the Byrd Visitor Center, the wastewater treatment facility, the multi-unit employee residences and guest accommodations, and an amphitheater at the picnic grounds. None of the grading involved in the construction of these new facilities resulted in substantial changes in the topography.

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

Historic Conditions (through 1952):

Numerous roadways and trails criss-crossed the ridgeline of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries prior to the establishment of Shenandoah NP. Among the earliest of these were those likely established by Native Americans who used the area for hunting. European exploration was recorded in 1669 when Lederer traveled the area including the Big Meadows area, followed by Spotswood and his expedition in 1716. It has been argued that Spotswood's party reached the ridgeline at Milam Gap, just south of Big Meadows (Lambert 2000:31). Regardless of their origins in Native American habitation or in European settlement, routes in this area were largely dictated by the terrain over which they passed.

The Big Meadows developed area was located at milepost 51 along Skyline Drive within the park's Central District. Construction of this section of the scenic road began in 1931 and opened for traffic in 1934. A separate two lane gravel access road, named Rapidan Road, was also built at this time leading eastward from Big Meadows to Rapidan Camp, which was President and Mrs. Hoover's fishing camp on the upper tributaries of the Rapidan River.

The Big Meadows landscape was designed to serve motorists traveling along Skyline Drive and as a maintenance area for the park. A wye intersection with Skyline Drive allowed traffic to safely move on and off the drive and access the picnic grounds, campground, guest cabins, and Lodge via a curvilinear access road, referred to as Big Meadows Road. Adjacent to the access road's intersection with the drive was the wayside area. Gasoline pumps were located to the side of the Wayside station, and a parking lot was located to the rear, out of view from the road. The Wayside station offered a lunchroom, gift shop, and restrooms. Visitors could then exit onto Big Meadows Road and access the rest of the site without driving back onto Skyline Drive.

Further west along Big Meadows Road, a spur curved around a knoll and led to a maintenance area that also included employee housing and stables located off of two smaller roads. Since the maintenance area only served a utilitarian park use, it was located away from the view of passing motorists. Big Meadows Road then continued to the cabin/lodge area, terminating at a loop drive for cars to discharge passengers at the front entrance of Big Meadows Lodge before continuing on to the parking area. The parking lots were incorporated into the loop road and were divided into two linear lots with 150 spaces and edged with wood guardrails. A service road intersected with the loop road and continued to the rear of the Lodge building. The Lodge also featured a flagstone terrace in the rear overlooking the valley to the west. The access road then curved back to Big Meadows Road. Adjacent to the parking lots and Lodge were a cluster of two-unit guest cottages with separate walkways leading to each entrance.

Southeast of the Lodge, a spur off of Big Meadows Road lead to the picnic grounds and campground. The picnic grounds were arranged around a loop road with most picnic sites located within the loop. Three parking areas were located along the perimeter of the loop with thirty-five spaces. A system of footpaths emanated from the perimeter and intersected in the center where a comfort station was located, forming a cloverleaf pattern. The spur also split off and led to a campground southeast of the picnic grounds. The campground was organized around a one-way loop road crossed by multiple one-way roads that divided the area into separate tiers. Most of the campsites had parking areas that spanned the width of the loop and provide access from two roads. This design allowed for convenient use by cars pulling trailers, which could pull into the sites and exit without backing up. The design of the picnic grounds and campground circulation was based on principles developed by forest pathologist E. P. Meinecke who endorsed the use of one-way loop roads with off-road parking and individual campsites with fireplaces and tables. He also promoted the idea of using vegetation, boulders, and logs to define spaces and provide a sense of privacy.

Pedestrian circulation at Big Meadows consisted of a network of hiking and horse back riding trails that weaved through the site. The Appalachian Trail, portions of which were reconstructed by the CCC in the early 1930s, meandered closely along the western edge of the Big Meadows development, including the campground, picnic grounds, and the cabin/lodge area. A bridle path crossed Big Meadows north to south, passing by the stables at the maintenance area. Another trail led from the parking area in front of the guest cabins to Blackrock. The Dark Hollows Trail wound its way through Big Meadows from the Lodge and terminated at a waterfall east of Skyline Drive. Big Meadows Road itself did not appear to have contiguous sidewalks or walkways.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Additions to the circulation network since the period of significance at Big Meadows include the parking and circulation serving Byrd Visitor Center overlooking the meadow along Skyline Drive. The design and construction of the Byrd Visitor Center also prompted a redesign of some of the circulation at the Wayside, including the removal of the original access road off of Skyline Drive to the gasoline pumps, the addition of a new entrance and exit, a new filling station, and expanded parking connected to the parking lots for the Visitor Center. Additionally, a spur road leading from the Big Meadows Road to a wastewater treatment plant was constructed in 1978. A second campground loop was built adjacent to the existing campground in the 1960s to accommodate the unprecedented growth in visitation. The new loop was composed of campsites with a pull-in area from the loop road, where cars and recreational vehicles could be parked. Paths connected the sites to nearby masonry block comfort stations and stacked stone drinking fountains. Tent sites were also located south and east of the new loop with walk-in sites consisting of a small clearing among the trees and shrubs.

The configuration of most hiking trails and the bridle path remains the same with minor alterations. The Dark Hallows Falls Trail starting at the Lodge was renamed the Nature Trail and includes interpretive signage at various points along the way. The Dark Hallows Falls Trail was restored in the late 1990s by the Back Country Trails Department and has no historic CCC-related remnants. The Lewis Springs Trail runs parallel with the Appalachian Trail but further down the slope of the hillside. Originally proposed in 1941 as part of the overall Master Plan, the actual date of construction and completion of the trail is unknown. A new trail, the Story of the Forest Trail, was constructed under the Mission-66 program and consists of a 1.8-mile circuit from the Byrd Visitor

Center to the campground.

The circulation network of roads and trails, and pathways at Big Meadows continues to reflect the design characteristics present during the period of significance (Figure 21). Big Meadows Road remains as the main access road linking all the sub-areas of the development. The site also retains the original campground loop, the picnic area loop, the Lodge drop-off and parking, the park maintenance area, and several trails.

