
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory
2009



Rapidan Camp
Shenandoah National Park

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Inventory Summary

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

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Purpose and Goals of the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the national park system, is one of the most ambitious initiatives of the National Park Service (NPS) Park Cultural Landscapes Program. The CLI is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources through a public planning process and in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into a national database. In addition, for landscapes that are not currently listed on the National Register and/or do not have adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures, assists the NPS in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2006), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two GPRA goals are associated with the CLI: bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (Goal 1a7) and increasing the number of CLI records that have complete, accurate, and reliable information (Goal 1b2B).

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries and archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the site's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit. Unlike cultural landscape reports, the CLI does not provide management recommendations or

treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape.

Inventory Unit Description:

Rapidan Camp is the former retreat and “summer White House” of President Herbert Hoover, situated on a level area of land at the headwaters of the Rapidan River, in a remote and rugged area of Shenandoah National Park (NP) in Virginia. The site, a designated National Historic Landmark, today encompasses approximately 106 acres and is accessed by Rapidan Road, which connects to Skyline Drive at Big Meadows. Development at the site began in 1929, and of the thirteen original buildings three still exist, as do trails, paths, stone footbridges, a stone fountain, a massive outdoor stone fireplace, and man-made water channel and trout pool. Many of these features have been preserved and restored to convey the camp’s original function, appearance, appeal, and significance. There are also remnants of other Hoover-era buildings and infrastructure throughout the camp, as well as old barbeque pits and other structures from when the site was maintained and used by the Boy Scouts from 1948 to 1958. Since the mid-1990s, storm events and diseases have caused a dramatic loss of the towering hemlocks and other trees that historically shaded the site, and now there is considerably more sunlight and understory vegetation growth. As requested by Hoover when he deeded the property to the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1933 for eventual incorporation into Shenandoah NP, Rapidan Camp can be still be used by the President and his administration, though only one since Hoover’s term has done so.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The history of Rapidan Camp is directly connected with the establishment of Shenandoah NP and the planning and construction of Skyline Drive. The idea of establishing a national park in the region came about in 1924 when the U.S. Secretary of the Interior formed the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee. The Committee recognized that a scenic motor road, now called Skyline Drive, atop the Blue Ridge Mountains in northern Virginia could offer dramatic views of the Shenandoah Valley and the Piedmont Plain.

Shenandoah NP was authorized in 1926 but without funds for land acquisitions, which was accomplished through private donations and funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia. To lead the effort to obtain land, Virginia Governor Harry F. Byrd established the Commission on Conservation and Development, headed by William Carson, his former campaign manager. Carson was an untiring advocate of Shenandoah NP and the eventual construction of Skyline Drive.

Soon after his victory in the November 1928 presidential election, Herbert Hoover directed an aide to find a good fishing site and retreat within driving distance of Washington D.C. Carson heard about Hoover’s interest and in February 1929 found such a place within Shenandoah NP, securing fishing rights held by the Rapidan Fishing Club for 264 acres along a stretch of the Rapidan River. Carson secured an appropriation made jointly by the state and Madison County to build an access road into the Rapidan basin from the east, off of the state highway near Criglersville. In a letter to Hoover, Carson wrote, “When you are satisfied with the stream, and pick a suitable location for a camp along it, I will have the camp built” (Letter, Carson to Hoover, cited in Lambert 1971:14). The Hoovers, Carson, and others explored the area on horseback in April, probably using some of the rough trails cut by the fishing club. When he came upon the somewhat level land where the Mill and Laurel Prongs joined to form

the Rapidan River, he said, “That’s were I want my camp” (Lambert 1971:19). Around this time, Hoover purchased 164 acres of land around this spot that had been owned by a family named Wayland for over 100 years.

Though the logistics of developing this rugged and remote upstream site proved to be difficult, construction of the camp proceeded rapidly. A detachment of the U.S. Marines Corps, led by Colonel Earl Long, was responsible for constructing the camp’s buildings, water supply, sewage disposal, entrance road, and intracamp roads, trails, and paths (but not the access road from the state highway in Criglersville, although the two did connect). The first building constructed was called Five Tents, on a hillside somewhat west of where the main area of the camp would be built. Hoover stayed here while the other camp buildings were constructed. Next was the President’s Cabin, also called the Brown House in contrast to the more famous White House, and later just called The President. This building overlooked the confluence of the Laurel and Mill Prongs and featured a living room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a screened sleeping porch, massive stone chimneys, and a large sitting porch overlooking the streams. Next was the Mess Hall where all meals were served, quarters up the slope for the Navy men (a chief steward and a dozen Filipino cooks and attendants), Town Hall for indoor conferences and recreation, and a small Office or duty shack for Secret Service and Marines aiding in camp protection and maintenance. In early October 1929, the Prime Minister’s Cabin and Ishbel’s Cabin were built in advance of a visit by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and his daughter. In the months that followed, additional cabins named The Slums, Trails End, and The Owl were sited amongst the trees and previously erected buildings. The Creel cabin was the last of the buildings to be constructed at the camp during the Hoover occupancy.

Other improvements at the camp were related to use, circulation, and infrastructure. Gravel walkways in the core of the camp were bordered with stones, and connected to other trails and camp roads that lead to scenic destinations in and around the site. Roads and trails also led to stables and to two separate camps built to support the President’s Camp: the Marine Camp and the Cabinet Camp. The site also included a massive outdoor stone fireplace, a stone fountain, stone walls along the entrance road, a concrete-lined trout pool, and a winding man-made water channel named Hemlock Run. The channel, which was fed by water diverted through a sluice gate upstream on Laurel Prong, was defined by randomly-arranged boulders and mortared stone retaining walls and crossed by a series of picturesque stone and wood footbridges. Between the President’s Cabin and the Prime Minister’s Cabin, existing rock outcrops and boulders were incorporated into the channel to form a small waterfall, called Hemlock Run Falls, which was often visible in the background of photographs of the Hoovers. Other camp features included numerous telephone and power lines, reservoirs, spring houses, water and sewage lines, and security lights.

Throughout the camp’s development, the Hoovers were adamant in preserving the scenery and its rustic character. They insisted that only deadwood, such as the blighted chestnuts, could be used for cooking or heating, and that no living trees, coal, or oil could be used for such purposes. Mrs. Hoover was an avid gardener and botanist, and was responsible for the many of the site’s garden areas and flower boxes that brightened the cabins. Her wishes were outlined in a detailed set of directions that specified the use of plants native to the area or species that would thrive at this location. “The

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President is very fond of color in gardens, so where possible, and appropriate to the species, arrange flowering shrubs and flowers so as to give the mass effects of color” (“Flowers and Shrubs for the President’s Camp” with Mrs. Hoover’s emphasis). The document also discouraged formal beds of plants or flowers, recommending that they instead remain untrimmed and be allowed to ramble off into the surroundings.

Despite the early beginnings as a retreat, Rapidan Camp soon became a kind of auxiliary White House, with the President conducting official business there. Planning sessions and policy debates soon became regular occurrences. In between meetings or in the evenings, recreational activities included fishing, pitching horseshoes, riding horses, or simply strolling the grounds or relaxing on one of the porches. Boulder-gathering and dam-building to create trout pools was one activity Hoover enjoyed doing with other guests, whereas fishing he preferred to do alone. The President generally did not hike except as required to fish. He also did not often ride horseback either, but did enjoy taking drives as roads in the area became more prevalent.

Having successfully convinced President Hoover to establish his retreat within the boundaries of Shenandoah NP, William Carson continued to promote the concept of the national park and a road along its ridgeline. Aware of the implications for the future of the park if such a road was built, Carson commented to Hoover that a useable road was needed to provide convenient and safe access to Rapidan Camp and to connect it with Skyland. Hoover reacted favorably to the idea of such a road, emphasizing its benefit to the “traveling public,” and appears to have originally endorsed the project in early October 1929. However, the collapse of the American stock market several weeks later intervened and the project was temporarily halted.

The onset of the Great Depression coincided with what was considered to be the worst drought in the history of Virginia, which led to crop failures and greatly hurt the region’s farmers. The declining economic conditions in the region spurred Carson to make an appeal for relief funding to get construction started on the road from Thornton Gap to Rapidan Camp. By the autumn of 1930, Carson promoted a plan to accomplish the twin objectives of putting jobless men to work and making the area accessible to the public by building the road. President Hoover agreed to provide money from drought relief funds for construction if Congress approved the measure. Upon passage of the bill, Hoover immediately allocated money to build the road from Front Royal to Jarman Gap, nearly the entire length of Shenandoah NP. However, this allocation was subsequently denied when Hoover issued a general order of economy because of the national financial crisis.

In time, Carson succeeded in obtaining enough money to build a thirty-four mile section of the road from Thornton Gap to Swift Run Gap (comprising the park’s Central District), which was an extension of the originally planned twenty-mile segment connecting Thornton Gap to Skyland and Rapidan Camp. Finally with appropriations made available for road construction in the national parks by the Emergency Public Works Act, the Bureau of Public Roads, in cooperation with the NPS, began the initial work on what would be named Skyline Drive in the summer of 1931. As part of this project, Rapidan Road was built from Big Meadows to the camp.

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Herbert Hoover left the White House in early 1933 after losing the November 1932 presidential election to Franklin D. Roosevelt. Around this time, he transferred his private ownership of the 164-acre camp tract (along with other lands) to the Commonwealth of Virginia for eventual inclusion into Shenandoah NP. Hoover reiterated his hopes that the camp would be used by his successors or perhaps by the Boy or Girl Scouts.

Roosevelt visited the site in April 1933, but it was decided that the camp's terrain would be too rough for him. While several improvements were planned at the camp to accommodate him and his cabinet in case he changed his mind, including updates to the cabins and construction of a swimming pool, none were implemented. Beginning in 1935, one regular camp user in the summers was Secretary of the Navy Claude A. Swanson, until 1939 when he died at the camp. At this time, Navy property at the camp was removed and the NPS assumed direct charge of the site, assigning a caretaker who lived in the nearby Marine Camp. The NPS also used Rapidan Road as its sole access route to the camp.

In subsequent years, the use and future of the camp was in limbo. Organizations and individuals had wanted to use it occasionally or permanently, but as long as any possibly remained that it could again be used by a sitting President, few projects went beyond the planning stages. In 1941, the park was directed to evaluate the condition of the camp's buildings and furniture for possible use by Department of Interior officials. Reporting that most of the buildings were in poor condition, the park requested appropriation to either repair the buildings or remove the most dilapidated buildings at the President's Camp and all of the Marine Camp. The request was denied and another plan, to allow the park's concessionaire to repair and operate the camp as part of its visitor accommodation system, was introduced, but the events of World War II eventually halted the plan. Sometime during the war, the vehicular bridge over Mill Prong was replaced by a steel truss "Bailey" bridge, and in 1944 the Marine Camp was demolished and the caretaker of the President's Camp was relocated to The Creel cabin. In 1946, the park again requested funds to repair or remove the camp's buildings. The Department of the Interior agreed something should be done, but felt former President Hoover should be consulted first. A letter to Hoover was drafted but never sent.

In March 1948, the National Capital Council of the Boy Scouts of America signed a 20-year lease for the camp and assumed full responsibility for the site's maintenance and operation. Hoover fully supported the idea and contributed funds to improve the camp, but with the provision that it could be used again as a presidential retreat. Access to the camp was to be from Criglersville, not from Skyline Drive and Rapidan Road, which had a locked gate. The Boy Scout Council began several modifications to the buildings and grounds, which included the addition of pit toilets and barbeques and the removal of the deteriorated Five Tents. At this time, Rapidan Camp became known as Camp Hoover. (In 1953, the old Cabinet Camp was bought for private use.)

The Boy Scout camp was very popular, but by 1958 operational costs, recurrent washouts of the road, and further deterioration of the buildings became too burdensome and the camp closed. Faced once again with what to do with both the old Hoover-era buildings as well as the abandoned Boy Scout structures, the NPS, with Hoover's approval, decided to demolish all of the buildings at the camp except for the President's Cabin, Prime Minister's Cabin, and The Creel, which would be preserved and

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rehabilitated and serve as the essential features of a permanent historical-natural shrine. In 1960, twenty-four buildings and structures (more than half of them the Boy Scouts) were torn down and removed. The grounds were cleared except for the three buildings, the outdoor fireplace, and the stone fountain.

From 1960 to 1963, the NPS performed rehabilitation work at Rapidan Camp, repairing the three buildings and making changes to the floor plans to accommodate lodgings for the President, cabinet members, and congressmen. The Creel still served as caretaker's residence. Also at this time, trails were rehabilitated and interpretive signage was installed for park visitors coming to the camp on foot or horseback. The camp was used frequently by the Nixon Administration from 1969-1974, but such uses became the subject of public criticism. In May 1979, Jimmy Carter and his family stayed at the camp, the first visit to Rapidan Camp by a sitting President in over forty-five years.

Use of the camp waned in the 1980s and through the 1990s. In 1996, privileges for governmental officials were formally discontinued because of the site's failing septic system, the replacement of which would require substantial land clearing and damage to potential archeological resources. At this time, the park decided to restore the exterior and interior of the President's Cabin to a 1930-1931 period, the exterior of the Prime Minister Cabin (the interior to house a self-guided exhibit of the camp's history), and the exterior of The Creel (the interior to accommodate the caretaker supplied with bottled water for drinking and cooking). Work on these projects occurred from 1996 to 2004. Between 1998 and 2004, additional landscape structures and features at the camp were addressed in various stabilization, reconstruction, and restoration projects, including the camp driveways, paths, Hemlock Run bridges and walls, stone fountain, exterior stone fireplace, and the trout pool.

In the winter of 1997-1998, severe ice storms heavily damage many trees in and around Rapidan Camp. At the same time, many of the area's hemlocks and oaks were in decline or dying from various diseases. As a result of these events, Rapidan Camp was transformed from a cool and shady site to a hot and sunny site. The park's strategy was to allow the removed trees (except for the hemlocks) to resprout and eventually form again a closed canopy, recognizing that the old field vegetation that would inevitably emerge would in time die out as it fell under the shade of the enveloping tree canopy. Where existing shade remained or where areas were completely open, new shrubs, perennials, and forbs would be planted consistent with historic photographs, Mrs. Hoover's preferred plant lists, and/or introduced species still on-site. This work began in 2000 and continued through 2006. Field work undertaken for this CLI in 2008 revealed that a significant number of these plantings could not be found, and most that were located were either in poor condition or had grown little. This has been due to the successional environment in which the intentional plantings are being outcompeted by the surrounding forest species.

The most recent natural disaster struck the camp in 2003 in the form of Hurricane Isabel, which damaged even more trees and shrubs and washed out bridges. The sluice gate at the head of the Hemlock Run was severely damaged, which substantially decreased the flow of the run, and the footbridge over Mill Prong was destroyed. The footbridge was replaced-in-kind in 2005, but the sluice gate remains unrepaired. Work currently underway at Rapidan Camp includes construction of a small accessible comfort station and improvements to the water and sewer systems.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Rapidan Camp was designated a National Historic Landmark on June 7, 1988, significant for its use by President Herbert Hoover as a summer retreat during his term of office from 1929 to 1933. Located at the headwaters of the Rapidan River, the rustic-style camp originally contained thirteen buildings, an outdoor fireplace, a network of roads, trails and paths, as well as a constructed stream and manmade trout pools that facilitated the President's recreational fishing. The camp was frequently used by the Hoovers during their time in office and was the site of important meetings both within the administration and also with foreign leaders such as the Prime Minister of Great Britain. The association of the Hoovers with this section of the Blue Ridge Mountains also helped facilitate the construction of Skyline Drive and the beginnings of Shenandoah NP.

Based on the National Historic Landmark (NHL) documentation for the site, the national significance of Rapidan Camp corresponds with NHL Criterion 1 (event or pattern of events) and Criterion 2 (person). For the purposes of this Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), the significance of the landscape is evaluated according to National Register Criterion A in the area of politics/government, which corresponds to NHL Criterion 1; and National Register Criterion B for Herbert Clark Hoover, which corresponds to NHL Criterion 2. The period of significance for Rapidan Camp begins with the construction of camp buildings in 1929 and ends in 1933 when President Hoover left office and deeded the property to the Commonwealth of Virginia for eventual incorporation into Shenandoah NP.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

Landscape characteristics and features from the period of significance remain today at Rapidan Camp and are important to its historic character and unique identity. The camp was built by the U.S. Marine Corps and developed with significant input from the Hoovers. Three of the site's most important buildings – the President's Cabin (The Brown House), Prime Minister's Cabin, and The Creel – remain, their exteriors having been restored in recent years to the Hoover-era. Visitors can tour the President's Cabin, its interior also restored, or relax on the one of the porches that overlook two scenic streams, Mill Prong and Laurel Prong, which converge and become the Rapidan River. Restored and reconstructed stone-lined footpaths connect the three extant cabins and wind past the massive outdoor stone fireplace, Mrs. Hoovers stone fountain, and a concrete-lined trout pool. One of the most interesting features is the Hemlock Run, a man-made stone-lined water channel that flows through the heart of the camp and is crossed by mortared stone footbridges. A wood footbridge over Mill Prong that was the setting of many photographs of the Hoovers was recently replaced-in-kind after it was destroyed by Hurricane Isabel. Other paths and trails pass remnant foundation piers, stone steps, and old pipes hidden amongst the understory vegetation, reminders of former camp buildings and recreational activities. Historic stone walls and a stone bridge can also be found along the camp's original entrance road.

The site has undergone significant changes since the Hoover occupancy. In 1960, ten of the camp's thirteen buildings were removed due to their deteriorated condition, as were many of the structures built

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at the site by the Boy Scouts in the late 1940s through late 1950s. Since the mid-1990s, much of the camp's tree canopy has succumbed to severe ice storms, gypsy moth infestation, and the woolly adelgid that has decimated the stately hemlock trees. These events have transformed a once shady camp site into a mostly sunny site and have encouraged the growth of understory vegetation. The thinner overhead canopy has opened up views of the surrounding mountains, but the understory growth now limit views within the camp and have slowed efforts to restore plantings installed throughout the grounds by Mrs. Hoover. In 2003, Hurricane Isabel damaged the channel's sluice gate and has reduced the flow of water through the channel and over Hemlock Run Falls. Despite these changes, however, Rapidan Camp still retains sufficient integrity to convey its development and use as Herbert Hoover's presidential retreat. This is due to the park's extensive and ongoing restoration and reconstruction projects throughout the site. There are a few other features that remain from the post-historic Boy Scout period, but they do not detract from the historic scene. Non-historic features – a comfort station, two sheds, concrete curbs, log benches, a gate, signage, a ladder, and utility-related features – are generally inconspicuous in the landscape.

The condition of the Rapidan Camp landscape at the time of this report's completion is evaluated as "fair" due to the changing character of the site's vegetation. Severe ice storms in 1996/1997 resulted in the removal of over 150 trees at the site, and the mortality of oaks due to gypsy moth infestation and hemlocks from woolly adelgid continues. The rapid second growth of species in response to sunlight from the opened canopy should be addressed in the next 3-5 years.

Site Plan



Site Plan. Map 1 of 1 for Rapidan Camp (OCLP 2008).

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Rapidan Camp
Property Level:	Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	300126
Parent Landscape:	300126

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code:	Shenandoah National Park -SHEN
Park Organization Code:	4840
Park Administrative Unit:	Shenandoah National Park

CLI Hierarchy Description

Rapidan Camp is one five landscapes in Shenandoah National Park. The other landscapes and their component landscapes are as follows:

- Skyline Drive landscape with component landscapes: Big Meadows, Dickey Ridge, Elkwallow, Lewis Mountain, Piney River, Pinnacles, Skyland, South River Picnic Grounds, and Simmons Gap
- 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

Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Complete

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Field work for Rapidan Camp 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 National Park Service, 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 Jeff Killion in the spring of 2009. The park's Cultural Resource Manager is Ann Kain. She can be reached at 540-999-3500, x3435.

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	07/20/2009
National Register Concurrence:	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
Date of Concurrence Determination:	08/27/2009

National Register Concurrence Narrative:

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources concurred with the categorization of the landscape resources at Rapidan Camp, Shenandoah National Park, as contributing and noncontributing on August 27, 2009. The SHPO had no additional comments on the report.

Concurrence Graphic Information:

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

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

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

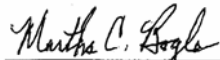
CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair

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 Rapidan Camp is hereby approved and accepted.



Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park


Date

Park concurrence on the findings of this CLI were received on July 20, 2009.

Geographic Information & Location Map

Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

For the purposes of this Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), the boundary of Rapidan Camp is consistent with the boundary established in the site's National Historic Landmark (NHL) documentation in 1988. The boundary includes buildings, building sites, structures, road and trail systems, man-made trout pools, and natural features that have historically been part of the site and maintain historic integrity.

The boundary begins at the metal gate across the Entrance Road, at the Shenandoah National Park (NP) boundary, and continues north and west along the northern side of the Entrance Road toward the

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main portion of the camp. The northern boundary then follows along the eastern side of Mill Prong up to Big Rock Falls, and then turns directly south to the site of the Laurel Dam. The boundary then proceeds northeast along the southern side of the Laurel Prong to include the headwaters of the Rapidan River, and then before closing again on the Entrance Road.

The camp's 1929 Entrance Road, which provided access to the camp from the east, was included in the 1988 NHL documentation. The 1931 Rapidan Road, which provided access to the camp from Skyline Drive to the west, was not. To correct this oversight, Rapidan Road was added to the Skyline Drive Historic District through a boundary increase in 2003. The Skyline Drive Historic District, including Rapidan Road, was designated a NHL on October 6, 2008. Rapidan Road will be included as a contributing feature in the Big Meadows CLI that is currently underway.

State and County:

State: VA

County: Madison County

Size (Acres): 106.00

Boundary UTMS:

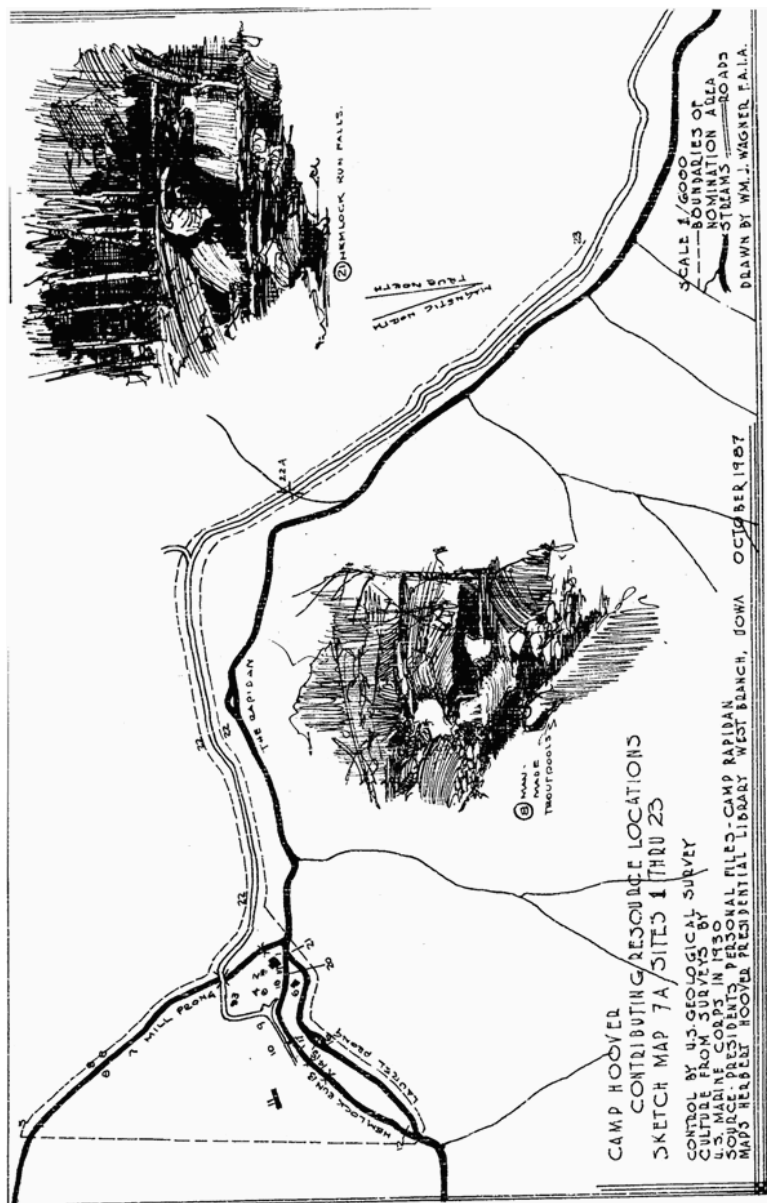
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Type of Point:	Area
Datum:	NAD 83
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UTM Easting:	726,210
UTM Northing:	4,262,910
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UTM Zone:	17
UTM Easting:	725,850
UTM Northing:	4,263,350
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UTM Zone:	17
UTM Easting:	724,940
UTM Northing:	4,263,320
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Type of Point:	Area
Datum:	NAD 83
UTM Zone:	17
UTM Easting:	724,680
UTM Northing:	4,263,690
Source:	USGS Map 1:24,000

Type of Point:	Area
Datum:	NAD 83
UTM Zone:	17
UTM Easting:	724,680
UTM Northing:	4,262,920
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Type of Point:	Area
Datum:	NAD 83
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UTM Easting:	725,420
UTM Northing:	4,263,210

Location Map:



Location Map. Shenandoah National Park is located in northwest Virginia (Map courtesy of Great Outdoors Recreation pages).



Location Map. Boundary map of contributing resources at Rapidan Camp, from the National Historic Landmark (NHL) documentation (NHL documentation 1988).

Regional Context:

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

Rapidan Camp is part of Shenandoah NP, where recreation is the primary cultural use. In the surrounding region, tourism is a significant industry. Agriculture, particularly poultry production, is the main industry to the west, with convenient north-south access via Interstate 81 and Route 340. Suburban development in the Washington D.C.-Baltimore metropolitan area dominates the east, with east-west access via Interstate 66 and Routes 7, 50, and 211.

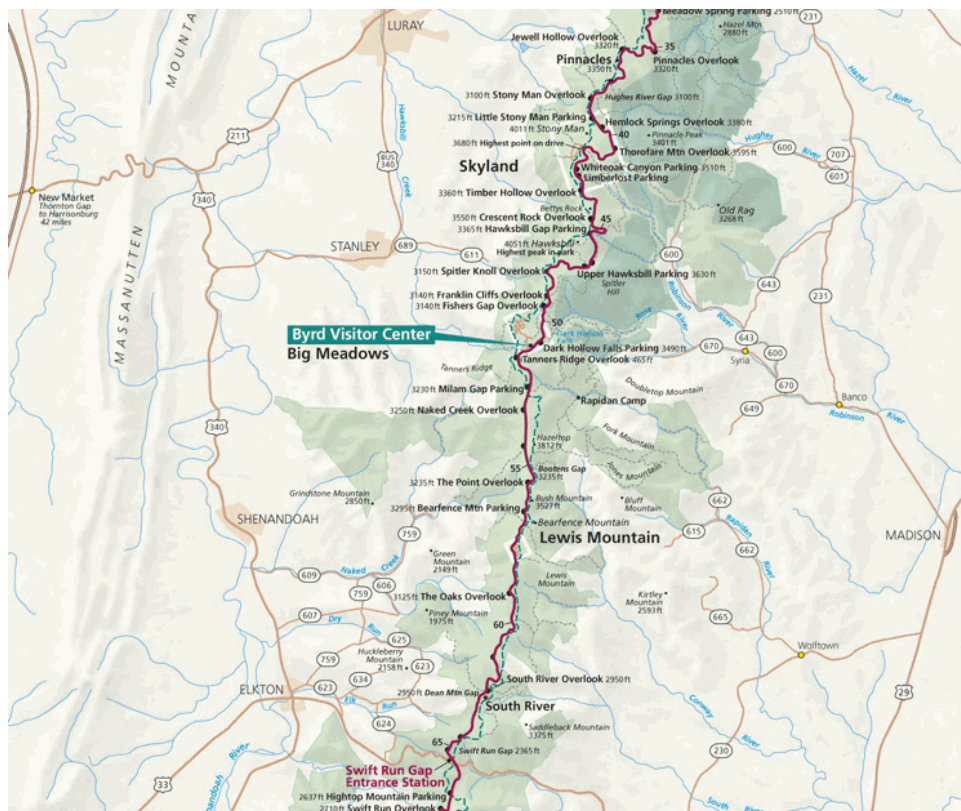
Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Rapidan Camp is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains along the crest running southeast to northwest with elevations ranging from 1,900 to 1,940 feet. The site offers panoramic views to the Shenandoah Valley to the west and the Piedmont to the east. The site is situated at the headwaters of the Rapidan River, where two streams, Laurel Prong and Mill Prong, converge. The river was once called Rapid Anne for its fast and turbulent nature, then shortened to Rapidan (Madison County Eagle, 31 May 1929, cited in Lambert 1971:25). (See Regional Landscape Context graphic).

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Regional Landscape Context. Rapidan Camp is located in the Central District of Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, east of Big Meadows (<http://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm>).

Type of Context: Political

Description:

Rapidan Camp is located in Madison County, in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is located within Shenandoah NP, authorized on May 22, 1926, and fully established on December 16, 1935.

Management Unit: Central District

Tract Numbers: 148-A (portion), 180 (portion), 181 (portion)

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 07/20/2009

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

Rapidan Camp 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 was designated a National Historic Landmark on June 7, 1988, under the Presidential Sites theme.

NPS Legal Interest:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Public Access:

Type of Access: Unrestricted

Type of Access: Other Restrictions

Explanatory Narrative:

Rapidan Camp is accessible year round, weather permitting, to hikers from the west by a 4.1 mile (6 km) round-trip hike on Mill Prong Trail, which begins on Skyline Drive at Milam Gap and where parking is available (Mile 52.8). The park offers guided van trips that leave from the Harry F. Byrd Visitor Center at Big Meadows. The camp is also accessible from the east along Quaker Run Road accessible near Criglersville, but vehicles are prohibited beyond a fire gate at the park boundary one mile from camp and parking there is limited. During much of the spring, summer, and fall, an interpretive guide stays at camp and provides tours of the President’s Cabin and Prime Minister’s Cabin. Bicycles are prohibited on unpaved roads within the park, and backcountry camping is prohibited within 0.5-miles of Rapidan Camp.

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? No

National Register Information

Existing NRIS Information:

Name in National Register: Camp Hoover
NRIS Number: 88001825
Primary Certification Date: 06/07/1988

Significance Criteria: A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
Significance Criteria: B - Associated with lives of persons significant in our past

Period of Significance:

Time Period: AD 1929 - 1933
Historic Context Theme: Shaping the Political Landscape
Subtheme: Political and Military Affairs 1865-1939
Facet: The Great Depression And The New Deal, 1929-1941

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Politics - Government

Statement of Significance:

Based on the National Historic Landmark (NHL) documentation for the site, the national significance of Rapidan Camp corresponds with NHL Criterion 1 (event or pattern of events) and Criterion 2 (person). For the purposes of this Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), the significance of the landscape is evaluated according to National Register Criterion A in the area of politics/government, which corresponds to NHL Criterion 1; and National Register Criterion B for Herbert Clark Hoover, which corresponds to NHL Criterion 2.

The period of significance for Rapidan Camp begins with the construction of camp buildings in 1929 and ends in 1933 when President Hoover left office and deeded the property to the Commonwealth of Virginia for eventual incorporation into Shenandoah National Park. The significance of Rapidan Camp as Herbert Hoover's presidential retreat, as stated in Section 8 of the 1988 NHL documentation, is still pertinent:

“What remains of the Hoovers’ Camp on the Rapidan offers more than a “Hoover Slept Here” significance in its direct association from 1929 to 1933 with the lives of President Herbert Hoover and First Lady Lou Henry Hoover. The tranquility afforded by the camp’s surroundings – the liquid lullabye of Laurel and Mill Prongs as they flow together to form the headwaters of the Rapidan River only a stone’s throw from the deck of the President’s cabin – persists today. Their Rapidan Camp speaks to the value the Hoovers, both geologists, placed throughout their lives in natural surroundings as a spiritual resource. “The joyous rush of the brook, the contemplation of the eternal flow of the stream, the stretch of forest and mountain all reduce our egotism, soothe our troubles and shame our wickedness,” Herbert Hoover wrote in 1930. (Hoover 1930:33, cited in NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8).

“While Herbert Hoover considered the camp a source of spiritual renewal, his personal physician credits Camp Rapidan with allowing the President and Mrs. Hoover to remain healthy throughout their White House years. “The Camp made it possible, I feel as a physician, for President and Mrs. Hoover to come through a very arduous four-year Presidential administration period without any serious physical impairments,” Admiral Joel T. Boone wrote in a reflection on the retreat. “Without the Rapidan Camp, now more specifically referred to as the Hoover Camp, President and Mrs. Hoover could hardly have left official life without any serious ailments.” (Lambert 1971:x, cited in NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8).

“For both Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover, the Rapidan Camp served as an oasis from the political firestorms that surrounded the Hoover Administration’s efforts to deal effectively with a failing world economy. As a presidential retreat, the Hoovers’ camp is the forerunner of the modern-day “summer White House” concept. It was the “Camp David” of its day; in fact, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established his Shangri-La retreat in Maryland’s Catoctin Mountains (now known as “Camp David”) after his first and only visit determined that the terrain surrounding Camp Rapidan, which the Hoovers had deeded to the State of Virginia in 1932 for use by future Chief Executives, was too rugged to accommodate FDR’s physical disability. The last President to make use of the camp was Jimmy Carter, who spent a weekend in May, 1979, with his wife, Rosalynn, and his daughter, Amy. (NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8).

“The camp’s association with the Hoovers is hardly casual. Its location was handpicked by Herbert Hoover in the spring of 1929 while on a horseback survey of the upper Rapidan terrain. Even before a site was selected, Lou Henry Hoover had a clear idea of what was required: “My husband’s idea was to have a camp down on one of the three-covered flats beside a stream or at the junction between two streams,” Lou Henry Hoover wrote in a January 27, 1929, letter that pre-dates the site selection expedition. “He likes to be near enough to hear the water murmuring. A spot might be found where part of the camp would be down there and part of it a hundred or so feet higher on one of the broad benches giving a distant view.”³ (Lambert 1971:13, cited in NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8). In his Memoirs, Herbert Hoover credits Lou Henry Hoover with the layout and design of the camp’s simple, rustic buildings and ground (Hoover 1952:322, cited in NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8). A four-tiered stone fountain remains today as a reminder of an elaborate Camp Rapidan rock garden described in the October 7, 1929, edition of The Washington Herald as “Mrs. Hoover’s pride and joy ... She has spent

Rapidan Camp

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much time restoring the land to its original leafy state, bringing rare shrubs, vines, ferns and flowers from the White House.” (Washington Herald, 7 October 1929, cited in NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8).

“Although the Rapidan Camp surrounded Herbert Hoover with opportunities to forsake the demands of his office, he often brought along his work and, at times, his White House associates for weekend working vacations at the camp. “I have discovered that even the work of government can be improved by leisurely discussions of its problems out under the trees where no bells or callers jar one's thoughts,” he said in greeting his new mountain “neighbors” in an August 17, 1929, speech at the Madison County, Virginia, Courthouse (Washington Post, 18 August 1929, cited in NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8).

“Fishing was the one form of recreation Herbert Hoover pursued throughout his life. While the trout streams that flow through Camp Rapidan provided an occasional diversion for the President, Hoover said in his Madison County Courthouse speech that he considered fishing as “an excuse to return to the woods and streams with their retouch of the simpler life of the frontier from which every American springs” (Washington Post, 18 August 1929, cited in NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8). As well as offering diversions from work, Camp Rapidan seemed also to help the President work more effectively. “I never saw him play cards at the camp, or work on jigsaw puzzles which were popular there, or pitch horseshoes,” Admiral Boone recalled. “The time he actually spent fishing was small...After brief fishing or sometimes a nap or a walk in the invigorating air he would plunge with a new energy into urgent work...He might recess a policy conference, go off fishing for a short while, then get going again with the conference, usually having worked out some key problem ... The loveliness of the place captivated people, though they had their different ways of enjoying it. Sometimes the President would sit quietly for many minutes, smoking his pipe, listening to the stream or fire” (Lambert 1981:27, cited in NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8).