Items noted in the table below and listed with an * are entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Big Meadows Road *	138852	Contributing					No
Appalachian Trail (portions)	138854	Contributing					No
Skyland – Big Meadows Horse Trail (portion)	138856	Contributing					No
Pedestrian Pathway (parallel to Big Meadows Road)	138858	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Story of the Forest Nature Trail (portion)	138860	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Lewis Springs Trail	137988	Undetermined					No
Parking Area / Loop Road from Lodge *	137990	Contributing	083069				No
Service Road	137992	Contributing					No
Blackrock Trail (portion)	137994	Contributing					No
Picnic Loop *	137996	Contributing	083088		Location	32190	Yes
Picnic Grounds Path System *	137998	Contributing	083091		Location	48078	Yes
Spur to Campground *	138000	Contributing	083092				No
Campground Loop (1937) *	138002	Contributing	083092				No
Campground Paths (1937) *	138004	Contributing					No
Campground Loop (1962)	138006	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Campground Paths (1962)	138786	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wayside Loop / Parking *	138832	Contributing	083071		Location	46296	Yes
Visitor Center Parking Lots	138834	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Spur to Maintenance Area *	138836	Contributing	083087		Location	46995	Yes
Spur to New Housing Area	138838	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Spur to Sewage Treatment Plant	138844	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Rapidan Road *	138846	Contributing	083060		Location	00002363	No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 21. View of CCC-constructed picnic grounds with footpath in the foreground leading to the comfort station beyond (OCLP, 2008).

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Historic Conditions (through 1952):

The design of the facilities throughout Shenandoah NP involved the coordination of government and private entities. The NPS San Francisco and Philadelphia planning offices undertook the master planning design work and developed the standards with which the CCC constructed many of the site's buildings and structures. Other buildings associated with visitor services were constructed under the direction of the concessionaire's architect, Marcellus Wright, Jr., with oversight provided by the NPS regional office.

The historic development of buildings and structures at Big Meadows occurred from 1937 to 1950. Buildings were grouped according to function and located in separate areas within the development.

Guest accommodations were grouped in adjacent locations, while the maintenance area was sited out of view. Facilities for motorists traveling on Skyline Drive were located conveniently adjacent to the road. Though grouped in separate zones, all of the buildings at Big Meadows shared a similar rustic-style design vocabulary. Big Meadows contains numerous examples of rustic park architecture made of native stone and timber, in the form of comfort stations, guest cabins, the Lodge, and service buildings, and reflect the master planning process guiding the development of national park facilities in the 1930s.

The Big Meadows Lodge, one of the original park structures, was built in 1939 by the park concessionaire, the Virginia Sky-Line Company, and designed by Marcellus Wright, Jr. as a multi-gable structure in the rustic style. Wright's architectural designs typically utilized local materials and native stone, and scaled buildings to blend into their surroundings. The two-and a half-story building was covered with flitched-edge wood siding with stone sections along the façade, and

concrete shingles. The entire structure was sited to provide views of the valley from guest rooms, the lounge, dining room, and the elevated flagstone terrace along the back side of the lodge. The massing of the building helped to integrate the structure with the existing topography as well. Wright also designed the Wayside building at the entrance to the Big Meadows development, comprised of a lunchroom, giftshop, restrooms, and a gas station. The building consisted of wood siding and cross gabled sections. The lunchroom was oriented to the east so that diners could enjoy views of the meadow during their meal.

Other guest accommodations designed by Wright included five guest cabins southwest of the Lodge. The two-unit cottages were named Petersburg, Blacksburg, Bridesburg, Lynchburg, and Mountain View. The cabins were wood frame T-shaped buildings with hipped roofs and flitched edge wood siding. Each building featured a stone chimney that opened onto two separate hearths.

Across the parking lot from the five guest cabins was a staggered line of four longer lodge buildings. The concessionaire constructed the first three in the 1940s with nearly identical exteriors. All had rustic lap siding kneewalls with board-and-batten upper walls, stone chimneys, and cross-gable roofs covered in cement shingles. Piedmont Cottage, constructed in 1941, and Hawksbill Cottage, constructed in 1946, each contained ten units and had five stone chimneys. Black Rock Cottage, constructed in 1946, was located between Piedmont and Hawksbill. Near Hawksbill Cottage was a row of small cottages referred to as Cottages "A" through "E". The NPS moved these cottages to this location in 1950 from the park's Swift Run area, where they were originally built from 1931-1934.

The CCC constructed several comfort stations at the picnic grounds and campground that represent the typical standard utilitarian design rendered in native chestnut timbers and stone veneered foundations built throughout Shenandoah NP. Chestnut logs were salvaged from the debris gathered by the CCC during the cleanup of forests and the roadside and was used for wooden guardrails (no longer surviving) and many of the concessionaire's and government buildings in the park. The comfort station at the picnic area was constructed of squared logs joined by V-notches and roofed with chestnut shake shingles. The CCC constructed two other comfort stations at the northern and southern sections of the campground in a similar fashion. In addition, the CCC constructed a campground Contact Station consisting of a small log building with asphalt shingles and a stone foundation and chimney.

At the maintenance area, the CCC constructed a complex of seven service buildings laid out in a rectangular configuration on a spur off of Big Meadows Road and enclosed by a wood palisade fence. The buildings were rustic in design, with vertical siding made of half-round timbers, about three or four feet long, and gabled roofs with wood shingles. Some of the buildings had wood shingles and others green asphalt roofing. The buildings included the Equipment Shed/Garage, Maintenance/Vehicle and Equipment Storage, Blacksmith Shop/Storage Shed, Storage Shed, Carpenter Shop/Storage Building, Warehouse/Storage, a Gas/Oil building, and stables that originally served as an employee garage. The layout and design of the maintenance area adhered to ideas developed by Charles Punchard, who promoted the concept of grouping maintenance facilities as a collection of buildings arranged for efficiency and located on side roads, away from park visitors. Another building at the maintenance area was the Ranger's Quarters located on a separate road off of the spur. The building, a gabled roof structure with wood siding, was originally constructed in 1930 by President and Mrs. Hoover as a schoolhouse for local children. The building was moved to its current site in 1945 and altered for use as a residence.