“Throughout the Hoover Administration, Camp Rapidan was the backdrop for policy debates and political strategy sessions. A story in the June 12, 1932, edition of The New York Times claims that the specifics of the Republican tariff bill of 1930 were hammered out at Camp Rapidan. During the summer of 1931, as he worked toward a balanced federal budget, Herbert Hoover summoned each of his department heads, one by one, to a series of weekend conferences at the camp. World attention was focused on the camp in October 1929 when British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and his daughter, Ishbel, spent a week at Camp Rapidan in cabins built specifically for their use. During their stay, Herbert Hoover and Ramsay MacDonald held a now-legendary discussion of naval disarmament during which, it was said, they dismantled the navies of the world while perched at opposite ends of a fallen tree trunk (NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8).

“That legendary tree trunk may in fact have been one of the logs arranged in front of the camp’s outdoor fireplace. Like the Mess Hall, where together camp guests took their meals, sometimes outdoors, the fireplace was a gathering place, with logs pulled around the hearth to facilitate open-air debate. Like the four-tiered, rock garden fountain, the fireplace remains today as a focal point of the camp (NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8).

“Ramsay MacDonald was only one of many distinguished visitors to the camp during the Hoover Administration. The guest register for Camp Rapidan during the Hoover Administration reads like a “Who’s Who” of the era, including such notables as Thomas A. Edison and Winston Churchill. Colonel Charles Lindbergh and his wife, Ann Morrow Lindbergh, were frequent guests of the Hoovers. Charles Lindbergh, like Herbert Hoover, enjoyed trout fishing. “Lucky Lindy” was frequently the winner of the camp’s horseshoe pitching contests. He was also among the guests who, according to humorist and columnist Will Rogers, were recruited on occasion by Herbert Hoover to stack rocks along Mill Prong to form pools as habitats for trout. Remnants of those dam-building outings along Mill Prong still exist between Big Rock Falls and the confluence with Laurel Prong. (NHL documentation 1988: Sec.8).

“The Hoovers’ decision to build Camp Rapidan has also been credited with initiating the construction of the previously proposed Skyline Drive. Horace Albright, the National Park Service director during the Hoover Administration, recalls an early morning 1930 horseback ride with the Hoovers that brought the group to the summit near Big Meadows. “The President motioned me to come up alongside of him,” Horace Albright recalled. “He told me that these mountains were just made for a highway, and ‘I think that everybody ought to have a chance to get the views from here. I think they’re the greatest in the world, and I’ve been nearly everywhere in the world.’” (Lambert 1971:56, cited in NHL documentation 1988:Sec.8). The President suggested work begin as soon as possible and told Horace Albright to have impoverished local farmers use their own tools to build the road, rather than relying on crews of outsiders using heavy equipment (NHL documentation 1988:Sec.8).

“Historian Darwin Lambert, in a 1979 essay entitled “The Rapidan Facet of Herbert Hoover,” extends Camp Rapidan’s significance and impact to an expansion of conservation efforts during the Hoover Administration. “The camp had a spirit or atmosphere conducive to tender concern for both humanity and nature -- in quite a few individuals, as in Hoover and his wife, for the people-earth combination in a sense now often called ecological,” he wrote. “The effect of the camp spread through the Hoover Administration into other conservation matters, working its charm toward saving the scenic values of Niagara Falls (treaty with Canada approved by the Senate in 1930); toward tighter control of oil leases on public lands and more efficient use of water for power, irrigation and navigation; toward reduction of overgrazing on western ranges and reclamation of wasteland; toward planning the great St. Lawrence waterway (treaty with Canada signed in 1932); toward protecting U.S. forests (more than 2 million acres added to the national system); toward launching the Hoover Dam project on the Colorado River; and toward bringing a 40% increase in the national park system, including addition of Carlsbad Caverns, Canyon de Chelly, Death Valley, and the Great Smokey Mountains (linked with Shenandoah, which was brought within reach, though not officially established, during Hoover’s term) (Lambert 1981:28, cited in NHL documentation 1988:Sec.8).

“This National Register nomination – and National Historic Landmark study – is submitted on behalf of those who concur with Darwin Lambert’s view of the historical significance of Camp Rapidan: “The evidence is ample, I feel sure, to support the feeling I have long had – that the Rapidan facet of Herbert Hoover was significant in his personal life and in his Presidential decisions, policies and accomplishments; that focus on this often-ignored facet helps confirm Hoover’s lasting contributions to

humanity and earth; and that Camp Hoover was, is and will remain a spiritual resource of meaning and value to America and the world.” (Lambert 1981:28, cited in NHL documentation 1988:Sec.8).

Rapidan Camp retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as the site of Herbert Hoover’s presidential retreat. Extant resources include three buildings – the President’s Cabin, Prime Minister’s Cabin, and The Creel – the exteriors of which have been restored. Many of the site’s historic roads, trails, and stone-lined paths have also been restored, as have the massive outdoor stone fireplace, a concrete-lined trout pool, and Mrs. Hoover’s stone fountain. Hemlock Run, a water channel spanned by mortared stone footbridges, winds its way through the site, its walls and bridges also restored. A wood footbridge over Mill Prong that was the setting of many photographs of the Hoovers was recently replaced-in-kind after it was destroyed by Hurricane Isabel. Other paths and trails encounter remnant foundation piers, stone steps, and old pipes that lie hidden amongst the understory vegetation, reminders of former camp buildings and camp life.

State Register Information

Identification Number:	056-0062
Date Listed:	02/16/1988
Name:	Camp Hoover

Chronology & Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type:	Designed
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Current and Historic Use/Function:

Primary Historic Function:	Camp
Primary Current Use:	Outdoor Recreation
Other Use/Function	Other Type of Use or Function
Government Office-Other	Historic
Outdoor Recreation	Historic

Current and Historic Names:

Name	Type of Name
President's Camp	Historic
Rapidan Camp	Both Current And Historic
Camp Hoover	Both Current And Historic

Ethnographic Study Conducted:

No Survey Conducted

Chronology:

Year	Event	Annotation
1600 - 900 BC	Established	First human habitation in Blue Ridge Mountains takes place about 11,000 years ago as seasonal encampments.
AD 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).
AD 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).
AD 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).
AD 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).
AD 1750 - 1830	Settled	Settlers move from lower elevations into mountain hollows, where they pursue farming, grazing, timbering, and hunting game (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
AD 1830 - 1839	Established	Recreational use of the mountains begin with the opening of Black Rock Springs Hotel south of Skyline Drive (Historic Resources Study 1997:41).
AD 1880 - 1928	Farmed/Harvested	The future site of Rapidan Camp is harvested for timber.

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AD 1894	Built	George Freeman Pollock establishes Stony Man Camp, later named Skyland (Lambert 1979:i).
AD 1904 - 1930	Destroyed	Chestnut blight leaves significant gap in forest cover throughout Blue Ridge Mountains.
AD 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).
AD 1925	Established	February 21, Congress passes legislation allocating \$20,000 for survey and evaluation of Shenandoah and other parks (SHEN website, Historical Overview).
AD 1926	Established	Congress first authorizes Shenandoah National Park (NP) on May 22, but without funds for land purchases.
AD 1929	Purchased/Sold	William E. Carson, chairman of the Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission, purchases 274 acres of land at the headwaters of the Upper Rapidan River. He then sells 164 acres of this land to President-elect Herbert Hoover and Mrs. Lou Henry Hoover for the purpose of building a rustic summer retreat.
	Built	An access road is built connecting the village of Criglersville to the Rapidan basin.
	Built	The majority of the buildings at the President's Camp are constructed. The first is Five Tents, followed by the President's Cabin (Brown House), Mess Hall, quarters for cooks and attendants, Town Hall, and the Office. Other cabins – Prime Minister's, Ishbel's, Slums, Trails End, Owl, and The Creel – are also constructed.
	Built	Circulation features are built, including entrance road that connects to the access road, various camp roads, Marine Corps Road, road to the spring house, Five Tents Trail, Hemlock Run Trail, and other cleared footpaths within the President's Camp. Sewage and water systems area also completed.
	Built	Also built at this time are a flagpole, an exterior fireplace, horseshoe pit, and several trout pools.

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	Built	Hemlock Run, a man-made water channel, is constructed.
	Built	Installation of telephone and electric services are completed at the camp.
AD 1930	Built	A concrete-lined trout pool is built southwest of the Brown House and adjacent to Hemlock Run (LCS 083065).
AD 1931	Built	Contractors hired by the Bureau of Public Roads begin construction of Skyline Drive in the summer of 1931. The Central District portion is opened for traffic in 1934.
	Built	Rapidan Road is built as part of Skyline Drive project 1-C, connecting Rapidan Camp to Big Meadows.
AD 1933	Built	Road within the Camp is extended to form a loop in front of the President's Cabin (Lambert, 127).
	Land Transfer	Hoover transfers the deed for Rapidan Camp to the Commonwealth of Virginia for eventual transfer to Shenandoah NP. The site encompasses 164 acres. Hoover reiterates his wish that future presidents use the site, or that it is used by the park or scout troops.
	Planned	Newly-elected Franklin Roosevelt visits Rapidan Camp but decides the terrain is too rough for him. A swimming pool is proposed at the camp for Roosevelt in case he changes his mind, but is not built.
AD 1935	Established	On December 26, the Secretary of the Interior accepts deeds for park lands from the Commonwealth of Virginia.
AD 1936	Established	President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicates Shenandoah NP on July 3 in a ceremony at Big Meadows.
AD 1939	Abandoned	Secretary of the Navy Swanson dies at the camp on July 7. All Navy property is withdrawn and the NPS assumes direct charge of the site.
	Abandoned	Access to the camp from Criglersville is discontinued.

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AD 1942	Planned	Shenandoah NP Superintendant Edward Freeland writes to the director of the National Park Service expressing a wish to raze dilapidated buildings at the President's Camp and the entire Marine Camp. Permission is denied.
AD 1944	Demolished	The Marine Camp is demolished. The camp caretaker is relocated to The Creel cabin.
AD 1946	Planned	Freeland begins a campaign to raze the President's Camp due to lack of funds for maintenance and lack of usefulness to the general public.
AD 1948 - 1958	Altered	National Capital Council of the Boy Scouts of America signs a 20-year lease for the camp and assumes full responsibility for maintenance and operation. Buildings are altered and pit toilets are built. Rapidan Camp becomes known as Camp Hoover. By 1958, however, the organization cancels its lease and the NPS reassumes full control of the Rapidan Camp site.
AD 1950 - 1954	Demolished	In the early 1950s, Five Tents is removed.
AD 1960	Demolished	In consultation with Hoover, all Hoover-era and Boy Scout-era buildings are removed except for the President's Cabin, the Prime Minister's Cabin, and The Creel. The stone fountain and outdoor fireplace are retained, but the remainder of the grounds are cleared.
AD 1960 - 1963	Altered	NPS performs rehabilitation work at Rapidan Camp, repairing the three remaining buildings and making changes to the floor plans to accommodate lodging. The park also rehabilitates trails and installs interpretive signage.
AD 1970 - 1972	Altered	The Brown House, Prime Minister, and The Creel interiors are reworked to better accommodate the VIP guests who made regular use of the camp (Racine:98).
AD 1988	Established	Secretary of the Interior Donald Hodel designates the core of "Camp Hoover," encompassing around 108 acres, as a National Historic Landmark under the Presidential Sites theme.
AD 1996	Abandoned	Privileges for governmental officials at the Camp is formally discontinued due to the failing septic system.

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AD 1997 - 2004	Restored	The park decides to restore the exterior and interior of the President's Cabin to a 1930-1931 period, the exterior of the Prime Minister Cabin, and the exterior of The Creel. Work on these projects occurs from 1996 to 2004.
AD 1997 - 1998	Damaged	Ice storms damage many of the trees in and around Rapidan Camp.
AD 1998 - 2000	Stabilized	The stone fountain is stabilized.
AD 1998 - 2004	Restored	The trout Pond is uncovered and restored.
AD 1998 - 2006	Planned	A study is conducted of the vegetation within the central area of the President's Camp in an attempt to determine how the camp was planted during the Hoover occupancy. Work occurs from 2000 to 2006.
AD 1999	Reconstructed	Paths in garden area reconstructed to match more closely those on historic maps of the camp (LCS 082945; photos from 9/99 in Archives).
AD 1999 - 2000	Restored	Hemlock Bridges # 1 and 2 are restored, with repointing of the masonry and replacement of missing stones. Retaining walls along Hemlock Run are also repaired/restored.
AD 1999 - 2002	Restored	The Creel cabin is restored.
AD 2000	Stabilized	The exterior fireplace is repointed and underpinned with a 6" concrete slab.
AD 2002	Preserved	Circulation drives within the camp are preserved.
AD 2003	Damaged	Hurricane Isabel damages trees and bridges at the camp. Hemlock Run sluice gate is severely damaged, decreasing water flows.
AD 2005	Reconstructed	Mill Prong footbridge is reconstructed with rustic style log handrails.

Rapidan Camp
Shenandoah National Park

AD 2007	Restored	Entrance Road bridge is repointed, and missing stones are replaced.
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Physical History:

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the site, organized by time periods. Much of the information below is based on Darwin Lambert's 1971 book (reprinted 1983), "Herbert Hoover's Hideaway."

NATIVE AMERICAN USE, 9000 BC TO 17TH CENTURY

Rapidan Camp, located within Shenandoah National Park (NP) and east of the Big Meadows developed area off of Skyline Drive, is situated within the Blue Ridge Mountains, an area known and used by Paleo-Indians for many centuries. The first human habitation took 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 Manahoac tribe inhabited the area east of the Blue Ridge Mountains and along the Rappahannock River (<http://indians.vipnet.org/tribes/monacan.cfm>). Archaeological testing of the Rapidan Camp area has produced Native American artifacts dating to at least 8,000 years before the present (revised epilogue for "Herbert Hoover's Hideaway," draft 2009:2).

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLUE RIDGE AREA, 1669-1928

A German immigrant named Dr. John Lederer 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 extend the boundaries of the colony. The crossing place was probably Swift Run Gap or the Big Meadows area (Lambert 1979:32-33). The land Spotswood claimed was soon bought up by investors, but disputes over ownership 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, however, local Native Americans were dying of introduced diseases and by 1800 they had disappeared completely or moved away (Lambert 1979:21-22; Resource Management Plan 1998:23). As the better farming land was taken, new settlers moved into the mountain hollows where they developed a 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). Industrial use also developed in some areas from 1845 to 1850, such as the Mt. Vernon Iron Furnace and the Stony Man Mountain Tract, where copper was mined and charcoal produced for smelting (Engle 1994:1).

In 1830, the first recreational use of the area occurred in what is now the park's South District. A resort called Black Rock Springs Hotel touted seven mineral springs with curative powers

(Historic Resources Study 1997:41-42). In 1894, George Freeman Pollock created a popular resort initially called Stony Man Camp and later renamed Skyland, in what would become the park's Central District. Skyland was a resort destination and summer residence for middle and upper middle class citizens primarily from Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Philadelphia. Pollock strongly supported the establishment of a national park in the Blue Ridge Mountains and would later play a key role in this effort (Historic Resources Study 1997:44).

Other land uses included cattle grazing, especially from 1830 to 1845, and lumbering that provided material for rebuilding after the Civil War, such as for railroad expansion. Tanneries were another important industry, utilizing chestnut bark for the source of tannin in the 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>).

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the site of Rapidan Camp was used primarily for small-scale agriculture and timber harvesting, primarily by the Wayland family. Immediately prior to the Hoover occupancy, the chief land use in the area was apparently recreational. The fishing rights were held by the Rapidan Fishing Club, and the river was lined with rough trails for their use.

Shenandoah National Park:

In 1924, Hubert Work, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, assembled a five-member Southern Appalachian National Park Committee (SANPC) to study the issues regarding establishment of a national park in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Committee distributed a questionnaire to gain public input into suggested sites (Shenandoah NP website, Historical Overview). George Pollock filled out the questionnaire with the aid of several colleagues, 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 purpose (Shenandoah NP website, Historical Overview). 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 the lack of funding (Historic Resources Study 1997:45). Congress authorized Shenandoah NP on May 22, 1926, but without funds for land purchases. To obtain the land, Virginia Governor Harry F. Byrd established the Commission on Conservation and Development, headed by William Carson, Byrd's former campaign manager. Carson was an untiring advocate of Shenandoah NP and the eventual construction of a scenic drive, now called Skyline Drive, along the crest of the Blue Ridge (NHL documentation 2008:60).

DEVELOPMENT OF RAPIDAN CAMP, 1929-1933

Selecting the Site:

Soon after his victory over Al Smith in the November 1928 presidential election, Herbert Hoover recognized that he would occasionally need a retreat from the pressures of Washington, D.C. (HSR 1997:53). Hoover was born and raised in Iowa and later in California, but as both states were far away, a place was sought that was within driving distance to Washington. An avid trout fisherman, Hoover instructed an aide, Lawrence Richey, to seek out trout streams within 100 miles of Washington that were at elevations around 2500 feet, which would provide cooler conditions in the the summers and be less likely to have mosquitoes (Historic Resources Study 1997:53).

President Hoover and First Lady Lou Henry Hoover were also hoping such a retreat would allow them to immerse in nature. Having traveled and lived abroad extensively after their years at Stanford University, the Hoovers were used to remote and primitive locations. In a letter from January 1929, Mrs. Hoover articulated such a place:

“My husband’s idea was to have a camp down on one of the tree-covered flats beside a stream or at the junction between two streams. He likes to be near enough to hear the water murmuring. A spot might be found where part of the camp could be down there and part of it a hundred or so feet higher on one of the broad benches giving a distant view...” (Letter, 27 January 1929, cited in Lambert 1971:13)

The letter went on to describe the camp’s building requirements, quarters, offices, guest rooms, dining room, and even the presence of stone fireplaces.

William Carson heard about Hoover’s interest and moved quickly to find a location within Shenandoah NP that met the criteria. In February 1929, Carson in his own name secured fishing rights for 264 acres along a stretch of the Rapidan River that had been held by the Rapidan Fishing Club, and began stocking the stream. Carson secured an appropriation made jointly by the Commonwealth of Virginia and Madison County to build an access road into the Rapidan basin from the east, off of the state highway near Criglersville. In a letter to Hoover, Carson wrote, “When you are satisfied with the stream, and pick a suitable location for a camp along it, I will have the camp built” (Letter, Carson to Hoover, cited in Lambert 1971:14). By late March, the Madison County Eagle reported the access road was under construction and that electric line installation had begun (Lambert 1971:16-17). In April, the Hoovers, Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur, Richey, Carson, and others explored Carson’s lands on horseback, along rough trails that had been cut by the Rapidan Fishing Club. Hoover liked the area and the sounds of the water along the river, and when he came upon the somewhat level land where the Mill and Laurel Prongs joined to form the Rapidan River, he said, “That’s were I want my camp.” (Lambert 1971:19). Around this time, Hoover purchased 164 acres of land around this site that had been in the Wayland family for over 100 years.