Other structures built during the period of significance, include a series of culverts and other drainage structures constructed by the CCC along Big Meadows Road and its spurs. Eight culverts on Big Meadows Road consisted of either headwalls or drop inlets built with coursed, mortared stone over a concrete core with corrugated metal pipes varying in diameter from fourteen to eighteen inches. Big Meadows Road also featured stone gutters constructed in a V shape with an overall depth of eight inches and three feet in width. The gutters were laid above tile underdrains and drained into drop inlets. Culverts were also constructed at the campground, also composed of corrugated metal pipes with headwalls of coursed, mortared stone over a concrete core and

included drop inlets with semicircular outer walls.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Since the period of significance, there has been some new construction at Big Meadows that departs from the typical rustic architectural style that defines the site's historic character and has altered some views from historic buildings. Overall, however, the general layout, design, and function of buildings and structures at Big Meadows remains intact. Many historic buildings and structures from the period of significance are extant, including the Lodge, guest cabins, Wayside building, maintenance buildings, employee housing, campground contact station, and comfort stations (Figures 22, 23, 24, and 25). Some buildings have been reconfigured, such as the Wayside building (the lunchroom was moved to the west side of the building), or adapted for other uses, such as the employee residences that are now used for storage.

The biggest addition to the site since 1952 is the construction of the Byrd Visitor Center, and associated parking lots, adjacent at the wayside area, completed in 1966. The Visitor Center was designed according to principles developed for the NPS park-wide Mission-66 program launched in 1956 to update park facilities and accommodate the dramatic rise in visitation. A key component of the program was the development of the visitor center, a new building type created by the NPS in order to concentrate public services into one facility, offering interpretive exhibits, museum displays, restrooms and other visitor amenities, as well as housing administrative offices. The visitor centers were sited at convenient and highly visible locations in the parks where visitors could park and have access to a range of services and attractions (Allaback 2000, appendix III). Visitor center buildings combined the previously separate contact stations, museums, and administrative buildings into one centralized resource for visitors. The architectural style of these new buildings were contemporary, utilizing mid-century design motifs first adopted in Europe, such as open floor plans, flat roofs, concrete construction, and pre-fabricated building components. The design of the visitor centers also incorporated flexible space plans as well as spaces for new technology such as slide and movie projectors. The Byrd Visitor Center houses interpretation exhibits for Big Meadows along with the park's Central District as a whole, and features views overlooking the meadow to the east. Although the overall massing of the building is of a more contemporary and larger scale, the use of stone on the exterior does provide a stylistic reference to the historic buildings on site. Visitor centers associated with Mission-66 have been determined eligible for the National Register if they possess exceptional importance even though they are less than fifty years old. Additional investigation and research is necessary to determine the building's eligibility for the National Register based on its context within the history of Mission-66. However, in the September 1997 National Register documentation for Skyline Drive, the Byrd Visitor Center was evaluated as a noncontributing feature. This evaluation was reaffirmed by the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office on June 20, 2000 prior to renovations to the building.

At the cabin/lodge area, several new buildings have been constructed since the period of significance. Adjacent to the Lodge is a small frame building used for refuse storage, built in 1971. Additional non-contributing buildings include a fire hose storage shed near the Petersburg Cabin and a storage shed for flammable materials near the Lynchburg Cabin. The Virginia Sky-Line Company built the multi-unit Doubletop Cottage in 1959 and the adjacent Rapidan Cottage in 1963, sited between the cluster of two-unit cabins and the edge of the west facing bluff. These two buildings were constructed parallel to the edge of the slope, blocking views to the valley from the original 1939 cabin cluster located to the east. Above the Doubletop Cottage, a Bell Atlantic cellular relay station is housed in a small shed-roofed building on the top of Blackrock Point. The concessionaire also constructed Crescent Rock Lodge in 1986, composed of ten units and a vending area. It was constructed of concrete block and wood, with clapboard siding and private decks across the west facing facade. A small, modern building near Blackrock was used for storage, ice, and concessions. Across the cabin/lodge loop road is a cluster of five buildings used for park employee housing. These buildings are of relatively modern construction and built of concrete block with low pitched asphalt shingled roofs. Each building contains either four or six employee apartments.

At the picnic grounds, the biggest change occurred with the construction of an amphitheater in 1978. The amphitheater is comprised of a fan-shaped arrangement of benches facing a stage and

screen structure. A simple stage structure was built with a painted plywood projection screen across the back and two small sheds. A projection booth is housed in a shed that sits at the back center of the amphitheater. A smaller shed, about 3' x 4' and located at the back right of the amphitheater, is used for storing firewood used in a fire ring to the left of the stage.

The campground at Big Meadows has undergone a major expansion since the period of significance, with an additional loop road system that increased the camping capacity to 200 sites. To accommodate a larger number of users, several new buildings were constructed between the campground and the picnic area, including showers, laundry facilities, and restrooms, of concrete block construction. A firewood storage shed was also built with open wood slat siding. Six additional comfort stations were also built throughout the campgrounds of concrete block. Two buildings from the period of significance have undergone restoration, including the CCC-constructed contact station, and a log comfort station to the east of the campground that was nearly destroyed by a fire in 1998.

At the maintenance area, the buildings that originally comprised the service complex survive with relatively few alterations. The Equipment Shed/Garage, Maintenance/Vehicle and Equipment Storage building have been joined into one long building. On the north end of the building, a new extension houses fire equipment. On the south end of this building is the Pitch Tar Storage Retaining Wall, a stone retaining wall with tanks mounted above to load tank trucks. Adjacent to the maintenance cluster are two buildings constructed in the 1960s as motel-style, single story, concrete block buildings. One building contains apartments and the other has been converted to office space. To the east of the maintenance area is the remains of the former stables area. There are currently two buildings there. One building was built as a garage in 1939, before being converted to a stable. The other building was built as a stable in 1959, and is now used as a trail cache for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club.

In 1978, the NPS constructed a wastewater treatment facility on a new spur off of Big Meadows Road, consisting of two structures and associated parking. The wastewater treatment building consists of an exterior of concrete blocks with deep vertical ridges. The second building is an open metal structure on a concrete foundation that is used for open air drying of processed sludge from the treatment plant. Seasonal ranger housing, located along another new spur road north of the wastewater treatment plant includes four buildings. Three of the structures are two-story (a basement and a main floor) ranch style structures with upper floors that are wood-framed with vertical siding, concrete block walk-out basement levels, and low pitch asphalt shingled roofs. The fourth building uses the same materials, but is of a different style. It has two stories, steep pitched roof, and sits on a concrete foundation with no basement. All of these buildings were built in the 1990s and are noncontributing.

In addition, there are three subterranean structures associated with the Big Meadows water supply system. The Lewis Spring house, located on the south side of Lewis Spring Road, is a small concrete chamber set into a westward sloping hillside. The passage to the entrance of the spring house is flanked by a pair of stylized curved stone walls which descend from a height of roughly seven and a half feet on either side of the door to about one foot in height. The pump house is a larger concrete room set into a south facing slope on the north side of Lewis Spring Road. The entrance to this structure is flanked by a simple pair of flared stone wing walls which taper from a total height of about eight feet down to ground level. Several steel pipes can be seen just below the surface leading between the structures and also possibly part of the intake and overflow systems. From this pair of structures, the water is pumped to a subterranean reservoir atop Blackrock. This 10,000 gallon concrete reservoir is visible on the surface only by way of three steel hatches and by the geometric grading over the structure. According to Reed Engle, former Park Cultural Resource Specialist, this entire system was originally installed by the CCC in the 1930s to provide water for the Big Meadows complex (Engle 1999, interview).

Items noted in the table below and listed with an * are entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Big Meadows Road Culvert Systems	138022	Contributing	083101				No
Big Meadows Road Gutters	138024	Contributing	083102				No
Lodge * (BM-0114)	138026	Contributing	081827		Location	85930	Yes
Petersburg Cottage * (BM-0149)	138028	Contributing	083080		Location	85928	Yes
Bridesburg Cottage * (BM-0153)	138030	Contributing	083081		Location	85926	Yes
Blacksburg Cottage * (BM-152)	138032	Contributing	083082		Location	85924	Yes
Lynchburg Cottage * (BM-155)	138034	Contributing	083083		Location	85923	Yes
Mountain View Cottage * (BM-154)	138036	Contributing	083084		Location	85921	Yes
Linen Storage * (BM-324)	138038	Contributing					No
Piedmont Cottage * (BM-115)	138040	Contributing	083072		Location	85915	Yes
Blackrock Cottage * (BM-0116)	138042	Contributing	083073		Location	85914	Yes
Hawksbill Cottage * (BM-0117)	138044	Contributing	083074		Location	85912	Yes
Employee Cottage "A" * (BM-1156)	138046	Contributing	083075		Location	85857	Yes
Employee Cottage "B" * (BM-1157)	138048	Contributing	083076		Location	85856	Yes
Cottage "C" * (BM-0314)	138050	Contributing	083077		Location	85891	Yes
Cottage "D" * (BM-0315)	138052	Contributing	083078		Location	85889	Yes
Cottage "E" * (BM-0316)	138054	Contributing	083079		Location	85887	Yes
Can Storage (BM-0382)	138056	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Double Top Cottage (BM-0118)	138058	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Rapidan Cottage (BM-0344)	138060	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Crescent Rock (BM-0397)	139674	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Employee Quarters (BM-0319)	139676	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Employee Quarters (BM-0320)	139678	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Employee Quarters (BM-0326)	139680	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

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Employee Quarters (BM-0327)	139682	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Employee Dorm (BM-0396)	139684	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Storage & Service Building (BM-0385)	139686	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Blackrock Cellular Relay Station Building (BM-0462)	139688	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Fire Hose Storage Shed (near Petersburg Cabin) (no #)	139690	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Flammable Materials Storage Shed (near Lynchburg Cabin) (no #)	139692	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Blackrock Storage Tank Reservoir (no #)	138102	Undetermined					No
Picnic Area Comfort Station * (BM-0507)	138104	Contributing	083089		Location	00002284	Yes
Amphitheater (BM-AMPH)	138106	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Projection Booth (BM-0467)	138108	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Pit Privy (Picnic Area) (BM-2464)	138110	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Campground Contact Station * (BM-0705)	138112	Contributing	083094		Location	00002293	Yes
Campground Comfort Station (west) * (BM-0508)	139694	Contributing	083095		Location	00002285	Yes
Campground Comfort Station (east) * (BM-0509)	139696	Contributing	083096		Location	00002286	Yes
Spur to Campground Culvert System (no #)	138118	Contributing	083093				No
Comfort Stations Campground (3) (BM-0541, 0542, 0543)	139698	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Comfort Stations Campground (3) (BM-0551, 0552, 0553)	139700	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Laundry & Service Building (BM-0356)	138164	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wood Sales Building (BM-0393)	138166	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Shower Building (BM-0398)	138168	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Pit Privies (Campground) (2) (BM-2422, 2423)	139702	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wayside Building * (BM-0113)	138172	Contributing	082849		Location	85939	Yes
Byrd Visitors Center (BM-2302)	138174	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

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Service Station (BM-0374)	138176	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wayside Ice Storage (BM-0381)	138178	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wayside Garbage Storage (BM-0390)	138180	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Equipment Shed / Workshop / Repair / Garage * (BM-0410)	139704	Contributing	081828		Location	00002272	Yes
Maintenance / Vehicle & Equipment Storage * (BM-0411)	139706	Contributing	081829		Location	00002271	Yes
Blacksmith Shop / Storage Shed * (BM-0412)	139708	Contributing	081830		Location	00002273	Yes
Storage Shed (Ranger's Office) * (BM-0413)	139710	Contributing					No
Carpenter's Shop / Storage Building * (BM-0414)	139712	Contributing	081832		Location	00002275	Yes
Warehouse Sub HQ / Storage * (BM-0415)	138212	Contributing	081833		Location	00002276	Yes
Gas / Oil Building * (BM-0416)	138214	Contributing	081834		Location	00002277	Yes
Stables * (BM-1158)	138216	Contributing	081835		Location	85855	Yes
Office / Ranger's Quarters * (BM-0214)	138218	Contributing	083086		Location	00002270	Yes
Pitch Tar Storage Retaining Wall	138220	Contributing					No
Apartments (BM-0725)	139714	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Apartments (BM-0726)	139716	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Tackroom-Office (BM-0321)	139718	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Stables (BM-0379)	139720	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Office / Ranger's Quarters Shed (no #)	139722	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Tool Shed behind Warehouse / Storage (no #)	139724	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Residence (BM-0269)	139726	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Residence (BM-0270)	139728	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Residence (BM-0271)	139730	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Residence (BM-0272)	139732	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

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Storage for Quarters (BM-4107)	139734	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wastewater Treatment Plant (BM-1724)	139738	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Sludge Storage (BM-4127)	139742	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Rapidan Road Stone Retaining Walls *	139748	Contributing					No
Rapidan Road Culverts *	139750	Contributing	082931				No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 22. Comfort station constructed by the CCC at the picnic grounds (National Register, 9/1997, Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA, Neg. No. 15369).