Initial Camp Development:

The 164-acre tract was assessed as having 22 acres of cove hardwoods, 116 acres of slopes, and 26 acres of grazing land. It was noted that the land had been cut over “many years ago” (Madison County Land Records, SHEN 21203). The grazing area had “patches of good bluegrass sod, but large areas [were] covered by pine and other brush, and there is considerable blackberry,” indicating a recent lack of grazing activity.

The logistics of this remote upstream site proved to be very difficult, with rocky and steep ridges and hollows, dense forests, and a scattered and tangled understory that had grown in areas opened up from previous tree cutting (Lambert 1971:21). Nonetheless, development of the camp proceeded rapidly. An architect friend of the Hoovers, James Y. Rippin, wrote a letter in which he specified the camp facilities that would be required by the Hoovers, which corresponded to the ideas in Mrs. Hoover's January letter. Mrs. Hoover was familiar with Mr. Rippin's work for the Girls Scouts of America organization, in which she held various leadership roles from 1917 until her death in 1944. The letter called for ten "tents," all placed on wooden frames with the floor elevated a foot above ground and board sidewalls rising five feet, as well as an all-frame dining room-kitchen. Two of the buildings used by the Hoovers would have field stone chimneys and fireplaces (Lambert 1971:20). A detachment of the U.S. Marines Corps, led by Colonel Earl Long, was responsible for constructing the camp's buildings, water supply, sewage disposal, entrance road, and intracamp roads, trails, and paths (but not the access road from the state highway in Criglersville, although the two did connect).

The first building constructed at the camp was called Five Tents, a 120x30-foot structure with canvas sides later replaced by wood siding (Lambert 1971:29). It was located on a hillside somewhat west of where the main area of the camp would be built. The Eagle reported that Hoover slept in a raised Army tent on May 24, which was probably Five Tents as it was away from the construction area. The second building constructed was the President's Cabin, also called the Brown House in contrast to the more famous White House, and later just called The President. This building overlooked the junction of the Laurel and Mill Prongs and featured a 60x20-foot living room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a screened sleeping porch, massive stone chimneys, and a large sitting porch overlooking the streams (Figure 1) (Lambert 1971:29,31). Next was the Mess Hall where all meals were served, quarters up the slope for the Navy men (a chief steward and a dozen Filipino cooks and attendants), Town Hall for indoor conferences and recreation, and a small Office or duty shack for Secret Service and Marines aiding in camp protection and emergency maintenance (Figure 2) (Lambert 1971:29).

In addition to the various buildings, other improvements were made at the camp related to both use, circulation, and infrastructure. According to the Eagle on May 24, 1929:

"[the] grounds have been cleaned up and leveled in places and the natural floral display made orderly and more pleasing. Walkways have been bordered with rocks which lay helter-skelter on the preserve. Other rocks have been erected in conical piles from which native flowers send forth their fragrance..."

The newspaper also reported the camp featured a flagstaff (location unknown), a massive open air fireplace and chimney, a horseshoe pit, and a pool created by a dam that Hoover helped build, which may have been one of several trout pools built at various locations along Mill and Laurel prongs or a concrete lined pool built near the President Cabin (Figures 3, 4, and 5) (Lambert 1971:23-26). By May, telephone lines reached the camp and by June electric power was established. There were two water systems, one chlorinated for drinking and cooking originating in a covered spring, and one not chlorinated for baths, showers, and fire protection from an open stream. According to the Eagle, ten 600-gallon tanks were brought in to store

mountain spring water (Madison County Eagle, 6 May 1929, 10 May 1929, 17 May 1929, and 26 July 1929, cited in Lambert 1971:23-25,29).

Throughout this period of development, Carson was hoping to build a more luxurious facility for the President. Although Congress appropriated \$48,000 for the camp, and the Commonwealth of Virginia offered \$100,000, Hoover declined both offers and instead chose to buy the land on which the camp was built. Hoover personally owned 164 acres and leased some 2000 acres around the camp (Lambert 1971:36). He also paid \$15,000 for building materials and supplies, including food stuffs, but construction and transportation costs were incurred by the Marines, who were encamped nearby and simultaneously conducted training exercises (Lambert 1971:20,27-28). In August 1929, Hoover told Carson that he wished the camp to become part of Shenandoah NP after he left office for his successors to use as a weekend camp, or for the park to use (Lambert 1971:53).

By the fall of 1929, many of the camp's buildings and much of its infrastructure had been constructed. Despite the early beginnings as a retreat, Rapidan Camp soon became a kind of auxiliary White House, with the President conducting official business there. Planning sessions and policy debates soon became regular occurrences. One of the most significant events occurred in early October 1929 when Hoover brought British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald to the camp to discuss naval disarmament. In advance of this visit, the Prime Minister's Cabin and Ishbel's Cabin, named for MacDonald's daughter who also came on the trip, were built (Lambert 1971:70). In the months that followed, additional guest cabins were built amongst the previously erected trees and buildings, though at a less frenzied pace (Lambert 1971:29). They included The Slums, Trails End, and The Owl. The Creel cabin was the last of the buildings to be constructed at the camp during the Hoover occupancy. The earliest known plan showing the camp's buildings exists from 1931 (Figure 6).

Cabinet Camp, Marine Camp, and Stables:

In addition to the President's Camp, the Marines also built a Cabinet Camp for Hoover Administration officials. The site was located about two miles southeast and downstream of the President's Camp, and featured six buildings, water pipes, and a roadway (Lambert 1971:38). It was connected to the President's Camp via the entrance road as well as a secondary road and a trail, later named the River Trail and Marine Corps Road, respectively.

The Marines also built their own camp, located about a mile east of the President's Camp and directly connected by the entrance road. The Marine Camp was initially comprised of tents except for the mess hall and a few other structures, though the tents were replaced with barracks in the 1930s (Lambert 1971:130). The number of men approached 500 under Long's command in mid-1929 due to the initial burst of construction at the President's Camp, and to provide presidential protection and conduct military training in the mountains. The typical contingent was 150-200 when the President was in residence, but only around twelve in the winter. Situated along the entrance road and roughly between the two camps were stables that connected to the President's Camps on the Marine Corps Road and various trails (Lambert 1971:29-30,34).

Camp Life and Subsequent Development:

Recreational activities at Rapidan Camp included fishing, pitching horeshoes, riding horses. The Marines, along with men hired by Hoover, blazed hiking and horse trails from the camp to nearby waterfalls, peaks, and other scenic areas (Lambert 1971:29-30). Mrs. Hoover enjoyed taking guests to a clearing in front of Five Tents to enjoy the distant views and watch the moon rise. Other times it was enough to simply walk around, as the Hoovers often did hand in hand, or relax on one of the many porches (Figure 7). Boulder-gathering and dam-building to create trout pools was one activity Hoover enjoyed doing with other guests, whereas fishing he preferred to do alone (Figure 8) (Lambert 1971:41-43). The President generally did not hike except as required to fish. He also did not often ride horseback either, although he did enjoy taking drives as roads in the area became more prevalent (Lambert 1971:55).

Throughout the camp's development, the Hoovers were adamant in preserving the scenery and its rustic presence. Historian Darwin Lambert writes that, "[t]he camp had a spirit or atmosphere conducive to tender concern for both humanity and nature. . . The effect of the camp spread through the Hoover Administration into other conservation matters . . ." (Lambert, "The Rapidan Facet of Herbert Hoover," an essay appearing in *Herbert Hoover Reassessed*," 27, cited in *National Register*, 12/2003, Sec 8, 106). The Hoovers, for example, insisted that only deadwood, such as the blighted chestnuts, could be used for cooking or heating, and that no living trees, coal, or oil could be used for such purposes. The Marines were directed not to remove any trees in the area unless authorized, and one particularly large hemlock next to the President's Cabin was specifically retained and left growing through the porch floor (Lambert 1971:31-32,35).

In addition to having a geology degree from Stanford, Mrs. Hoover was an avid gardener and botanist, and was responsible for the flower boxes that brightened the cabins. Throughout the grounds she made natural looking flower pots of fallen rocks and logs. A seven page document of directions, called "Flowers and Shrubs for the President's Camp," outlined her wishes: new plantings were to be identical as those growing within 20-25 miles of the camp, or hardy species that might be cultivated but similar to the natives, and all plants should not seem out of place among the woody setting. "The President is very fond of color in gardens, so where possible, and appropriate to the species arrange flowering shrubs and flowers so as to give the mass effects of color." ("Flowers and Shrubs for the President's Camp" with Mrs. Hoover's emphasis).

The document also discouraged formal beds of plants or flowers, recommending that they instead ramble off into the surroundings. Plants were not to be carefully trimmed, no beds should be outlined, and some flowers were to be planted along the creek edge and overhang the water. Mrs. Hoover also desired an area of flowers at a little distance from the camp that could be used for cuttings, but did not want to cut flowers in the camp per se. Ferns or other plants were to be taken only from little hidden places, and not from areas that would be frequented by them or guests, or from the along a creek, trail, or open meadow. Mrs. Hoover also noted that mountain laurel was abundant, but hoped that the absence of rhododendron, honeysuckle, dogwood, huckleberry, and Judas tree could be brought in from nearby. The document also included a long list of plants that she liked (Lambert 1971:46-48).

Several water features were built at the President's Camp, and one of the most impressive was a man-made water channel called Hemlock Run. The channel was built in 1929 by the Marines and fed by water diverted through a sluice gate upstream on Laurel Prong. The upstream portion of the channel meandered through the forest and was loosely defined by randomly-arranged boulders, but portions farther downstream in the heart of the camp were lined with stone retaining walls and crossed with stone and wood footbridges (Figure 9). Where the channel passed between the President's Cabin and the Prime Minister's Cabin, existing rock outcrops and boulders were incorporated into the channel to form a small waterfall, called Hemlock Run Falls. The falls were often visible in the background of photographs of the Hoovers (Figure 10). Next to falls was a small concrete-lined pool for holding stocked trout for fishing. Built in 1930, it was watered via pipes from Hemlock Run.

At the center of the camp, Mrs. Hoover supervised the construction of a stone fountain, which was round with steps rising toward a narrow apex where water would gush out and fill each of the circular bowls. Paul Abernathy, in charge of camp maintenance, built the fountain with natural stones mortared with waterproof concrete. Water for the fountain was piped from the open stream (presumably Mill Prong), and Mrs. Hoover insisted that both vegetation and rocks were to be replaced after the pipe was installed (Lambert 1971:31).

Other features at the camp included a camp fire area, logs made into seats and benches, and outdoor lights, which were a necessary security measure. To reduce the appearance of artificiality (and perhaps to lure bugs away from walks), the lights were located high in trees so as to be hidden (Lambert 1971:32). Other security measures included eleven different sentry posts in and around camp, with seven posted along the access road and entrance road when the President was arriving or leaving (Lambert 1971:36). On Fork Mountain to the southeast of the camp, a fire tower was erected by the Marines and the state and manned during dry times. Airplanes supplemented fire prevention efforts on hazy days (Lambert 1971:36). The tower also provided the Hoovers and their guests excellent views of the Blue Ridge area.

Rapidan Road and Skyline Drive:

Having successfully convinced President Hoover to establish his retreat within the boundaries of Shenandoah NP, William Carson continued to promote the concept of the national park and a road along its ridgeline. Aware of the implications for the future of the park if such a road was built, Carson commented to Hoover that a useable road was needed to provide convenient and safe access to Rapidan Camp and to connect it with Skyland. Such a connection was also consistent with the Secret Service rules that did not allow the President to always take the same route to and from places. Not surprisingly, the idea of a road was also supported by Skyland's founder, George Pollock. Informal routes between the resort and camp already existed in some form from newsmen in a hurry to get to the camp (Lambert 1971:55).

Hoover reacted favorably to the idea of such a road, emphasizing its benefit to the "traveling public," and appears to have originally endorsed the project in early October 1929. However, the collapse of the American stock market several weeks later intervened and the project was temporarily shelved. Hoover maintained his interest in the proposed park, apparently giving

National Park Service (NPS) Director Horace Albright special instructions (on various viewpoints and possible uses for the abundance of chestnut wood) while accompanying him on horseback to inspect the proposed park (NHL documentation 2008:60).

The onset of the Great Depression coincided with what was considered to be the worst drought in the history of Virginia. The drought led to crop failure in the apple orchards of the Blue Ridge region, greatly hurting the region's farmers and greatly reducing local employment in harvesting and packing. Declining economic conditions in the region spurred Carson to make an appeal for relief funding to get construction started on the road from Thornton Gap to Rapidan Camp. By the autumn of 1930, Carson promoted a plan to accomplish the twin objectives of putting jobless men to work and making the area accessible to the public by building the road. As the economic depression worsened in 1930 and 1931, the prospects of building a road on the ridge grew in importance as a source of employment for the people of the northern Blue Ridge. Employment was urgently needed, and President Hoover agreed to provide money from drought relief funds to build the road, if Congress approved the measure. U.S. Senator Carter Glass of Virginia, at the urging of Carson and Albright, introduced a bill to make drought relief funds available for building roads in the national parks. Upon passage of the bill, Hoover immediately allocated money to build the road from Front Royal to Jarman Gap, nearly the entire length of Shenandoah NP. This initial allocation of \$1,570,479 was subsequently denied, however, when Hoover issued a general order of economy because of the national financial crisis (NHL documentation 2008:60-61).

Meanwhile, Carson continued to pressure Senator Glass and federal authorities until he succeeded in obtaining enough money to build a thirty-four mile section of road from Thornton Gap to Swift Run Gap. This was an extension of the originally planned twenty-mile segment connecting Thornton Gap on Lee Highway (Route 211) to Skyland and Rapidan Camp. Local newspaper editors would later urge readers to pressure state and federal authorities to extend the road south to Waynesboro, and north to Front Royal. Finally with appropriations made available for road construction in the national parks by the Emergency Public Works Act, the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), in cooperation with the NPS, began the initial work on what would be named Skyline Drive in the summer of 1931 (NHL documentation 2008:61).

The middle section, or Central District, of Skyline Drive was constructed first because it was situated between Route 211 (Thornton Gap) and recently completed Route 33 (Swift Run Gap), and it would provide access to Rapidan Camp (NHL documentation 2008:17). This new access road, called Rapidan Road, was built as part of Skyline Drive project 1-C that stretched 20.11 miles from Big Meadows to Swift Run Gap (NHL documentation 2008:5). The two-lane, 6.3 mile gravel road bed featured switchbacks through steep wooded areas, culverts, and several runs of stone retaining wall (NHL documentation 2008:17,43). As soon as the road was graded enough to be passable, Hoover began exploring by car some of the areas that Mrs. Hoover and guests had already explored on horses. The Rapidan Road was not paved, but Skyline Drive was and it opened to traffic on September 15, 1934 (Lambert 1971:109; NHL documentation 2008:17).

Land Transfers:

Rapidan Camp

Shenandoah National Park

Only a few changes are noted at the camp during the last half of the Hoover Administration. Beginning in 1932, the entrance road was improved, but to what extent is unknown. In 1933, the road within the camp was extended to form a loop in front of the President's Cabin (Lambert 1971:127). An interesting sketch map from 1932 shows the arrangement of buildings, structures, and circulation features towards the end of the Hoover residency (Figure 11).

Herbert Hoover left the White House in early 1933 after losing the November 1932 presidential election to Franklin D. Roosevelt. Around this time, he transferred his private ownership of the Rapidan property to the Commonwealth of Virginia (NHL documentation 2008:60). The transfer included the 164-acre camp tract with buildings, a separate 1.58-acre Hoover School tract, and leasehold rights to adjacent lands to Shenandoah NP (Lambert 1971:122). Hoover reiterated his hopes that the camp would be used by his successors or perhaps by the Boy or Girl Scouts. Hoover estimated he had spent about \$114,000 in personal funds on the development of Rapidan Camp (Lambert 1971:124).



Figure 1. View looking south at the President's Cabin and the footbridge over Mill Prong, early 1930s (Shenandoah NP, Archives).



Figure 2. View looking northeast at a footbridge crossing Hemlock Run, 1932. On the other side of the channel, Town Hall is on the right and the Office is on the left (Photograph by Major Long, USMC, Shenandoah NP, Archives).



Figure 3. The outdoor fireplace at Rapidan Camp in 1931, surrounded by fallen logs for use as benches (Shenandoah NP, Archives, Negative No. 1052).



Figure 4. Mrs. Hoover and other guests, 1929-1933. Stone-lined paths can be seen in the background (Shenandoah NP, Archives).



Figure 5. Trout pools were built at various locations along Mill Prong. This location is just upstream from the footbridge at the President's Cabin, 1929-1933 (Shenandoah NP, Archives).