Figure 23. Main entrance at Big Meadows Lodge (OCLP, 2008).



Figure 24. Rear view of the Wayside station at Big Meadows (OCLP, 2008).



Figure 25. View of the Maintenance/Vehicle and Equipment Shed and other attached historic buildings at the Big Meadows maintenance area (OCLP, 2008).

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

Historic Conditions (through 1952):

Early travelers on Skyline Drive enjoyed a multitude of panoramic views framed by pastures and fields and some forested areas. In 1931, the Big Meadows area was noted for its expansive open fields and large stands of dead chestnut trees, often referred to as “ghost trees.” During the construction of Skyline Drive and the park facilities, an emphasis was placed on preserving the existing natural landscape and restoring altered landscapes through the planting of thousands of native trees, shrubs, vines, and groundcover. The NPS aimed to reduce introduced non-native vegetation as well, and to remove dead or diseased trees.

At Big Meadows, the CCC established one of two nurseries near Fechner Camp, to “ensure the success of transplants” to be used throughout the park (Historic Resources Study 1997:84). Transplants (and in some cases cuttings) spent a limited time in special beds in order to strengthen the plants and their root systems. The presence of a nursery offered a ready stock of a number of types of plants, including Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*), bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*), arrow-wood viburnum (*Viburnum dentatum*), rhododendrons, dogwoods (*Cornus*), and sumac, as well as pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*), red spruce, (*Picea rubens*), Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*) and walnut (*Juglans nigra*) trees. Fraser fir, red spruce, and Canadian yew (*Taxus canadensis*) were especially singled out for cultivation. These declining species in the park were started via transplants and seeds, and studies were made about their germination and growth to understand the appropriateness of these species in the park. Stock was planted on slopes along the drive to control erosion, around picnic areas and campgrounds for screening for privacy, and to frame views and vistas. Under this project, 300,000 trees and shrubs were transplanted (Historic Resources Study 1997: 84, citing Lambert:198).

At Big Meadows, the CCC installed plantings throughout the site, including deciduous trees, such as red oaks and black walnuts, and evergreen trees for screening and shade. Historic photographs of Big Meadows Lodge show several mature trees that were preserved during construction in order

to maintain as much of the original vegetation as possible. Existing trees were also preserved where possible at the cabin/lodge area, picnic area, and campground. At the wayside area, an open lawn was dotted with trees to keep views to and from Skyline Drive open, as well as provide views to the meadow. The CCC also installed foundation plantings and trees within the wayside area parking lot island. At the maintenance area, the CCC installed foundation plantings at several buildings. As they matured, the plantings throughout the site began to define spaces within the picnic grounds as well as the cabin/lodge, and campground.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

In the spring of 2000, the park began to address the loss of the open landscape through removal of recently established black locust trees (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) from the perimeter of the meadow, and black locust and pine trees near Skyline Drive to restore its historic open character. Park staff has reduced the shrub cover at the meadow by controlled burning in the spring mowing in the fall. Efforts are underway to control the invasive Asiatic bittersweet vine (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) and to selectively remove shrubs from the wetland area at the center to encourage rare plant growth.

Remnant plantings exist around the location of Camp Fechner on the east edge of the meadow. The plantings are believed to be remnants of the CCC era because they appear in locations where they would not naturally have occurred and/or because they are arranged in unnatural configurations. On the edge of the meadow there are rows of lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*), witch hazel (*Hamamelis* sp.), and barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*). Further back into the tree line are isolated groups or individual plants out of character with the natural plant associations common in the area, including sugar maples (*Acer sacharum*) and masses of witch hazel.

At the wayside area, there are scattered trees in the lawn on the side nearest the parking lot and in taller grass on the Skyline Drive side. The trees include oaks, black locust, hemlock, a Norway spruce (*Abies picea*), and dogwood. Recent tree plantings include white pine and oaks south of the Wayside station. At the cabin/lodge area, there are plantings that include mixed oaks with scattered pine trees and underplantings of spirea (Figure 26). The vegetation within in the driveway circle in front of the Lodge includes red and white oaks, pine, and dogwood.

At the picnic area, there are primarily mixed oaks and a few pines scattered about the lawn, and some understory trees such as witch hazel, apple (*Malus*), hawthorn (*Crateagus*), and mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) (Figure 27). At the amphitheater, the surrounding tree canopy is made up of oaks with an understory of witch hazel. Black locusts flank the entry at the road with witch hazel present as the understory along the length of the entry path. The tree canopy at the campground Contact Station is comprised of mixed oaks and maples. Some species of pine are found in the tent area, and around the comfort stations there are pines, spruce (*Abies*) and cherry (*Prunus*).

At the maintenance area, there is a mixture of trees including hawthorne and black locust. At the ends of the CCC buildings there are semi-circular beds that are currently planted in grass. One bed at the Carpentry Shop still has a mountain laurel that may have been part of the original planting. Along the embankment in back of the Equipment Shed/Garage and the Maintenance/Vehicle and Equipment Storage there is a mature row of red oaks (*Quercus rubra*) underplanted with a row of three witch hazels. There is a remnant horse pasture below the former stables consisting of an open area with grass and thistles, and a few scattered trees, such as black locust and one spruce. There has been recent tree planting in the pasture, as evidenced by many tree tubes. At the wastewater treatment facility south of the maintenance area there are scattered trees that include white pine, hemlock, oaks, hawthorne, and witch hazel.

Planting plans dating to the period of significance have not been discovered to provide exact information regarding all the plantings installed by the CCC. Many decisions were typically made in the field as to what plantings to install at various park locations. The plantings were also intended to blend in with existing vegetation, and in the course of over seventy years they have done so. Therefore it cannot be known with certainty how much of the original plantings remain.