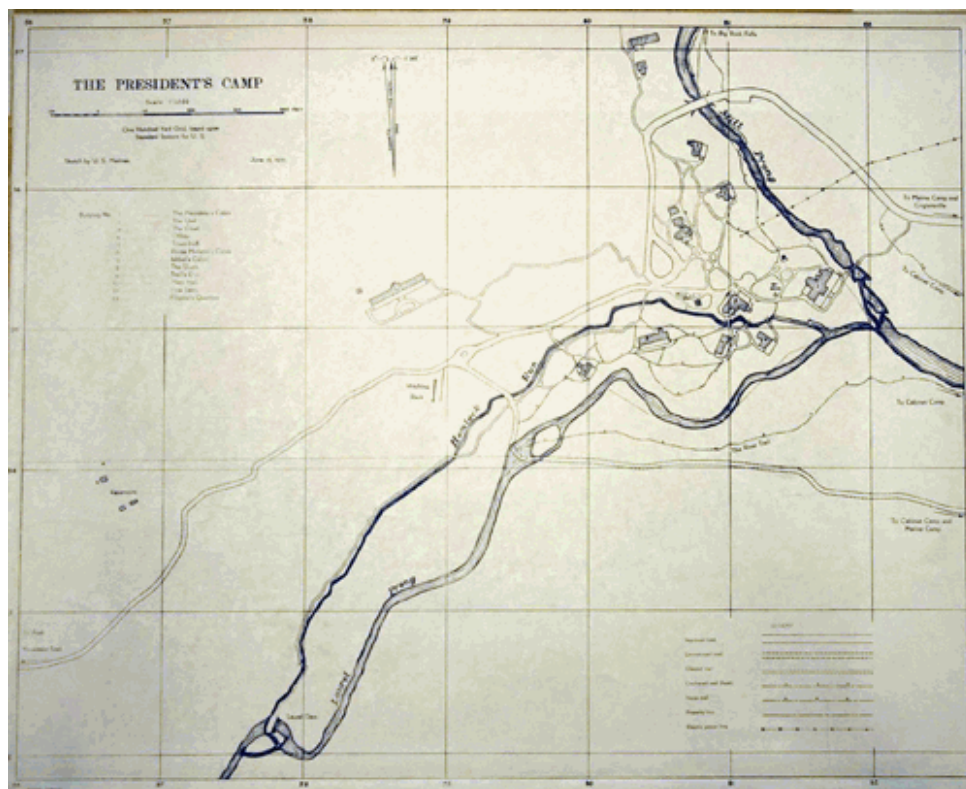


Figure 6. Plan of Rapidan Camp from June 1931 prepared by the U.S. Marines (Shenandoah NP, Archives).

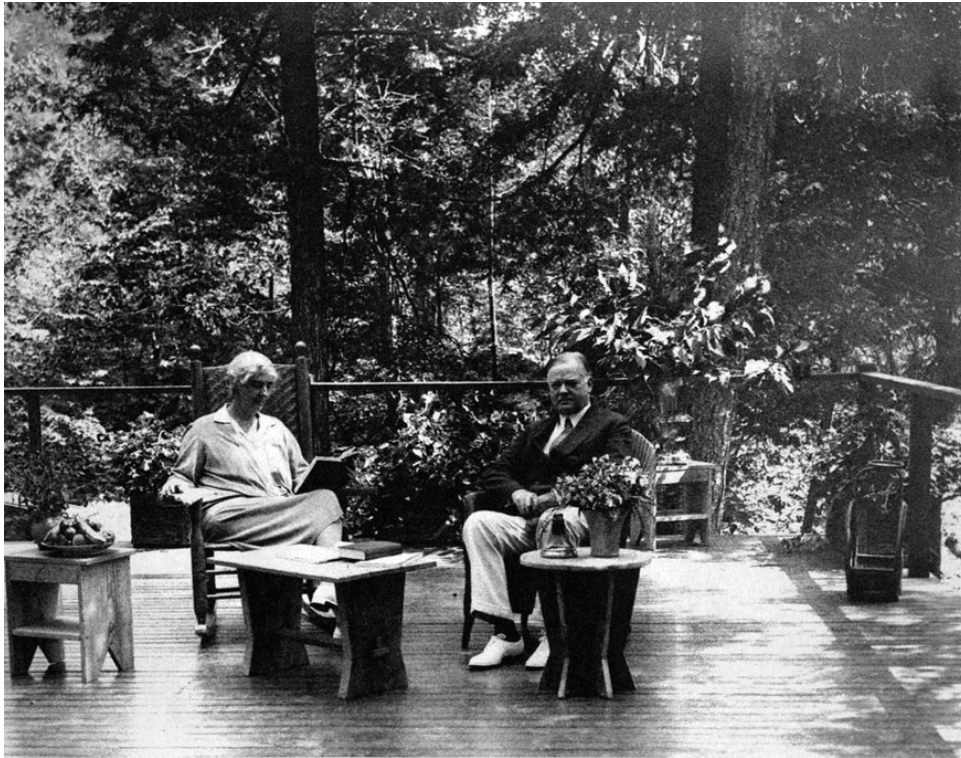


Figure 7. The Hoovers on the porch at the President's Cabin, 1929-1933 (Shenandoah NP, Archives Negative No. 1036).



Figure 8. Herbert Hoover fishing on the Rapidan River, 1929-1933 (Shenandoah NP, Archives).



Figure 9. The falls along Hemlock Run, 1929-1933, with the Prime Minister's Cabin accessed by a mortared stone footbridge (Shenandoah NP, Archives).



Figure 10. View of the Hoovers in a small grass area below the President's Cabin. In the background are the stone walls of Hemlock Run and water flowing over Hemlock Run Falls (Shenandoah NP, Archives).



Figure 11. Sketch map of Rapidan Camp by Edward M. Stone, 1932 (Shenandoah NP, Archives).

POST-HOOVER USES OF THE CAMP, 1933-1948

President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in March 1933, and soon after decided that he would not use Rapidan Camp. However, at Carson's urging, Roosevelt visited the site in April. Although the Marine contingent that remained to oversee the site had installed ramps at all camps buildings so that Roosevelt would have easier access, it became clear during the visit that the camp's terrain would be too rough. During this visit, however, Roosevelt agreed to reinstate the funds necessary to complete Skyline Drive (upon becoming President he had issued a general order impounding all government funds). Roosevelt's New Deal legislation ensured the completion of Skyline Drive as a joint project of the NPS and the Bureau of Public Roads (NHL documentation 2008:61).

Roosevelt's April 1933 visit to the camp was his only one, as he eventually selected sites in Maryland, and then Georgia, for his retreats. Nonetheless, several improvements were planned at the camp to accommodate him in case he changed his mind. One such project from May 1933 concerned the construction of a swimming pool for Roosevelt between Hemlock Run and Laurel Prong. The design was prepared by Major Long (of the Marines), and NPS engineers and architects, but there was apparently a disagreement between Long, who wanted a 25x70-foot rectangular concrete pool with vertical sides, and the NPS designers, who desired a naturalistic "ole swimmin' hole" (Figure 12). The project would have required a oil burning plant capable of raising 100,000 gallons of water 25 degrees in 12 hours, a costly consideration. The pool was to be constructed by the newly formed Civilian Conservation Corps, but it was never built. However, the CCC did complete "...a new road at the summer White House so

autos can drive right up in front of it” (Lambert 1971:126-127).

President Roosevelt never visited the site again, though he was nearby on July 3, 1936 at the dedication ceremony of Shenandoah NP at Big Meadows (earlier, on December 26, 1935, the Secretary of the Interior accepted deeds for park lands from the Commonwealth of Virginia). Mrs. Roosevelt, however, came to Rapidan Camp several times, as did other federal officials in subsequent years (Lambert 1971:126). In the spring of 1934, the NPS received instructions to prepare plans to improve the camp’s buildings so that “each cabin will be a complete unit for cooking, dining, and sleeping.” Site plans and drawings were completed, but the projects were not implemented (Lambert 1971:127). From 1935 to 1939, one regular camp user in the summers was Secretary of the Navy Claude A. Swanson (a former Governor of Virginia and U.S. Senator). In July 1939, Swanson died at The Slums cabin and soon after Navy property at the camp was removed. The NPS assumed direct charge of the site and assigned a caretaker who lived in the nearby Marine Camp (Lambert 1971:128-129). At this time, access to the site from Criglersville was discontinued, and Rapidan Road became the primary access route (Lambert 1979:154).

Since Hoover’s departure, the use and future of the camp had been in limbo. Organizations and individuals had wanted to use it occasionally or permanently, but as long as any possibly remained that it could again be used by a sitting President, few projects went beyond the planning stage (Lambert 1971:129-130). In 1941, when a plan surfaced for Interior Department officials and members of Congress to use the camp, the park’s superintendent, Edward Freeland, was instructed to evaluate the condition of the camp’s buildings and furniture. Freeland reported that most of the buildings were not in the best condition. Hearing no response on the plan, the superintendent asked for an appropriation in 1942 to either repair the buildings, or remove the most dilapidated buildings at the President’s Camp and all of the Marine Camp (Lambert 1971:130). This request was denied and another plan was offered, to allow the park’s concessionaire, the Virginia Sky-Line Company, to repair and operate the camp as part of its visitor accommodation system. This work began, but the Secretary of the Interior then reversed the decision because of limited resources and rationing caused by World War II (Lambert 1971:130). Around this time, the vehicular bridge over Mill Prong was replaced by a steel truss “Bailey” bridge (NHL documentation 1988: Sec. 7,7).

In 1944, the Marine Camp was demolished and the caretaker of the President’s Camp was relocated to The Creel cabin (Lambert 1971:130). In 1946, the park superintendent reported there had been no use of the camp since 1941, and again requested funds to repair or remove the camp’s buildings. The Department of the Interior agreed the NPS had no legal obligation to keep the buildings, but felt former President Hoover should be consulted. A letter to Hoover regarding the matter was drafted but not sent. Two more plans for the site were proposed, one familiar and one earlier proposed by Hoover: that the camp be used by members of Congress or by the Boy or Girl Scouts (Lambert 1971:130).

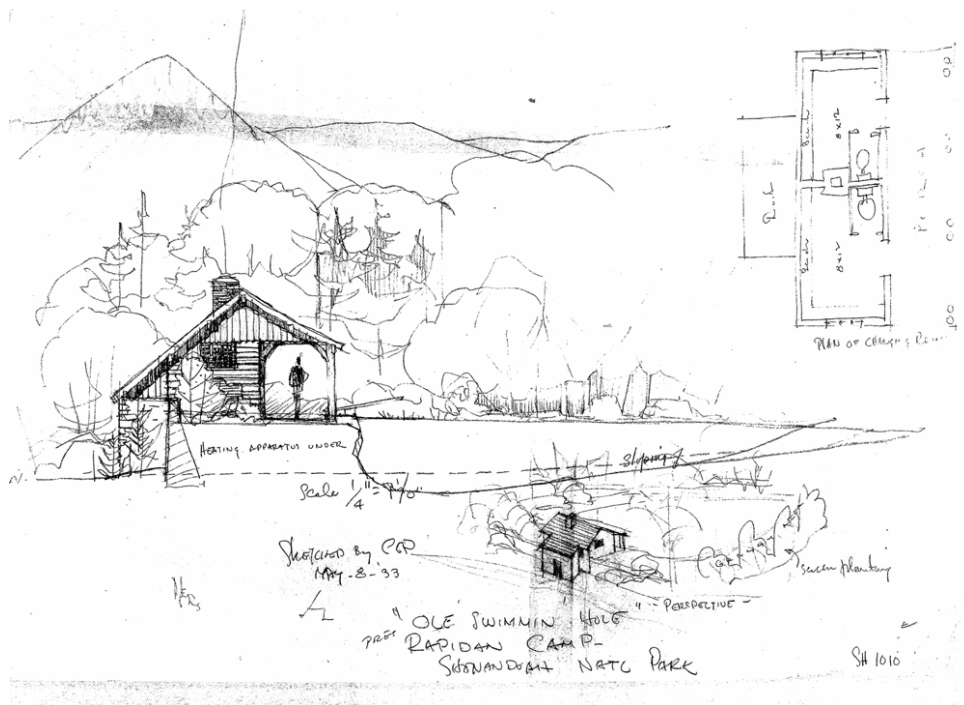


Figure 12. Sketch of the heated swimming pool as proposed by the National Park Service, in 1933 (etic SHEN 134-1010, Denver Service Center).

BOY SCOUT CAMP, 1948-1958

Hoover's wish came true in March 1948 when the National Capital Council of the Boy Scouts of America signed a 20-year lease for the camp and assumed full responsibility for the site's maintenance and operation. Though the lease was somewhat counter to the NPS policy of not permitting exclusive use of park lands by a single entity, the Secretary of the Interior felt this was a special case. Former President Hoover helped fund the effort to improve the camp, but with the provision that it could be used again as a presidential retreat. The Girl Scouts had also expressed an interest in the site, but the Boy Scouts had already signed the lease. Access to the camp was to be from Criglersville, not from Skyline Drive and Rapidan Road, which had a locked gate. At this time, Rapidan Camp became known as Camp Hoover (Lambert 1971:132).

The Boy Scout Council began modifications for year-round use. Toilets were removed from some cabins and bathrooms were converted to kitchens, and some porches were taken down (Lambert 1971:132-133). A Shenandoah NP park ranger report from March 1949 noted tent sites at the old Five Tents, one halfway up the road to the camp boundary, and another at boundary fence, and several new toilet structures. The ranger also observed seven tent frames, rock fireplaces, and a standard pit toilet had been built on the hill behind the old Mess Hall, about which he wrote, "Twelve trees from 4" up had been felled (!), showing need to make park policies better known...Engineer of Scout council looks over dam sites for swim pool. I discouraged idea but outcome unknown" (Lambert 1971:133).

After the presidential election in November 1952, it appeared the Boy Scouts might have to vacate the camp. While President Truman had shown no interest in the camp, newly elected President Eisenhower was a fisherman. The NPS prepared costs associated with returning the camp into Presidential condition, and prepared a report (and welcome) for the President. In the end, though, Eisenhower declined and chose to fish out West (Lambert 1971:133-134). Nearby, in 1953, the old Cabinet Camp was bought for private use (Lambert 1971:39).

Despite having to deal with aging infrastructure, several dilapidated buildings (Five Tents was removed around this time), and recurrent road washouts, the Boy Scout camp was popular (Lambert 1971:133). In 1954, Hoover visited the camp for the first time in over twenty years, recalling with the boys his time there (Lambert 1971:135). By 1958, however, operation of the camp had become a burden for the Boy Scout Council. The decline was brought about by several factors, including termite damage in the buildings and a state health department finding that the water supply was contaminated. The short-term solution was to boil water, but the long-term solution was a new water system. There were also recurring maintenance problems along the entrance road, and although the park was allowing access from Rapidan Road, such favoring of a few could not become policy. Additionally, there was no water sports available at the site. As a result, the NPS resumed direct responsibility of Rapidan Camp, and once again the camp was in limbo; a part of the park still to be held for possible presidential use that so far had not occurred (Lambert 1971:136-137).

RAPIDAN CAMP, 1959-2009

New park superintendent, R. Taylor Hoskins, who was Shenandoah NP's first chief ranger and quite familiar with the old camp, was now faced with a decision on the future of both the old Hoover-era buildings as well as the abandoned Boy Scout buildings. This time, Hoover was promptly consulted, and he asked his old friend, Lawrence Richey, to decide the best course of action. Richey and the NPS decided to demolish all of the buildings at the camp except for three that would be preserved and rehabilitated and serve as the essential features of a permanent historical-natural shrine: the President's Cabin, Prime Minister's Cabin, and The Creel (Lambert 1971:138). In 1960, twenty-four buildings and structures (more than half of them the Boy Scouts) were torn down and removed. The grounds were cleared except for the three buildings, the outdoor fireplace, and the stone fountain (Lambert 1971:138).

From 1960 to 1963, the NPS performed rehabilitation work at Rapidan Camp, repairing the three buildings and making changes to the floor plans to accommodate lodgings for the President, cabinet members, and congressmen. The Creel still served as caretaker's residence. Also at this time, trails were rehabilitated and interpretive signage was installed for park visitors coming to the camp on foot or horseback. A wooden map was erected to show the layout of the camp (Racine 2001:97; Lambert 1971:138,141).

During the Nixon Administration from 1969-1974, the camp was used heavily. White House staff requested that The Creel be winterized to allow for cold weather trips. It was, although the original structure was heavily damaged in the process. Changes were also made to the President's Cabin and the Prime Minister's Cabin to better accommodate the VIP guests who

made regular use of the camp. (Racine 2001:98). Such frequent uses, however, engendered public criticism and necessitated a public defense. Nixon never personally visited the camp, but finally, in 1979, a sitting President of the United States did: Jimmy Carter and his family stayed at the camp May 11-14 (revised epilogue for “Herbert Hoover’s Hideaway,” draft 2009:1). On June 7, 1988, Secretary of the Interior Donald Hodel designated the core of “Camp Hoover,” around 108 acres, as a National Historic Landmark under the Presidential Sites theme.

Use of the camp waned in the 1980s and through the 1990s. In 1996, VIP privileges for governmental officials at the camp were formally discontinued (Racine 2001:3). The main reason was that a routine water test revealed that the septic system serving the the President’s Cabin and Prime Minister’s Cabin was failing, providing the potential for contamination of the Rapidan River. New water and sanitary systems to the three cabins would have required substantial land clearing. This information, along with evidence of Native American artifacts at the site, prompted the park to abandon the project and cease any residential use of the camp until another solution could be found. At this time, the park decided to restore the exterior and interior of the President’s Cabin to a 1930-1931 period, the exterior of the Prime Minister Cabin (the interior to house a self-guided exhibit of the camp’s history), and the exterior of The Creel (the interior to accommodate the caretaker supplied with bottled water for drinking and cooking) (revised epilogue for “Herbert Hoover’s Hideaway,” draft 2009:2). Work on these projects occurred from 1996 to 2004 (List of Classified Structures, #s 007773, 007774, 007775).

In the winter of 1997-1998, severe ice storms heavily damage many trees in and around Rapidan Camp (Updyke 2004). Over 160 trees were damaged and had to be removed, a process that had to be done by hand because of the potential archeological sensitivity. As a result, Rapidan Camp was no longer a shady glen, but a hot and exposed field of downed and ragged vegetation. To make matters worse, the few hemlocks that did remain were heavily infested with wooly adelgid, their future not promising (revised epilogue for “Herbert Hoover’s Hideaway,” draft 2009:5). In 1998, a study was conducted on the vegetation within the central area of the President’s Camp in an attempt to determine how it may have been planted during the Hoover occupancy. Reed Engle, the park’s former Cultural Resource Manager, explains the strategy in a revised epilogue for Darwin Lambert’s book, “Herbert Hoover’s Hideaway:” Landscape restoration was now a part of the calculus, but by natural revegetation with some assistance from park staff. The removed trees, except for the hemlocks, would resprout from their own roots. In a few years the park staff would mark the trees to be retained and remove the others. The trees retained would be allowed to grow and form again a closed canopy. In the meantime, brush would grow up, but this old field vegetation that would die out as it fell under the shade of the enveloping tree canopy. Where existing shade remained, or where areas were completely open, new shrubs, perennials, and forbs would be planted consistent with historic photographs, Lou Henry Hoover’s preferred plant lists, and/or introduced species still on-site. This work began in 2000 and continued through 2006. Removal of old field vegetation continues and will probably be required for another decade. (Revised epilogue for “Herbert Hoover’s Hideaway,” draft 2009:5)

Engle’s last statement appears to be a reality. Field work associated with this CLI has revealed that a significant number of the plantings shown on a planting plan from 2004-2005

could not be found, and most of those that were located were either in poor condition or had not grown as much as would be expected in three to four years time. The main reason appears to be that the now open tree canopy has encouraged a successional environment in which the intentional plantings are being outcompeted by the surrounding forest species.

Other landscape structures and features at the camp have been addressed in various stabilization, reconstruction, and restoration projects: camp driveways (2002), paths (1999-2004), Hemlock Run bridges (#s 1 and 2) (1999-2000), Hemlock Run retaining walls (1999-2000), stone fountain (1998-2001), exterior stone fireplace (2000), and the trout pool (1998-2004) (List of Classified Structures, #s 092672, 082945, 082957, 082957, 082946, 082938, 083065). Some projects, such as the location and composition of the paths, were informed by archeological testing. One pleasant discovery was finding the old trout pond between the President's Cabin and the Prime Minister's Cabins, which had simply been backfilled sometime after the Hoovers left the camp permanently in late 1932. Another discovery found what may have been a small stream and series of pools leading from the stone fountain to the trout pool (List of Classified Structures, # 082946; revised epilogue for "Herbert Hoover's Hideaway," draft 2009:3-4).

Another natural disaster struck the camp in 2003 in the form of Hurricane Isabel, which damaged more trees and shrubs and washed out bridges. The sluice gate at the head of the Hemlock Run was severely damaged, which substantially decreased the flow of the run. Projects hastened by the hurricane included the replacement-in-kind of the footbridge over Mill Prong (2005) and repairs to the entrance road stone bridge (2007) (List of Classified Structures, #s 423123, 360630, 082934). Work currently underway includes construction of a small accessible comfort station and improvements to the water and sewer systems.

One of the last senior government executives to stay at Rapidan Camp overnight was former Vice President Al Gore. Perhaps he too experienced fishing at Rapidan Camp in the same way Herbert Hoover once did: "an excuse to return to the woods and streams with their retouch of the simpler life of the frontier from which every American springs" (Washington Post, 18 August 1929, cited in National Register, 12/2003, Sec 8, 104).

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Significant landscape characteristics identified for the Rapidan Camp site include natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, topography, circulation, constructed water features, vegetation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, and small-scale features. 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.

The physical integrity of Rapidan Camp is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1929-1933) with current conditions. The site still retains historic landscape characteristics and features. The camp is situated at the confluence of the Mill Prong and Laurel Prong, which meet to form the headwaters of the Rapidan River. The rushing water in these streams continues to evoke the qualities that attracted the Hoovers to this site, and along with the level topography and rock formations influenced the layout of the camp's buildings and structures, circulation features, and plantings. The President's Cabin (The Brown House), Prime Minister's Cabin, and The Creel are three of the camp's thirteen buildings constructed by the U.S. Marine Corps that remain today, their exteriors having been restored in recent years to the Hoover-era. Mrs. Hoover's stone fountain, a massive outdoor stone fireplace, and a concrete-lined trout pool have also been restored and reconstructed, as has Hemlock Run, a man-made stone-lined water channel that flows through the heart of the site. Mortared stone footbridges span the channel, while a rustic wood footbridge, recently replaced-in-kind after Hurricane Isabel, crosses Mill Prong. A network of stone-lined footpaths, trails, and roads also wind through the camp and pass by remnant foundation piers, stone steps, and old pipes associated with former camp features and hidden in the understory vegetation. Historic stone walls and a stone bridge can also be found along the camp's original entrance road.

The site has undergone significant changes since the Hoover occupancy. In 1960, ten of the camp's thirteen buildings were removed due to their deteriorated condition, as were many of the structures built at the site by the Boy Scouts in the late 1940s through late 1950s. Since the mid-1990s, much of the camp's tree canopy has succumbed to severe ice storms, gypsy moth infestation, and the woolly adelgid that has decimated the stately hemlock trees. These events have transformed a once shady camp site into a mostly sunny site and have encouraged the growth of understory vegetation. The thinner overhead canopy has opened up views of the surrounding mountains, but the understory growth now limit views within the camp and have slowed efforts to restore plantings installed throughout the grounds by Mrs. Hoover. In 2003, Hurricane Isabel damaged the channel's sluice gate and has reduced the flow of water through the channel and over Hemlock Run Falls. Despite these changes, however, Rapidan Camp still retains sufficient integrity to convey its development and use as Herbert Hoover's presidential retreat. This is due to the park's extensive and ongoing restoration and reconstruction projects throughout the site. There are a few other features that remain from the post-historic Boy Scout period, but they do not detract from the historic scene. Non-historic features – a comfort station, two sheds, concrete curbs, log benches, a gate, signage, a ladder, and utility-related features – are generally inconspicuous in the landscape.

INTEGRITY

Location:

President Hoover selected the site of Rapidan Camp at the headwaters of the Rapidan River in early 1929, not only because of the excellent trout fishing but also because the mountain stream location was in close proximity to Washington D.C. Visitor's can still experience this secluded retreat and rush of water from the camp's remaining buildings or along the restored paths, trails, and roads that meander through the landscape.

Design:

Rapidan Camp was built by the U.S. Marine Corps and developed in accordance with the general requirements and wishes of the Hoovers. Although their exact role in the siting of each building is unknown, it was made clear that the camp's buildings, roads, and paths were to be designed and used in a manner that would preserve the site's physical conditions and natural setting. The wood-frame buildings were designed simply and practically for three-season use, and except for the massive field stone chimneys, had no appreciable architectural distinction. Features such as the outdoor fireplace, fountain, and footbridges incorporated native stones so they would blend in with the surroundings. Other features, such as Hemlock Run Falls, incorporated some of the many ancient boulders found throughout the site. Attached porches and wood footbridges featured rough cut railings and handrails. Mature trees and shrubs were retained wherever possible, and new plantings installed by Mrs. Hoover were either native species or carefully selected so that they would thrive in this location.

Setting:

With the loss of ten of the site's thirteen buildings and the growth of understory vegetation, the camp no longer reads as a tightly-knit collection of cabins. That said, the relationships between the site overall and the surrounding landscape are still evident. The siting of the camp in this mountaineous environment, and the presence and sound of water rushing in and around it, still reflect the conditions the Hoovers were seeking for their retreat.

Materials:

Extant original materials at Rapidan Camp include the three restored wood-frame cabins. Native fieldstone was the most prevalent material of choice in many other features at the camp, and many were retained in the various restoration and reconstruction projects. Features with stone include indoor and outdoor fireplaces, free-standing and retaining walls, culverts, footbridges, steps, and a fountain. Stones also lined some of the paths and trails. Some historic plant material also remains from the Hoover period, while other material has been replaced-in-kind.

Workmanship:

The workmanship of the U.S. Marine Corps in the construction of the camp's buildings, circulation features, and constructed water features is still evident due to the park's careful restoration efforts that began in 1996. Several structures, such as the wood footbridge over Mill Prong, have been carefully replaced-in-kind based on historic photographs.

Feeling:

The feeling of Rapidan Camp as it existed during the Hoover period has been diminished with the loss of many of the site's buildings. The site's more open conditions and the subsequent growth of understory plants has impacted spatial relationships and historic views between the buildings and other landscape features. However, careful restoration efforts on the three extant cabins, as well as many of the site's circulation systems, constructed water features, and small-scale features, continue to convey at least a sense of what life at the camp may have been like.

Association:

The site's three remaining cabins, roads, trails, paths, constructed water features, and various small-scale features can be directly linked to the occupancy of President and Mrs. Hoover between 1929-1933. These features were constructed by the U.S. Marine Corps.

The section below 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 (1929-1933), 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.

Landscape Characteristic:

Natural Systems and Features

Historic and Existing Conditions:

Hydrological forces shaped the site that would become historic Rapidan Camp over the course of millennia. Concentrations of surface drainage on the slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains acted to erode underlying rock, creating narrow stream valleys. Two of the streams on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge were the Laurel and Mill Prongs, which joined to form the upper Rapidan River, at approximately 2500' above sea level (Figure 13). It is at this confluence that President Herbert Hoover chose to locate his summer retreat. The flat area here provided sufficient space for a camp capable of accommodating a presidential entourage. It was also at this elevation that mosquitos and summer temperatures would be more tolerable.

Long-term interactions between water and bedrock also resulted in the formation of boulders of significant size that lodged at various points along the slopes and valleys. One such collection of boulders came to be known as Big Rock Falls, a small natural waterfall about 500 yards upstream from the vehicular bridge across the Mill Prong. It became a popular destination for visitors to the camp. Other rocks and boulders were found around the site of Rapidan Camp and influenced its layout, and some were incorporated into Hemlock Run Falls, a water channel built through the camp (discussed under Constructed Water Features). Another interesting site was the ford and island along Laurel Prong, which provided a crossing for horses between the stables to the east and the hitching area below the Five Tents. Weathering of rock material, erosion, and deposition by hydrological forces continues to induce subtle changes in the landscape.

The Rapidan Camp site was also densely wooded, providing comfortable shade in the summertime. This native vegetation was one of the defining characteristics of the site and one that the Hoovers greatly admired and were careful to preserve. As such, they were careful to “shoehorn in” the buildings of the camp around existing trees. In January 1929, Mrs. Hoover wrote to a friend describing the area they had just scouted for their summer retreat. Although she does not refer specifically to the site that was eventually chosen, her description of the general area is informative:

“Excepting where occasional benches have been cleared for corn or a few old orchards by the primitive mountain folk, the slopes are very well-wooded with a youngish growth. There are innumerable enormous dead chestnuts standing all over the place, so that it must have been a very different place after the foliage was out a dozen years ago. . . There were a few long-leaved pines scattered throughout the general deciduous growth and quite a good deal of hemlock, but mostly it was of young oaks, maples, sycamores, and tulip poplars---and probably many more I could not recognize with their leaves off.” (Letter, 27 January 1929, cited in Lambert 1971:13)

The oldest plan of the camp illustrating vegetation is from 1935, a few years after the period of significance, though little is believed to have changed in the interim. The plan shows a dense canopy of trees throughout the camp, but historic photographs show that there were spots within the camp that received a good deal of sunlight. A forest coverage map of Shenandoah National Park from 1941 indicates Rapidan Camp was primarily within a red oak forest with a smaller area of cove hardwood. Another map from 1985 shows that the site was dominated by cove hardwood, with lesser amounts of yellow poplar and only a small area classified as red oak (Shenandoah NP GIS: veg_41, forest polygon_1985).

One of the most dramatic changes in vegetation has occurred in 1996-1997 when severe ice storms severely damaged vegetation, requiring the removal of over 160 trees. Also around this time was the beginning of a devastating infestation of the wooly adelgid in the Eastern hemlocks and the gypsy moth in the oaks at the site and throughout the park. The loss of all but a few of these trees, many of which had once lined the streams around the camp, has significantly changed growing conditions in the understory and opened up spaces that have been since taken over by plants such as blackberry, poison ivy, and tulip poplar seedlings. This has drastically altered the site’s spatial qualities, especially in the vicinity of the stone fountain. As Mrs. Hoover once observed, a few years can have a dramatic impact on a place when a key species is lost, and Rapidan Camp is now a very different place compared to a dozen years ago. In other areas, plantings installed by Lou Hoover have naturalized with the surroundings, much like the Civilian Conservation Corps plantings at developed areas along the park’s Skyline Drive.

Items noted with an * are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Mill Prong

Feature Identification Number: 137738
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
Feature: Laurel Prong
Feature Identification Number: 137740
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
Feature: Rapidan River
Feature Identification Number: 137742
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
Feature: Big Rock Falls *
Feature Identification Number: 137744
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
Feature: Ford and Island, Laurel Prong *
Feature Identification Number: 137746
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 13. View looking south at the vegetation around the President's Cabin from across Mill Prong (OCLP 2008).

Spatial Organization

Historic Conditions (through 1933):

The physiographic features of the Blue Ridge Mountains influenced the development of Rapidan Camp. The President's Camp was clustered around a broad rocky and wooded bench between the Mill and Laurel Prongs, which joined to form the Rapidan River. The President's Cabin was located above this confluence. Other buildings at the site were carefully built amongst the trees and boulders, and all were sited so that the sound of the streams could be heard. Together, the buildings at the camp formed a tight cluster joined together by footpaths and drives that connected to surrounding trails, roads, and scenic destinations. The primary access into the camp was from the east along a road from Criglersville. In 1931, another road, Rapidan Road, was built to provide access from the west and Skyline Drive. Two other camp clusters were developed nearby (and outside the CLI study boundaries) with their own buildings, structures, roads and paths, and water systems. The Marine Camp, located one mile to the east, constructed the President's Camp and infrastructure and provided protection and maintenance. The Cabinet Camp, situated approximately two miles downstream from the President's Camp, provided a retreat for members of Hoover's Cabinet where they could be close to the President if necessary.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

From 1948-1958, the National Capital Council of the Boy Scouts of America leased the President's Camp. During this period, the Five Tents building was demolished and several Hoover-era buildings were modified. Additional pit toilets, barbecues, and tent sites were also developed. In 1960, many buildings from both the Hoover and Boy Scout eras that were in poor condition were removed. The exceptions were the President's Cabin, Prime Minister's Cabin, The Creel, the outdoor stone fireplace, and the stone fountain. Foundation remains, roads, paths, and constructed pools were left but unmaintained, and eventually became overgrown and lost in the wooded landscape. Many of site's circulation and water features were brought back beginning in the mid-1990s as part of site-wide restoration and reconstruction efforts. Today, the fundamental layout of Rapidan Camp is still visible, but the loss of all but three of the buildings has altered the site's spatial qualities.

Land Use

Historic Conditions (through 1933):

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the site of Rapidan Camp was used primarily for small-scale agriculture and timber harvesting. In 1929, Hoover purchased 164 acres that had been in the Wayland family for over 100 years. This tract was assessed as having 22 acres of cove hardwoods, 116 acres of slopes, and 26 acres of grazing land, but cutting and grazing had not occurred in recent years preceding Hoover's purchase. Immediately prior to the Hoover occupancy, the chief land use in the area was apparently recreational, with fishing rights held by the Rapidan Fishing Club. The river was lined with rough trails for their use.

With establishment of the President's Camp, much government business was conducted at the site when Hoover and his staff were in residence. Support and security land uses were located nearby at the Marine Camp and Cabinet Camp. Upon leaving office in 1933, Hoover

transferred his 164-acre tract (along with other lands) to the Commonwealth of Virginia to be condemned with the other area properties which were to become part of Shenandoah NP. With this transfer he expressed a wish that the camp be kept available for the use of future Presidents if they so wished.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Hoover's stipulation for Rapidan Camp created an ongoing conflict for the NPS, which was unsure of how to manage a property that was in public park land but also set aside for Presidential use. President Franklin D. Roosevelt found the camp terrain too rough for his use, but other government officials occasionally used the site. Upon the death of the Secretary of the Navy at the camp in 1939, all Navy property was removed and site management reverted back to the NPS, at which time a caretaker was assigned to watch the property. When the Marine Camp was removed in the 1940s, the caretaker moved on-site into The Creel cabin. From the 1940's on, the use of Rapidan Camp was primarily recreational. The Boy Scouts of America leased the property from 1948 to 1958 and used it as a summer camp they called Camp Hoover, but by 1960 the Boy Scout's additions, and all but three Hoover-era buildings, were razed. Officials from the Nixon Administration often used the site, but it was not until Jimmy Carter visited that the camp finally once again hosted a President.

Residential use was suspended in 1996 when it was found that the sites water and septic systems were failing. Since then, those services are supplied by portable and self-sustaining facilities. Land use at Rapidan Camp today is essentially consistent with its historic use: residential and recreational, although both are of a somewhat different in nature and scale. A park employee resides in The Creel cabin during the summer months, acting as a caretaker. Hiking and horse trails lead down to the camp from Skyline Drive, and limited access is also possible from the east from Criglersville past the former Cabinet Camp (the Cabinet Camp was never incorporated into Shenandoah NP. It is currently owned by a cooperative that rents out the remaining cabins). In 2008 the park began daily summer shuttle bus runs down to the camp from Big Meadows, via Rapidan Road, and interpretive tours of the camp and the interior of the President's Cabin.

Topography

Historic Conditions (though 1933):

Landform manipulation at Rapidan Camp was deliberately kept to a minimum. The camp conformed with the site's topography and was sited on a relatively flat area of land at the bottom of several hills. Buildings were also sited with careful regard to preserving the site's vegetation. The finished floor elevation of each building was determined by the highest point under the intended footprint, and differences were accommodated with wooden piles. The only major grading work done for the camp was limited to the roads leading into it, along some of the trails, and the construction of the Hemlock Run and a concrete-lined trout pool.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

The topography of Rapidan Camp today represents that of the period of significance. No

discernable landform manipulation can be seen, and it is not believed that the Boy Scouts made any significant alterations to topography during their years leasing the camp from 1948-1958. Some grading occurred to construct several small parking areas off of the original driveway loop, but these changes are minimal.

Circulation

Historic Conditions (through 1933):

When President and Mrs. Hoover first visited the site that would become Rapidan Camp in the spring of 1929, they completed the final leg of the journey on horseback along rough trails because the a road to the area from Criglersville, a small town approximately seven miles southeast of the camp, was not yet completed. When finished, this road would be the primary means of access to Rapidan Camp.

The access road from Criglersville passed by the Cabinet Camp prior to continuing through a gate that marked the 164-acre Hoover property. At this juncture, the road's construction was accomplished by the U.S. Marine Corps and referred to as the Entrance Road. Soon after the gate were the stables on the west side of the road and then the entrance to the Marine Camp on the east side. After this point was Rapidan Road, completed in 1931 as part of Skyline Drive, to provide access from the west. From this point west, the core of the camp, the Entrance Road was lined with dry-laid stone walls. Prior to the crossing at Mill Prong was a small parking pullout that accommodated four or five automobiles. After crossing Mill Prong, the entrance road terminated as a loop at the west edge of the main camp area. None of the roads were paved during the historic period.

Another road, called the Spring House Access Road, headed west from the original loop to connect to the Five Tents building, the reservoir that served the camp, and eventually as a foot trail up to Fork Mountain where an observation tower was built to take advantage of excellent views of the surrounding area. Closer to the camp, Spring House Access Road in turn connected to another road, the Marine Corps Road that headed east across Hemlock Run and Laurel Prong and lead back to the stables, Marine Camp, and Cabinet Camp. In the mid-1933, a few months after Hoover's occupancy, the Civilian Conservation Corps built a road heading east from the original loop that terminated as a loop directly in front of the President's Cabin. Various plans indicate that this was accomplished mostly by widening some of the existing paths.