Items noted in the table below and listed with an * are entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Turf along Shoulders of Historic Roads	138242	Contributing					No
Lodge / Cabin Area Lawns	138244	Contributing					No
Trees around Lodge	138246	Contributing					No
Trees around Guest Cabins	138248	Contributing					No
Circular Drive Island Grove	138250	Contributing					No
Picnic Area Lawns	138252	Contributing					No
Oak Grove	138254	Contributing					No
Campground Area Lawns	138258	Contributing					No
Oak Grove	138262	Contributing					No
Lawns	138264	Contributing					No
Remnants of CCC Plantings Along Edge of Meadow	138266	Contributing					No
Raised Perennial Bed near Visitor Center	138268	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Shrub Massings near Gas Station	138270	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Foundation Planting Beds	138272	Contributing					No
Row of Red Oaks (behind Equipment/Storage Building)	138274	Contributing					No
Remnant Pasture	138276	Contributing					No
Mountain Laurel at Carpentry Shop	138278	Undetermined					No
Housing Area Lawns	138280	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wastewater Treatment Plant Lawns	138294	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Open Meadowland Vegetation *	138296	Contributing					No
CCC Hedges / Flowerbeds *	139672	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 26. View of mature trees at Big Meadows Lodge (OCLP, 2008).



Figure 27. View of picnic grounds with lawns and clusters of trees (OCLP, 2008).

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

Historic Conditions (through 1952):

Views and vistas were one of the most important characteristics of the park's Skyline Drive as it traced the spine of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Views were so fundamental to the motoring experience that all developed areas were carefully sited to highlight views. As vehicles traced the ridge, their views alternated between the Shenandoah Valley and Appalachians to the west to the Piedmont to the east. At the time of the drive's construction beginning in 1931, the patchwork landscape of Virginia's Blue Ridge was comprised of cultivated lands, farms and mills, as well as a few old-growth woodlands. This resulted in predominantly open expansive views at the beginning of the period of significance. Successional forests, and plantings installed by the CCC around the developed areas, began to limit some of the views by the end of the period of significance.

The views and vistas at the Big Meadows site were a major consideration in its development in the early 1930s. The Lodge and guest cabins were sited to take advantage of spectacular views primarily to the northwest across the Shenandoah Valley. Trails were also laid out to provide views of the valley and included overlooks from rock outcroppings. The most notable of these was the view westward from Blackrock. The Wayside building, and specifically the dining room, was designed to offer sweeping views across the open meadow across Skyline Drive.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Today there are excellent panoramic views of the valley from Big Meadows Lodge, Rapidan and Doubletop Cottages, and from the original section of the campground (Figure 28). The addition of Rapidan and Doubletop, in 1959 and 1963 respectively, blocked the westward views to the valley from the original cluster of the Petersburg, Blacksburg, Bridesburg, Lynchburg, and Mountain View cabins. There has been recent clearing in swaths along the back of Lodge, Rapidan, and Doubletop cabins to reestablish views to the valley. The Byrd Visitor Center was located near the Wayside to take advantage of the same panoramic views across to the open meadow as the Wayside building. Visitors can still enjoy the view from inside the Wayside even though the lunchroom has been relocated to the building's west side.

Historic views have been impacted following the end of the historic period. Poor air quality has reduced the visibility of the Shenandoah Valley and the mountains to the west. Despite efforts to reestablish some views, overgrown vegetation has continued to limit or obscure some other views and vistas.

Items noted in the table below and listed with an * are entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
View West to Valley from Lodge	138300	Contributing					No
View West to Valley from Rapidan Cottage and Double Top Cottage *	138302	Contributing					No
View West to Valley from Blackrock	138304	Contributing					No
View North to Valley from Campground	138306	Contributing					No
View East to Meadow from South Side of Wayside Area *	139670	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 28. View of the Shenandoah Valley from the flagstone terrace at the rear of Big Meadows Lodge (OCLP, 2008).

Landscape Characteristic: Small Scale Features

Historic Conditions (through 1952):

Albert H. Good's 1938 "Park and Recreation Structures" catalogued variations on small-scale features within the NPS. The three-volume encyclopedic work provided examples of barriers, water fountains, picnic tables, picnic fireplaces, signs, and comfort stations, which spoke to a craft tradition romanticizing early American pioneer efforts. The collection assembled in these books highlighted NPS features that were sensitive to regional vernacular design vocabularies.

Throughout Shenandoah NP, the built small-scale features followed the same design language described in Good's work. Log and rock barriers; boulder water fountains; rusticated log-framed signage; wood picnic tables; and stacked-stone all appeared within developed areas along Skyline Drive. Small-scale features at Big Meadows were highly characteristic of park-wide and even NPS-wide standardized variations on rustic-style features. Among these variations, the following have been verified at Big Meadows in historic photographs: rusticated log-framed signage, boulder drinking fountains, log guardrails, wood fencing, wood picnic tables, and boulder bollards.

Water Fountains

Boulder water fountains used at the picnic grounds and campground at the Big Meadows complex represent one of several historic types found along Skyline Drive. The boulder drinking fountains were each made of a single large boulder generally about 4'L x 3'W x 3'H with a fountain head mounted to the top and a spigot with hose attachment mounted near the base. These CCC constructed the water fountains at the picnic grounds.

Stacked Stone Fireplace or Grill

Photographs of the historic campground and picnic area show one of the original stacked stone fireplaces with a grate covering the top. The construction consisted of stacked stone with coursed and mortared stone. The fireplaces were located throughout the campground and picnic grounds.

Signage

Many of the original signs at Big Meadows were constructed by the CCC in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Signs featured a rustic style using salvaged chestnut logs with wood panels suspended by metal straps. Rustic style signs were installed at the wayside area, the entrance to the campground, and at the cabin/lodge area. Another historic sign is the concrete milepost installed along Skyline Drive during the road construction. Trail signs along the Appalachian Trail were composed of square concrete pillars with the name indented vertically along the side and location information on a metal band encircling the pillar near the top. Markers associated with the Appalachian Trail and Skyline Drive are evaluated in separate CLIs.

Retaining Walls and Rocks

Large boulders were used as bollards along drives, paths, and trailheads at Big Meadows to provide barriers and define campsites. The use of boulders as bollards followed ideas proposed by E. P. Meinecke, of the U.S. Forest Service, who promoted their use to define parking areas. The use of boulders also protected vegetation from parked automobiles.

Log Guardrails

Historic images reveal the use of log guardrails along the outer edges of the parking lots at the cabin/lodge area and the picnic grounds. The guardrails were typically built as two posts roughly eighteen inches high, topped with a log roughly nine to ten feet in length. These log guardrails provided a barrier discouraging cars from going over the edge, which sloped down in some areas.

Plank Wood Picnic Tables

The tables at the picnic grounds at Big Meadows were fairly typical in construction, using wood with a cross-braced frame connecting benches and table.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Several small-scale features in the Big Meadows contemporary landscape date to the historic period of significance. They include the boulder water fountains and the boulder bollards (Figures 29 and 30). Alterations to the historic picnic grounds landscape include the removal of the stone grills and wood picnic tables. The original picnic tables have been replaced with tables of similar but contemporary materials. There are also split log benches along a trail from the wayside/visitor

center area to the Lodge that may date to the period of significance, but this has yet to be determined.

Non-historic additions to the landscape include standard NPS signage in the 1960s, contemporary benches placed at the Byrd Visitor Center, and metal outdoor grills in the picnic grounds. Some of the newly installed site furniture also accommodates universal access. At the cabin/lodge area and picnic grounds parking lots, log guardrails have been removed and replaced with concrete wheel stops. A variety of exterior lighting has been added throughout the site, such as pathway lighting, floodlights, and bollard lights at the cabin/lodge area, and several lights mounted on poles in the parking lots.

A range of signs have also been added to the landscape since the period of significance. Most notably, a new sign was constructed along with the Byrd Visitor Center in the late 1960s that used similar materials as the historic signs, including stone and wood, but the overall design is more contemporary. In addition, simpler carved wood signs have been utilized that are mounted on wood posts, and generally painted or stained brown with white lettering. They are used for labeling structures and trails, and giving directions. Other wood markers include small kiosks with bulletin boards at the Big Meadows Lodge, campground, and the Wayside. In addition, wayside interpretive exhibits have been located throughout the site.

At the Byrd Visitor Center, a bronze statue of a male worker was dedicated in 2000 to the memory of the CCC laborers and their contributions to the park during 1930s and 1940s. In addition, a monument consisting of a bronze plaque mounted on a boulder is also dedicated to the CCC with the following text: "Between 1933 and 1942, more than 10,000 young men served in the Civilian Conservation Corps camps in Shenandoah NP. These 'boys' created the form and fabric of the new park so that future generations could find recreation and re-creation here."

In the early 1960s, stacked stone drinking fountains were built near at the campground and at the Byrd Visitor Center and Wayside. This type of fountain consisted of a square pillar roughly three feet in height, which tapered from about a sixteen-inch square at the base to about a twelve-inch square at the top. The fountains were made of random coursed ashlar sandstone, sometimes with a step made of a single stone block to one side. An oval enameled steel basin with a chromed steel fountain head was set into the top of the pillars with concrete. Although not constructed during the historic period of significance, their style is similar to those built at other locations in the park during the 1930s and early 1940s. At the cabin/lodge area, a playground was added near Petersburg Cabin, consisting of a wood chip surface among the trees with a metal swing set and wood climbing structure with plastic slides.

A range of fencing types has been installed at various locations at Big Meadows. At the Wayside, "snake-rail" style fencing is used along the gas station parking and turn-around area. There is stockade fencing around the upper service entrance of the lodge, separating the terrace from the lower service area, and around dumpsters. It is 5-1/2' tall, with narrow wooden pickets. Stacked rail fencing surrounds the playground. Along the valley side of Doubletop and Rapidan fence rails are supported by stone pillars.

In addition, stone and concrete remnants are located in the meadow that may date to the CCC camp period or after, when the Army Corps of Engineers occupied the site during World War II for training purposes.

Other miscellaneous additions to the landscape respond to the change in site management as well as changing recreational needs and infrastructure improvements throughout the site, including dumpsters and recycling bins, three flagpoles, bicycle racks, and fire hydrants, and a telephone booth.

Items noted in the table below and listed with an * are entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Bollards	138312	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Fire Hydrants	138314	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trash Cans and Dumpsters	138322	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Recycling Containers and Signs	138324	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Interpretive Wayside Exhibits	138326	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Signs (wood and metal)	138328	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Bike Racks	138354	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Split Log Benches	138360	Undetermined					No
Black Metal Site Furniture	138362	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Concrete Wheel Stops	138364	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Playground	138366	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wood Fencing	138368	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Parking Lot Lamp Posts	138370	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Stone Tree Wells	138372	Undetermined					No
Picnic Grounds Water Fountains (3) *	138374	Contributing	083090				No
Boulder Bollards	138382	Contributing					No
Picnic Tables	138384	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Metal Grills	138406	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Sign Kiosk	138410	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Parking Lot Light Posts	138392	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trash Receptacles	138412	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Concrete Wheel Stops	138396	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wood and Metal Benches	138424	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

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Fire ring by Amphitheater	138426	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Outhouse	138430	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Campground Water Fountains (5) *	138438	Contributing	083097			No
Fire Pits / Grills	138440	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Stacked Rock Water Fountains (5)	138442	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Telephone Booths	138444	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Metal Bench	138446	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Camp Site Markers	138448	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Directional Signs	138450	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Chain and Bollard Gates	138452	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Bear-proof Storage Boxes	138454	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Flagpole	138456	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Statue	138868	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Memorial Plaque and Boulder	138870	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Stacked stone water fountain	138872	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Big Meadows sign	138874	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Wood Benches	138894	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Air Quality Station (BM-4117)	138896	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Kennels (4) (BM-2705, 2706, 2707, 2708)	138898	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Aviary (2) (BM-2717, 4121)	138912	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Propane Tank	139662	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Gas Tanks	139664	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Generator	139666	Noncontributing – Compatible				No
Clothes Line	139668	Noncontributing – Compatible				No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 29. View of boulders used as bollards in at the campground at Big Meadows (OCLP, 2008).



Figure 30. View of typical CCC-constructed boulder water fountain at the picnic grounds (OCLP, 2008).

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 3

Next Assessment Due Date: 08/28/2028

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 08/28/2025

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The overall landscape is well-maintained and in good condition.

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/21/2021

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Provisional. The condition reassessment for this CLI has been delayed due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and staffing shortages. In the meantime, the most recent condition assessment will remain in place until it is reassessed as part of a comprehensive update of the entire CLI. Planning and scheduling this update will occur in FY 2022.

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 08/06/2009

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The condition of the Big Meadows landscape is evaluated as "good," which indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. A program for continued preservation of the meadow has been undertaken. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Fire

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: Fire has had a long history within Shenandoah NP. Such events could impact views from the site.

Date Identified: 09/02/2009

Type of Impact: Pests/Diseases

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: Continued spread of the gypsy moth and wooly adelgid diseases, as well as the sudden oak disease, may impact trees within the site's boundaries and beyond them, and should be monitored.