In addition to roads, a 1931 Marine Corps plan of the President's Camp shows three types of paths or trails: "cleared trails," "uncleared trails (foot)," and "horse trails." The camp's most important trails were the cleared trails, which were approximately 3-feet wide and connected the main cluster of camp buildings to each other and to the roads. In addition, cleared trails also lead to the Five Tents and to the dam on Laurel Prong (the Five Tents Trail and Hemlock Run Trail). Within the camp proper, the cleared trails were edged with unmortared stones and surfaced with gravel. These paths typically meandered through the site and helped form the islands of vegetation that comprised Mrs. Hoover's "woodland garden." Stone steps and stone edging were incorporated into the paths where topographic conditions dictated, especially along the trail to Five Tents. Additionally, numerous stone and wood footbridges crossed the two

streams and Hemlock Run. The uncleared trails were secondary trails that connected to the cleared trails, and often tracked close to the streams. The main horse trail was called the River Trail and generally followed the same course as the Marine Corps Trail but tracked closer to Laurel Prong. The unimproved road to the Fork Mountain Trail was also used as a bridle path.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

In 1939, the NPS discontinued access from Criglersville and Rapidan Road became the primary access route. As a result, the portion of the Entrance Road from the east gate to the junction with Rapidan Road became unused. After many of the camp's buildings were removed in 1960, the site was not actively used. Circulation features, especially paths, gradually deteriorated and were no longer discernible when the area was mapped in 1995.

Due to the many extensive restoration and reconstruction projects that began in the mid-1990s, circulation features for the most part reflect conditions as shown in the park's 1935 Master Plan that was prepared a few years after Hoover left. Visitors can now walk along many of the camp's primary stone-lined and gravel "cleared trails" (Figure 14). The most notable change to the path system is a wide path extending from the arrival loop to The Creel cabin, which replaced a series of paths that once encircled the Mess Hall. The section of the Entrance Road heading west from the junction of Rapidan Road is in good condition, as are the original loop and the loop in front of the President's Cabin. The graded Spring House Access Road still exists, but the Marine Corps Road is in some places only a trace.

The trail to Big Rock Falls has been relocated to the west side of the Mill Prong, beginning on the north side of the entrance road and passing the area where the servants' quarters once stood. The Hemlock Run Trail is still usable, though the former footpaths between the former cabin sites in this area are no longer discernible. The Five Tents Trail is intact, with the sets of stone steps and stone edging in fair condition (Figures 15 and 16).

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

Character-defining Features:

Feature:	Entrance Road (CH-06)
Feature Identification Number:	137748
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	82933
Feature:	Circulation Drive (CH-08)
Feature Identification Number:	137750
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	92672

Feature: Spring House Access Road (CH-05A)

Feature Identification Number: 137752

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82952

Feature: Road to Stables and Marine and Cabinet Camps * (CH-10)

Feature Identification Number: 137754

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 83190

Feature: Walkways (CH-09)

Feature Identification Number: 137756

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82945

Feature: Trail to "Five Tents" * (CH-05B)

Feature Identification Number: 137758

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82953

Feature: Stone Side Walls along "Five Tents" Trail *

Feature Identification Number: 137760

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82953

Feature: Stone Steps along "Five Tents" Trail

Feature Identification Number: 137762

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82953

Feature: Hemlock Run Trail (CH-11)

Feature Identification Number: 137764

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82954

Feature: Mill Prong Horse Trail (no #)

Feature Identification Number: 137766

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 14. View of the restored roads and paths leading to the President's Cabin at Rapidan Camp (OCLP 2008).



Figure 15. Stone steps can still be found along the Five Tents Trail (OCLP 2008).



Figure 16. View of stone edging along the Five Tents Trail (OCLP 2008).

Constructed Water Features

Historic Conditions (through 1933):

Unlike most developed sites within Shenandoah NP, constructed water features played a significant role in the design of Rapidan Camp. The site's natural streams initially attracted the Hoovers to this location, and the camp was designed to take full advantage of them with additional construction. Trout pools were built at several locations along Mill Prong, both upstream and downstream from the bridge that provided the main access to the site. Small stone dams and/or lines of natural rocks were positioned in relation to exposed bedrock and the stream's banks. They were built by Hoover and his guests at various times throughout the historic period to improve trout habitat.

Hemlock Run was a significant part of the site's rustic character, bringing the sound of running water into the heart of the camp. The stream was essentially an excavated channel, watered by diverting the stream flow from Laurel Prong through a sluice gate that consisted of two concrete piers with embedded cuts for a removable gate. The sluice gate was set back from a low berm or small island, possibly secured with stones as a dam, that diverted water through the gate. The 0.5-mile long channel, which ran higher than the level of Laurel Prong, was lined with loosely arranged unmortared stones at the western portion and more defined mortared stone walls at the eastern portion. Several large rocks were incorporated into the channel between the President's and Prime Minister cabins to create Hemlock Run Falls, a small but picturesque waterfall. Several finely-crafted wood footbridges and impressive mortared stone footbridges spanned the channel.

Adjacent to Hemlock Run and Hemlock Falls was an artificial trout pool. This circular concrete form pool was lined with stones and fed by two cast iron pipes from Hemlock Run. At the center of the camp and Mrs. Hoover's woodland rock garden was a round, four-tiered stone fountain with several adjacent pools leading south. Although concrete was used as a mortar, the fountain's random-cut stone construction created a naturalistic appearance.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

The trout pools along Mill Prong have deteriorated over the years due to the constant flow of the stream and high water events, but some portions of the old stone dams are still discernable upstream from the vehicular bridge. Hemlock Run itself still exists, but the flow of water has been significantly reduced since Hurricane Isabel severely damaged the sluice gate structure in 2003 (Figure 17). Due to the diminished water flow, there is rarely enough water to create visible water falls over the large rocks at the site of Hemlock Run Falls (Figure 18). The channel's mortared stone walls have been restored and reconstructed are in generally good condition. The unmortared stones lining the channel's edge farther upstream are present, but portions are overgrown, although this part of the stream was intended to be more naturalistic in appearance. The troutpool next to the falls is in good condition, though the pipes that once fed it are not functional and the water inside is essentially stagnant (Figure 19). Mrs. Hoover's stone fountain does not currently function, and only a few of the recorded seven pools flowing from it are discernable (Figure 20). Structurally, though, the fountain is in good condition, and one can imagine what it may have looked like when it was turned on.

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

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Man-made Troutpools (on upper portion of Mill Prong) *

Feature Identification Number: 137768

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Stone-lined Channel, Hemlock Run * (0)

Feature Identification Number: 137770

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 423143

Feature: Hemlock Run Falls *

Feature Identification Number: 137772

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Troutpool (CH-16A)

Feature Identification Number: 137774
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 83065

Feature: Hemlock Run Sluice Gate * (CH-11.E)
Feature Identification Number: 137776
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 82958

Feature: Stone Fountain * (CH-12)
Feature Identification Number: 137778
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 82946

Feature: Man-made Troutpools (on lower portion of Mill Prong)
Feature Identification Number: 137780
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 17. The mortared stone retaining walls along the man-made water channel, Hemlock Run, have recently been restored. View looking north (OCLP 2008).



Figure 18. Due to the damage to the sluice gate upstream, the flow of water through Hemlock Run has been reduced to a trickle that makes for a less dramatic experience at Hemlock Run Falls shown here (OCLP 2008).



Figure 19. View looking east at the trout pool next to Hemlock Run, with the President's Cabin in the distance (OCLP 2008).



Figure 20. View looking west at the stone fountain and overgrown adjacent pools (OCLP 2008).

Vegetation

Historic Conditions (through 1933):

The dense forested location of Rapidan Camp was one of the site's most important and

cherished assets, and was enhanced by new plantings under the direction of Mrs. Hoover. Historic documentation indicates many new plantings corresponded to sunny areas. According to Mrs. Hoover's instructions:

"The immediate surroundings of the camp have many trees and bushes which means a great deal of shade; yet there are open spaces where the sun comes through, so that these patches can be picked out for sun-loving things. But there must be a great many things for blooming in the shady places." ("Flowers and Shrubs for the President's Camp")

Regarding the additional plant material brought to the site for the camp, Mrs. Hoover outlined her desires very clearly:

"All the plants should be either the native variety or look so like it that they will not seem out of place among that woody setting. . . There should be no formal beds of plants or flowers but, while having a certain compactness as to give masses of color, should ramble off into the surroundings. They should not be carefully trimmed nor should the beds be outlined in any way" ("Flowers and Shrubs for the President's Camp")

Also included in this document was a reference to cut flowers in an area of somewhat removed from the main part of the camp, instructions regarding where plants could be transplanted from, and lists of preferred plant species. The list was categorized according to those plants that already grew profusely in the area, those that had been seen in the vicinity, and those that had not been seen but were thought to possibly grow well at the camp.

A historic photograph shows the Hoovers seated within a small open and perhaps grassy area below the President's Cabin. However, such an area is not specifically indicated on any historic maps or plans of the site.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Vegetation at Rapidan Camp has changed since the period of significance, especially since the mid-1990s when ice storms resulted in the removal of many mature shade trees and the oaks and hemlocks began to decline, which together created significantly more sunny areas in a site that was historically quite shady. This change has encouraged a sharp increase in the growth of other understory plants that have begun to crowd out some of the site's original plantings and establish themselves in other areas.

In other instances, Mrs. Hoover's plantings have naturalized with the surroundings. In 1998, the park's Division of Natural and Cultural Resources undertook a study of the vegetation in the central area of the Rapidan Camp. In the study, they sampled sites within the central area of camp that had been the location of former buildings, sites within the camp that were never built over, and comparison sites outside of the center of camp. Their results noted non-native ornamentals were present, as well as unusual concentrations of natives that indicates they were deliberately planted as part of Mrs. Hoover's plan to beautify the camp in a naturalistic way. One such remnant that was observed during the fieldwork for this CLI was the non-native vinca (*Vinca minor*), which has naturalized in the area near the troutpool between the

President's and Prime Minister's cabins.

Based in part on this study, projects were undertaken from 2000 to 2006 to replant the central area of the camp with selected species that were common during the Hoover occupancy. At the time of CLI fieldwork, current conditions were compared to a planting plan from 2004-2005. A significant number of the plantings could not be found, and most of those that were located were either in poor condition or had not grown as much as would be expected in three to four years time. Much of the reason for this lack of success appears to stem from the fact that the opening up of the tree canopy has resulted in a successional environment in which the intentional plantings are being outcompeted. Currently, tulip poplar seedlings cover vast areas of the central camp. Other natives such as young birch, blackberry, and poison ivy are also prevalent, obstructing views to the streams in ways that the mature canopy did not. Additionally, the small grass area shown in a photograph of the Hoovers, below the President's Cabin, is no longer present and is overgrown.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Remnant Plantings by Lou Henry Hoover

Feature Identification Number: 137782

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Successional Vegetation at Site

Feature Identification Number: 137784

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Buildings and Structures

Historic Conditions (through 1933):

During the Hoover presidency, there was a total of forty buildings at the President's Camp, Marine Camp, and the Cabinet Camp. The President's Camp contained thirteen buildings at the end of the period of significance. All were wood-framed in a rustic style, designed by the architect James Y. Rippin with significant input from First Lady Lou Henry Hoover.

The camp's single-story buildings were built on wooden pilings that were placed to accommodate the natural topography of the site. Though Hoover later referred to them as "log cabins," the buildings were in fact constructed with pine boards, and adequate but not showy heavy framing covered by what has been called "German siding." Roofs were thin, could hold back rain but not hold in heat, and were comfortable for three seasons. The buildings had no appreciable architectural distinction except for the massive field stone chimneys (Lambert 1971:29). The buildings were designed to minimize separation between outside and inside: they had numerous windows, and the wood panels around many of these windows were hinged so that nearly half the wall could be let down. All buildings also had open air porches of varying sizes, most of which looked out over one of the camp's streams. The buildings within the President's Camp were constructed by the U.S. Marine Corps. They included, in order of

construction: Five Tents, President's Cabin (The Brown House), Mess Hall, "Filipino's Quarters" and an unnamed building nearby, Town Hall, Office, Prime Minister's Cabin, Ishbel's Cabin, The Slums, Trails End, The Owl, and The Creel. There was also a stable area consisting of at least two buildings, located just off the Entrance Road between the Marine Camp and Cabinet Camp, two separate camps nearby during this period.

Other buildings and structures in the President's Camp consisted of vehicular and pedestrian bridges, stone walls and culverts, a springhouse, and reservoirs. The Entrance Road featured two bridges. One was located about 100 yards southeast of the junction with Rapidan Road and was constructed with mortared stone. Another crossed Mill Prong, but it was replaced in the 1940s and its original design is unknown. Dry laid stone walls lined both sides of the Entrance Road between the Rapidan Road junction and Mill Prong to create a subtle yet clear gateway approach to the camp.

Historic plans indicate the Hemlock Run water channel was spanned by eight crossings. In upstream portions of the channel, the crossings were simple stone slabs or metal culvert pipes covered with stones, but farther downstream the bridges were either wood construction with rustic wood handrails, or mortared stone construction supported by a central stone pier. The wood footbridge over the Mill Prong to the east of the President's Cabin was supported by a mortared stone pier at one end and a boulder at the other, and featured rustic timber handrails. There are several historic photographs of the Hoovers standing on this footbridge. Another footbridge of unknown construction was located upstream between this footbridge and the vehicular bridge. There is no record of any bridges on Laurel Prong (except for the crossing at the ford).

Comprehensive details of the camp's water and sewer systems are not known, but site plans from 1931 and 1935 indicate a series of reservoirs west of the site connected to the camp via a 2-inch water line and a chlorinator to the north of the "Filipino's" Quarters. In the site's National Historic Landmark documentation, a wood-frame springhouse was identified in this area, which helped deliver water to the camp. The 1935 site plan also shows sewer lines criss-crossed the camp. The system discharged to a septic field south of Laurel Prong, via a pipe supported by mortared stone piers.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Soon after the Hoovers left Rapidan Camp, several plans were prepared to modify the camp's buildings so that each cabin could function independently with its own sleeping, cooking, and dining areas. These plans were not implemented. Some of the buildings were used occasionally by government officials in the ensuing years, and right before World War II the Virginia Sky-Line Company, the park's concessionaire, began to transform the site into guest lodgings, but this plan was also abandoned. Around this time, The Creel was utilized as a residence for the site's caretaker and the bridge over the Mill Prong was replaced with a steel "Bailey"-type bridge.

From 1948 to 1958, many of the buildings at Rapidan Camp were used and modified by the Boy Scouts. Additional structures were also built, including toilets and barbeques, but the Five Tents building was removed. In 1960, all but three buildings in the President's Camp were demolished due to their deteriorated condition (the stable area may have been removed at this time or perhaps earlier in the 1940s when the Marine Camp was demolished). The three remaining buildings – the President's Cabin (The Brown House), Prime Minister's Cabin, and The Creel – were used sporadically until 1996 when it was discovered that the camp's septic facility was failing, at which point the park decided to restore the building exteriors. This work continued through 2004. Other restoration efforts were undertaken on the site's stone bridges, culverts, and walls.

Today, The Creel cabin is utilized as housing for a park volunteer/caretaker, while the President's Cabin and the Prime Minister's Cabin are both open to the public for daily park-led tours (Figures 21, 22, and 23). Visitors can relax on the porches of these two buildings, which are furnished with simple contemporary wooden benches and chairs. As the site's wood-frame buildings were elevated above the ground, the only traces of the other ten buildings removed in 1960 are in the scattered remnants of stone steps, support piers, and pipes. The exception is the Five Tents building site that has been preserved for interpretive purposes. It includes the massive field stone chimney and an impressive semi-circular stairway (Figure 24).

The mortared stone bridge along the Entrance Road is in good condition and was repointed in 2007 (Figure 25). The non-historic steel "Bailey" bridge over Mill Prong is also in good condition. The stone walls lining the Entrance Road are still intact and range between 2-4-feet in height, but are in generally poor condition. Five of the eight crossings built across the Hemlock Run water channel remain. The National Historic Landmark and List of Classified Structures documentation forms alternately describe these crossings as both culverts and bridges, and there appears to be duplicate LCS records. Heading downstream from the sluice gate, the first crossing is simple mortared arched bridge over the channel (Figure 26) (NHL #13, LCS #082955). The second crossing consists of a single slab of stone set across the channel, marking the point where the Hemlock Run Trail crosses the channel, just upstream from the ford crossing (Figure 27) (NHL #14, LCS 082956). The third crossing consists of twin corrugated metal pipes covered by compacted earth and gravel that carry the Marine Corps Road over the channel (Figure 28) (NHL #30, LCS 083062). The fourth crossing is located between the Ishbel's cabin site and the Prime Minister's Cabin, features mortared stone construction reinforced by steel railroad track set, and is supported by a central mortared stone pier (Figure 29) (NHL #18, LCS 222272 and 082957). The fifth crossing is located next to the Prime Minister's Cabin, features mortared stone construction, and is also supported by a central mortared stone pier (see Figure 17) (NHL #19, LCS 222245 and 083063).

Historic plans indicate there were three other crossings opposite The Slums and Trails End cabins, and one between Ishbel's Cabin and Town Hall. These were likely wood footbridges supported by stone piers or steps. Only scattered stones, remnant steps, and small abutments remain of them today. The site's most significant wood footbridge, across Mill Prong next to

the President's Cabin, was rebuilt in the 1970s or 1980s using milled board construction, but then destroyed in 2003 by Hurricane Isabel. Supported by mortared stone abutments and boulders, the footbridge was replaced-in-kind in 2005 following the design of the historic period structure but using thicker processed logs instead of the more rustic materials of the original (see cover photograph). In conjunction with this project, the west bank of Mill Prong was reinforced with rip rap to prevent a repeat of bank erosion caused by Isabel and to provide long-term protection for the President's Cabin. No trace of the other footbridge crossing upstream from here remains.

The reservoirs no longer have integrity (and are outside the NHL boundary), but the springhouse is extant though it is in poor condition. The camp's septic field was abandoned in 1996 due to contamination, but the pipe and stone supporting piers crossing Laurel Prong were retained (Figure 30). Concrete pad and stone remnants of three privy sites dating from the Boy Scout period can still be found at various locations. A Boy Scout barbeque pit consisting of a raised concrete pad and remnants of a stone chimney is visible in the woods just to the south of the Entrance Road.

Work is underway on construction of a small unisex comfort station opposite the small parking area on the Entrance Drive, as well as a 1000-gallon septic system and water well, which will service the site's three historic buildings (PMIS 81704). Adjacent to this structure is a nonhistoric wood-framed shed. Another small shed is located just west of the The Creel.

Items noted with an * are documented on the National Register of Historic Places.

Character-defining Features:

- Feature: "The President" Cabin * (CH-01)
Feature Identification Number: 137786
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 7773
- Feature: "The Prime Minister" Cabin * (CH-02)
Feature Identification Number: 137788
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 7774
- Feature: "The Creel" Cabin * (CH-03)
Feature Identification Number: 137790
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 7775
- Feature: "Five Tents" Building Site * (CH-05)

Feature Identification Number: 137792

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 83066

Feature: Bridge along Entrance Road * (CH-06B)

Feature Identification Number: 137794

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82934

Feature: Hemlock Run Bridge * (CH-11A)

Feature Identification Number: 137796

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82955

Feature: Stone Slab Bridge, Hemlock Run * (CH-11.C)

Feature Identification Number: 137798

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82956

Feature: Marine Corps Camp Road Culvert (CH10A)

Feature Identification Number: 137800

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 83062

Feature: Stone Bridge, Hemlock Run * (CH-11.B) (CH-11.D)

Feature Identification Number: 137802

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82957

Feature: Bridge, Hemlock Run * (CH-11.A) (CH-16)

Feature Identification Number: 137804

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 83063

Feature: Stone Walls along Entrance Road * (CH-06D)

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Feature Identification Number: 137806
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 82936
Feature: Wooden Bridge, Mill Prong
Feature Identification Number: 137808
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 360630
Feature: Springhouse * (CH-17)
Feature Identification Number: 137810
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 83064
Feature: Sewer Pipe Piers (CH-14)
Feature Identification Number: 137812
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing
IDLCS Number: 82942
Feature: Mess Hall site
Feature Identification Number: 137814
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing
Feature: Site of "Filipino's Quarters"
Feature Identification Number: 137816
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing
Feature: Site of unnamed building
Feature Identification Number: 137818
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing
Feature: Town Hall site
Feature Identification Number: 137820
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing
Feature: Office site

Rapidan Camp
Shenandoah National Park

Feature Identification Number:	137822
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non Contributing
Feature:	"Ishbel's" cabin site
Feature Identification Number:	137824
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non Contributing
Feature:	"The Slums" cabin site
Feature Identification Number:	137826
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non Contributing
Feature:	"Trails End" cabin site
Feature Identification Number:	137828
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non Contributing
Feature:	"The Owl" cabin site
Feature Identification Number:	137830
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non Contributing
Feature:	Stables site
Feature Identification Number:	137832
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non Contributing
Feature:	Bailey Bridge
Feature Identification Number:	137834
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non Contributing
Feature:	Culvert Crossing, Hemlock Run
Feature Identification Number:	137836
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non Contributing
Feature:	Riprap at Mill Prong
Feature Identification Number:	137838
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non Contributing
Feature:	Boy Scout privy sites (3)
Feature Identification Number:	137840

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Boy Scout barbeque pit

Feature Identification Number: 137842

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Comfort Station

Feature Identification Number: 137844

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Shed

Feature Identification Number: 137846

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Storage Shed

Feature Identification Number: 137848

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 21. View looking south from the President's Cabin porch. The exterior and interior have been restored to conditions during the Hoover residency. Though the tree has died, the trunk of the old hemlock through the porch has been retained (OCLP 2008).



Figure 22. The exterior of the Prime Minister's Cabin has been restored, while the interior now houses exhibits. In the foreground, a path leads across Hemlock Run via a mortared stone footbridge (OCLP 2008).



Figure 23. The exterior of The Creel has been restored. The building now serves as seasonal housing for a park volunteer (OCLP 2008).



Figure 24. The fieldstone chimney and the semi-circular stairway still remain at the site of Five Tents (OCLP 2008).



Figure 25. View from downstream of the recently repaired mortared stone bridge on the Entrance Road (OCLP 2008).



Figure 26. View of the first crossing from the sluice gate along Hemlock Run (OCLP 2008).



Figure 27. View of the second crossing from the sluice gate along Hemlock Run (OCLP 2008).



Figure 28. View of the third crossing from the sluice gate along Hemlock Run (OCLP 2008).



Figure 29. View of the fourth crossing from the sluice gate along Hemlock Run (OCLP 2008).



Figure 30. Although the septic system is no longer used, the sewer pipe and stone supporting piers over Laurel Prong have been retained (OCLP 2008).

Views and Vistas

Historic Conditions (through 1933):

Due to the mostly wooded nature of the site, Rapidan Camp is not thought to have had many significant views beyond the site. One exception was probably from Five Tents, which was situated on a cleared area of hillside to the west of the main camp area buildings and likely had a view across Laurel Prong to Doubletop Mountain. Depending on the season, views of the surrounding mountains may have been possible from other locations in the camp.

The most important views in the camp itself were likely those to and from Hemlock Run and Hemlock Run Falls. It is not known to what extent these views were managed, but they were seen as an appropriately picturesque background in photographs of the Hoovers. Changing views of the camp and its gardens were surely possible from the cabins and their attached porches, and from many of the winding drives and paths. There was also presumably a view from the historic trail to Big Rock Falls, but no photographs of this view have been found.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Today, there are more views of the surrounding mountains due to the loss of many of the deciduous and hemlock trees at the site. Such views especially exist from Mill Prong and from the porch at the President's Cabin (see cover photograph). The historic view of Doubletop Mountain from Five Tents has been obscured by the woods that have overtaken the formerly cleared hillside. Historic views within the site, especially of Hemlock Run and the Hemlock Run Falls, are obscured by undergrowth that has come to dominate in the absence of the lost trees. There are no clear views on the current trail to Big Rock Falls.

Small Scale Features

Historic Conditions (through 1933):

Since it was developed as a private camp, Rapidan Camp lacked some of the types of small-scale features typically found elsewhere in Shenandoah NP. Those that existed were of the Hoovers choosing and unique to the camp setting.

Arguably the one of the most distinctive structures within the President's Camp was the exterior fireplace. This freestanding fieldstone structure featured a massive chimney that incorporated a native boulder into the hearth. Log benches were placed around the fireplace, and it was the site of many social gatherings, including talks between Hoover and the British Prime Minister. Log benches are also shown throughout the site in historic photographs in an area along Hemlock Run opposite Town Hall that was used as a horseshoe pitching ground and recreational area.

A letter by a camp guest in 1932 describes porches "made gay with boxes of geraniums and other hardy flowers" (Racine 2001:31). Photographs from the historic period show the Town Hall and the President's Cabin porches outfitted with wooden tables and chairs, most likely built by craftsmen from the Marine Camp (some of the camp's interior furniture was also made by the Marines). The Town Hall porch is also shown to have been equipped with game sets for the amusement of the camp guests.

A series of incandescent "street lights" were present at the camp. On the Five Tents Trail, they were mounted high in the trees so as to be relatively hidden and maintain the camp's naturalistic appearance. Lights were especially helpful along this trail when Mrs. Hoover accompanied guests to the clearing in front of Five Tents to watch the moon rise over Fork Mountain. Utility maps from the historic period show additional lights scattered throughout the camp's developed areas, and they too were probably similarly unobtrusive in design and placement.

Other features included a granite mounting block to serve horseback riders, a variety of hitching posts, a flagpole, and a metal swinging gate along the access road/entrance road(at the property's boundary) that marked the formal entrance to the camp. There were likely other features in the landscape donated by Hoover supporters. It is possible more details about them may be found in the collection of receipts from the era, housed at the Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, Iowa.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Only a few small-scale features remain from the Hoover era, although additional features from that period as well as Boy Scout period may be hidden in the dense understory vegetation. Standing at over nine feet tall, the exterior fireplace remains as one of the most visible features in the camp. The fireplace is in good condition, having been restored in 2000, and is kept clear of vegetation (Figure 31). The mounting block is in poor condition and is overgrown, but nonetheless still recognizable for what it is. The hitching post is only a remnant, its piers standing but crumbling and tangled in vegetation. Two lights high up in the trees along the Five

Tents Trail are all that remains of the lighting system (Figure 32). They are obviously no longer functional, but still provide a glimpse of the once developed aspect in this natural setting. The original metal gate on the access road/entrance road was removed in 1999 and replaced by another metal gate. The location or remains of the flagpole are not known. A pumphead and pipe on the north bank of Laurel Prong likely dates to the Boy Scout period.

Post-historic small-scale features consist largely of a series of interpretive markers located throughout the developed areas. They were installed in the early 1960s at the sites of existing and obliterated buildings as a part of an effort to interpret the historic nature of the camp to park visitors. Log benches similar in style to those shown in historic photos are located in the area around the southern end of the original loop drive. They are in poor condition, however, and only one seems to be structurally sound.

Contemporary metal signs mark the area of the camp where horses are not allowed. Carved wooden signs typical of those elsewhere in the park mark where Rapidan Road meets the Entrance Road, the Trail to Five Tents, and “The President’s Walk,” the lower section of the Hemlock Run Trail. There is a large sign in the same style located near the southern end of the original loop which bears a map of the layout of the President’s Camp, showing both existing paths and buildings and former ones. A companion sign relating a brief history of the founding of the camp was removed in recent years and is currently stored in the Maintenance Yard at Park Headquarters. Still present is a small stone monument with a bronze plaque identifying “Camp Hoover” as a National Historic Landmark. There are also various contemporary features such as small sheds, a fire hydrant, fire ladder and rack, and utility boxes and poles, and concrete curbs that define portions of the original loop.

Items noted with an * are documented on the National Register of Historic Places.

Character-defining Features:

Feature:	Exterior Fireplace * (CH-07)
Feature Identification Number:	137850
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	82938
Feature:	Mounting Block * (CH-13)
Feature Identification Number:	137852
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	82943
Feature:	Lights, Trail to “Five Tents”
Feature Identification Number:	137854
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing

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IDLCS Number: 82953

Feature: Camp Hoover NHL Monument (CH-04)

Feature Identification Number: 137856

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82937

Feature: Hitching Post

Feature Identification Number: 137858

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Gate

Feature Identification Number: 137860

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Pumphead and Pipe

Feature Identification Number: 137862

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Concrete Curbs

Feature Identification Number: 137864

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Log Benches

Feature Identification Number: 137866

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Wooden Signage

Feature Identification Number: 137868

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Interpretive Map

Feature Identification Number: 137870

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Concrete Trail Marker

Feature Identification Number: 137872

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Fire Hydrant

Feature Identification Number: 137874

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Ladder

Feature Identification Number: 137876

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Hose Shed

Feature Identification Number: 137878

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Utility Boxes and Poles

Feature Identification Number: 137880

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 31. The camp's exterior fireplace has been restored (OCLP 2008).



Figure 32. View of one of two remaining lights along the Five Tents Trail (OCLP 2008).

Condition

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 07/20/2009

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Although the site's three remaining historic buildings, major circulation features, constructed water features, and various small-scale features have been restored or reconstructed, the threatened condition of existing plantings warrants a condition assessment of "fair." The recent and increasing mortality of oaks due to gypsy moth infestation and hemlocks from woolly adelgid is radically changing the cultural landscape. These factors, coupled with the loss of many shade trees from ice storms in the mid-1990s and Hurricane Isabel in 2003, have created sunny and open conditions at the camp conducive to the growth of understory vegetation. The rapid second growth of species has begun to negatively impact plant restoration efforts associated with Mrs. Hoover's gardens.

Impacts

Type of Impact:	Flooding
Other Impact:	n/a
External or Internal:	Both Internal and External
Impact Description:	Severe flooding in 2003 from Hurricane Isabel damaged the sluice gate that regulates water flowing through Hemlock Run and destroyed the wood footbridge over Mill Prong. Rip rap has been installed on the stream bank near the President's Cabin to prevent further erosion caused by flooding.
Type of Impact:	Pests/Diseases
Other Impact:	n/a
External or Internal:	Both Internal and External
Impact Description:	The condition of oaks due to gypsy moth infestation and hemlocks from woolly adelgid should be closely monitored.
Type of Impact:	Vegetation/Invasive Plants
Other Impact:	n/a
External or Internal:	Internal
Impact Description:	The emergence of understory plants created by the loss of

canopy trees at the site threatens to change the character of the landscape and hamper other plant restoration efforts at the site.

Treatment

Treatment

Approved Treatment: Undetermined

Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:

A General Management Plan and Development Concept Plan was completed in 1983. The treatment for President's Cabin (Brown House), Prime Minister's Cabin, and The Creel was identified as Preservation, though this treatment was not implemented. 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 on April 25, 2005, states that all structures listed on National Register of Historic Places will be classified under the "Must Be Preserved and Maintained" management category.

There is currently a project in the Project Management Information System (PMIS) entitled "Prepare a Cultural Landscape Report for Camp Hoover" (PMIS 147301). Phase One includes a site history, existing conditions, and analysis, while Phase Two focuses on treatment recommendations. The total cost for the project is \$83,360.

Approved Treatment Completed: No

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography

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Citation Title:	Email, Elizabeth Igleheart, NERO, to Laura Roberts, SUNY-ESF, July 2008.
Year of Publication:	2008
Citation Publisher:	n/a
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Citation Title:	Draft National Register Nomination for Skyland
Year of Publication:	1994
Citation Publisher:	n/a
Citation Author:	Engle, Reed L.
Citation Title:	Draft epilogue for Herbert Hoover's Hideaway
Year of Publication:	2009
Citation Publisher:	n/a
Citation Author:	Hoover, Herbert C.
Citation Title:	A Remedy for Disappearing Game Fishes
Year of Publication:	1930
Citation Publisher:	New York: Huntington Press
Citation Author:	Hoover, Herbert C.
Citation Title:	The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, 1920-1933: The Cabinet and the Presidency
Year of Publication:	1952
Citation Publisher:	New York: The Macmillan Co.
Citation Author:	Hoover, Lou Henry
Citation Title:	"Flowers and Shrubs for the President's Camp"
Year of Publication:	1929
Citation Publisher:	Shenandoah National Park files

Citation Author:	Lambert, Darwin
Citation Title:	Herbert Hoover's Hideaway
Year of Publication:	1971
Citation Publisher:	Shenandoah Natural History Association
Citation Author:	Lambert, Darwin
Citation Title:	Administrative History, Shenandoah National Park, 1924-1976
Year of Publication:	1979
Citation Publisher:	Unpublished National Park Service report
Citation Author:	National Park Service
Citation Title:	Cultural Landscape Inventory, Pinnacles, Shenandoah National Park
Year of Publication:	2007
Citation Publisher:	n/a
Citation Author:	National Park Service
Citation Title:	Cultural Landscape Inventory, Skyland, Shenandoah National Park
Year of Publication:	2007
Citation Publisher:	n/a
Citation Author:	National Park Service
Citation Title:	List of Classified Structures
Year of Publication:	2009
Citation Publisher:	Unpublished National Park Service report
Citation Author:	National Park Service
Citation Title:	National Register of Historic Places, Skyline Drive Historic District, October 2008.
Year of Publication:	2008
Citation Publisher:	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

- Citation Author:** National Park Service
Citation Title: National Register of Historic Places, Skyline Drive Historic District, Boundary Increase, December 2003.
Year of Publication: 2003
Citation Publisher: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
- Citation Author:** National Park Service
Citation Title: Shenandoah National Park, Resource Management Plan
Year of Publication: 1998
Citation Publisher: Denver Service Center
- Citation Author:** Racine, Laurel
Citation Title: Historic Furnishings Report: Rapidan Camp: the Brown House
Year of Publication: 2001
Citation Publisher: Northeast Museums Services, National Park Service
- Citation Author:** Robinson & Associates and EDAW, Inc.
Citation Title: Shenandoah National Park: Historic Resources Study
Year of Publication: 1997
Citation Publisher: n/a
- Citation Author:** Updyke, Gloria
Citation Title: Restoring a National Historic Landmark: President and Mrs. Hoover's Rapidan Camp
Year of Publication: 2004
Citation Publisher: National Park Service website
- Citation Author:** n/a
Citation Title: <http://indians.vipnet.org/tribes/monacan.cfm>
Year of Publication: 2009
Citation Publisher: Website

Citation Author: n/a
Citation Title: <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/natural/chestnut.html>
Year of Publication: 2009
Citation Publisher: Website

Citation Author: n/a
Citation Title: SHEN website, Historical Overview
Year of Publication: 2009
Citation Publisher: National Park Service website

Supplemental Information

- Title:** Camp Rapidan, 1930
- Description:** Marine Corps map that provides excellent context for the original camp and its layout: topography, the locations of the President's Camp, Marine Camp, Cabinet Camp, Reservoirs, roads, horse trails, bridges, and Big Rock Falls.
- Title:** Map of Rapidan River Camp, 1929
- Description:** Blueprints drawn by US Marine Corps in October 1929. Earliest plan found of the main President's Camp, shows a cluster of smaller buildings where The Creel cabin was later located.
- Title:** Rapidan Camp: Existing Development: Part of the Master Plan, 1954
- Description:** Shows existing buildings and utilities, roads, trails, paths, bridges, tree cover. Includes 5 Tents but not Laurel Dam area
- Title:** Rapidan Camp: Part of the Master Plan, Shenandoah National Park, 1935
- Description:** First NPS map of the site, shows only President's Camp area. Shows some changes to circulation from the 1931 Marine Corps map. Shows outline of the tree canopy, differentiating between evergreen and deciduous. Includes 5 Tents and path to Laurel Dam.
- Title:** Shenandoah National Park: Camp Hoover, 1995
- Description:** CAD map that shows central camp area only (not 5 Tents). Shows topography, individual trees, existing buildings and structures including visible remnants.
- Title:** The President's Camp, 1931
- Description:** Marine Corps map that gives excellent detail on the circulation and layout of the main President's Camp area. Differentiates between improved roads, unimproved roads, horse trails, improved footpaths and unimproved footpaths. Shows bridges, including footbridges. Includes 5 Tents and path to Laurel Dam.