Date Identified: 09/02/2009

Type of Impact: Pollution

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: Air pollution in valley may impact quality of views of Shenandoah Valley from Big Meadows.

Date Identified: 09/02/2009

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type: Undetermined

Treatment Completed: No

Title:

IRMA Link:

Narrative:

The park's General Management Plan and Development Concept Plan were completed in January 21, 1983. However, these documents are considered out of date and the park superintendent now signs off on the treatment of all buildings and structures as they are added to or updated in the List of Classified Structures (LCS). A memo from the Superintendent states that all structures listed on National Register of Historic Places will be classified under the "Must Be Preserved and Maintained" management category. No treatment of the Big Meadows landscape has been determined.

In the LCS, the treatment of the following resources is listed as Preservation:

Big Meadows Lodge (BM-0114)
Office/Ranger's Quarters (BM-0214)
Stables (BM-1158)
Equip. Shed/Workshop/Repair/Garage (BM-0410)
Maintenance/Vehicle & Equip.Storage (BM-0411)
Blacksmith Shop/Storage Shed (BM-0412)
Carpenter Shop/Storage Building (BM-0414)
Warehouse Sub. HQ/Storage (BM-0415)
Gas/Oil Building (BM-0416)
Wayside (BM-0113)
Campground Contact Station (BM-0705)
Employee Cottage "A" (BM-1156)
Employee Cottage "B" (BM-1157)
Cottage "C" (BM-0314)
Cottage "D" (BM-0315)
Cottage "E" (BM-0316)
Petersburg Cottage (BM-0149)
Bridesburg Cottage (BM-0153)
Blacksburg Cottage (BM-0152)
Lynchburg Cottage (BM-0155)
Mountain View Cottage (BM-0154)
Piedmont Cottage (BM-0115)
Blackrock Cottage (BM-0116)
Hawksbill Cottage (BM-0117)
Campground Comfort Station (east) (BM-0509)
Campground Comfort Station (west) BM-0508
Picnic Area Comfort Station (BM-0507)
Big Meadows Road
Wayside Loop/Parking
Campground Loop
Picnic Loop
Spur to Maintenance Area
Parking Area/Loop Road from Lodge
Campground Water Fountains
Picnic Grounds Water Fountains
Picnic Grounds Path System
Big Meadows Road Gutters
Big Meadows Road Culvert System
Spur to Campgrounds Culvert System

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Treatment Type: See CLR

Treatment Completed: No

Document Type: Cultural Landscape Report

Document Date: 2020-01-01

Title: Cultural Landscape Report for Big Meadows,
Shenandoah National Park

IRMA Link: <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2272097>

Narrative:

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

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National Park Service	National Register of Historic Places, Skyline Drive Historic District, Boundary Increase, December 2003.	2003	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service	Narrative		
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National Park Service, Shenandoah NP	Landscape Management Natural Resource Fact Sheet	2008	http://www.nps.gov/shen/historyculture/at.htm	Narrative		

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Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Preliminary Plan for Recreation Area, 1941, SHEN 134-2170-C—336464

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Site plan with proposed recreational facilities, circulation, and vegetation.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Sign, Big Meadows," 1951, SHEN 134-2102-

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Architectural drawings for proposed sign at entrance to Big Meadows, including small plan of wayside area.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Big Meadows, Existing Development," 1954, SHEN 134-2115---336392

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Site plan showing existing conditions including utilities, circulation, buildings, structures, and vegetation.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Development Plan for Big Meadows," 1955, SHEN 134-3011---336529

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Site plan showing proposed loop at campground and new visitor center.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Development Plan, Big Meadows," 1957, SHEN 134-3011A-336530

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Plan showing proposed visitor center.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Expansion of Campground Area,": 1959, EN 134-2464-A—336517

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Plan of proposed campground expansion layout

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Preliminary Plan for Big Meadows Cabin Development," 1935, SHEN 134-1046 B 336205

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Site Plan showing layout of cabins, circulation and other sub-areas

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Cabin Camps and Campgrounds Proposed for Big Meadows," 1936, SHEN 134-1046F-336190

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Plan with layout of buildings, circulation, and vegetation.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Garage for Big Meadows," 1937, SHEN 134-2016 336360

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Architectural elevations.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Location for Sub-headquarters," 1937, SHEN 134-2057-336384

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Site plan with layout of buildings and circulation.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Big Meadows Lodge," 1938, SHEN 134-41052-336174_Page_6

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Architectural plans and elevations for Big Meadows Lodge.

Supplemental Information:

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Supplemental Information Narrative:

Master Plan including circulation, building layout, vegetation.

Supplemental Information:

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Supplemental Information Narrative:

Master Plan including circulation, building layout, vegetation.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Recreational Trails," 1941, SHEN 134-2261-id336478

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Trail map through park, including Big Meadows development.

Supplemental Information:

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Supplemental Information Narrative:

Site Plan of cottages designed by Wright and circulation.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Entrance Road Revision," 1941, SHEN 134-2259---336477

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Plan with proposed circulation changes around wayside.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Preliminary Drawings, Stables, Big Meadows, SHEN 134-8029-336561

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Architectural elevations of proposed stables and tac room at maintenance area.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Visitor Center, Parking, Utilities," 1961, EN 134-2495-336527

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Site plan showing proposed visitor center and parking area along with altered circulation around original wayside building.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Byrd Visitor Center," 1963, EN 134-3128-336126_Page_1

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Architectural plans and elevations for Byrd Visitor Center.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Seasonal Employee's Quarters," 1965, EN 134-3148A-336146

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Architectural plans for two new employee's quarters at the maintenance area.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Planting, Big Meadows Area," 1966, EN 134-3205B-336148

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Planting plans, details, and planting lists for visitor center and parking lot, and seasonal employee housing.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Big Meadows Amphitheater," 1969, EN 134-41008-336151

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Architectural plans and elevation for new amphitheater at picnic area at Big Meadows.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: "Big Meadows Amphitheater, Topographic Sheet," 1978, EN 134-41071-309260

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Topographic plan with contours at amphitheater

Landscape Documents:

File Name	Date	Attachment Type
SHEN_BigM-HQ-Piney-Pinnacles-Rapidan-Skyland_CLI Updates Notes_2025.pdf		

Source