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# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR ELEANOR ROOSEVELT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

VOLUME II: TREATMENT





# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR ELEANOR ROOSEVELT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

HYDE PARK, NEW YORK

*If beauty is good for the soul then  
I wish I could have taken the  
whole world to walk with me  
early Saturday morning in the  
woods at Hyde Park.*

Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day"  
January 26, 1949

## VOLUME II: TREATMENT

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Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
National Park Service, Boston, Massachusetts, 2013

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This report was developed by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in partnership with the Department of Landscape Architecture at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, New York. The Olmsted Center promotes the stewardship of significant landscapes through research, planning, and sustainable preservation maintenance. The Center accomplishes its mission in collaboration with a network of partners including national parks, universities, government agencies, and private nonprofit organizations. Techniques and principles of preservation practice are made available through training and publications. The Olmsted Center perpetuates the tradition of the Olmsted firms and Frederick Law Olmsted's lifelong commitment to people, parks, and public spaces.

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Cover Image: Looking east across Val-Kill Pond toward Stone Cottage, May 2010.  
(State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry,  
hereafter SUNY ESF)



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## FOREWORD

*I love contrasts in flowers as I do in people, the pale columbine is a good foil for the sturdier zinnia.* Eleanor Roosevelt, May 19, 1937

Eleanor Roosevelt engaged with her surroundings at Val-Kill in many important ways. The landscaped grounds around her home provided an all-important place for picnicking and swimming as well as an informal environment for entertaining. She used the outdoors as much as any other place for socializing and also for personal respite, notably by taking walks with her dogs nearly every day she was in Hyde Park. Typically, her work and personal life were blended, with a log bench on the grounds offering the right place for informal discussions with, for example, visiting dignitaries or UNESCO representatives. The grounds at Val-Kill were Eleanor Roosevelt's personal retreat, her office, her entertaining space, and also her inspiration. She frequently found material in the landscape for her writings, drawing fitting metaphors from nature for the people and social issues she wrote about.

This second volume of the Cultural Landscape Report for Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site provides a richly illustrated treatment plan for restoring the landscape that Mrs. Roosevelt knew so well. The report has already been used, in draft, to guide restoration efforts. A newly formed group of volunteers gathers weekly to work on rejuvenating shrubbery and defining planting beds all over the site. A complete restoration of the cutting garden is also underway that will better reflect Mrs. Roosevelt's garden while allowing fuller access and encouraging participation from visitors.

Eleanor Roosevelt surely would have enjoyed the design process that went into this report, particularly the design studio of landscape architecture students at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF). Our thanks to John Auwaerter and Laura Roberts who developed the report and to George Curry for overseeing the project. They are all at the SUNY ESF, which works with the NPS Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation on planning and design for historic landscapes at national parks. I also want to acknowledge Anna deCordova and Dave Hayes on the park staff who worked closely with the project team to review the drafts and search out photographic documentation for this landscape. Important pictorial information came from Edna Gurewitsch who spent considerable time with Mrs. Roosevelt with her photographer husband Dr. David Gurewitsch, and from Susan Curnan, a Brandeis University professor and daughter of caretaker Charlie Curnan. Susan grew up at Val-Kill. Through their contributions, the work of the talented people at SUNY ESF and the Olmsted Center, we will be able to bring back this important landscape.

Sarah Olson  
Superintendent



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## INTRODUCTION

Val-Kill, a tranquil landscape of simple cottages and gardens surrounded by water, woods, and fields, was the cherished country home of Eleanor Roosevelt from the late 1930s up until her death in 1962 (fig. 0.1). The site was a primary setting for significant events in Mrs. Roosevelt's life, both personal and political. Although best known as a First Lady, Mrs. Roosevelt remained a prominent world figure for two decades following her husband's death in 1945, serving as a leading humanitarian at the forefront of a global movement for human rights.

Today, Val-Kill is preserved for the inspiration of the American public as the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site. The site consists of 181 federally-owned



**Figure 0.1. A springtime view looking north across Val-Kill Pond to Val-Kill Cottage (left), and Stone Cottage (right), 2012. (SUNY ESF)**

acres that adjoin the jointly managed Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site. Val-Kill is located in Hyde Park on the east side of the Hudson River seventy miles north of New York City, within the eastern part of the historic 1,500 acre Roosevelt family estate. The main Roosevelt home, Springwood, is approximately two miles to the west, and FDR's retreat, Top Cottage, is less than a quarter mile to the east.

The origins of Val-Kill as a country retreat date back to the early 1920s, when the Roosevelt family picnicked along the east bank of the Fall Kill creek within the Bennett Farm that FDR had acquired in

1911. This spot became the residential core of Val-Kill with its two cottages, outbuildings, swimming pool, and gardens, surrounded by agricultural fields and forest. In 1970, eight years after Mrs. Roosevelt's death, the Roosevelt family sold Val-Kill. Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site was established in 1977 following efforts to save the property from redevelopment, and opened to the public in 1984.

This treatment plan, the second volume of the Cultural Landscape Report for Val-Kill, reflects the continuing efforts of Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites to preserve and enhance the historic character of this remarkable landscape, while meeting the demands for public access and education that are fundamental to the purposes of the park.

## **PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODS**

Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site was established to tell the story of the extraordinary woman who made her home at Val-Kill. Mrs. Roosevelt's modesty, strong belief in a productive life, joy in her family, and love of nature are all evident in the landscape of Val-Kill. Since taking custody of the site over thirty years ago, the National Park Service and its partners have done extensive work to preserve and enhance the property's character during Mrs. Roosevelt's lifetime. However, challenges faced by the park including natural changes to vegetation, maintenance backlogs due to staff and budget restrictions, and the need to accommodate contemporary visitor use and access have led to many changes in the cultural landscape. This has resulted in a Val-Kill that, while it retains its overall historic appearance, does not fully reflect the domestic and lively character of Mrs. Roosevelt's day.

The purpose of treatment in a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) is to direct management efforts towards the goal of preserving and enhancing a landscape's historic character in both the short and long term. A cultural landscape treatment plan is developed within the framework of other park management goals such as public access, natural resources conservation, recreation, and interpretation. Treatment is described through narrative and graphics at a conceptual level; further planning and design may be required for implementation based on the complexity of the task. Treatment does not typically address routine and cyclical maintenance, such as tree pruning and lawn mowing, that are necessary to retain the historic character of the landscape. Treatment may, however, touch on ongoing maintenance issues when they have the potential to significantly impact the character-defining features of the landscape.<sup>1</sup>

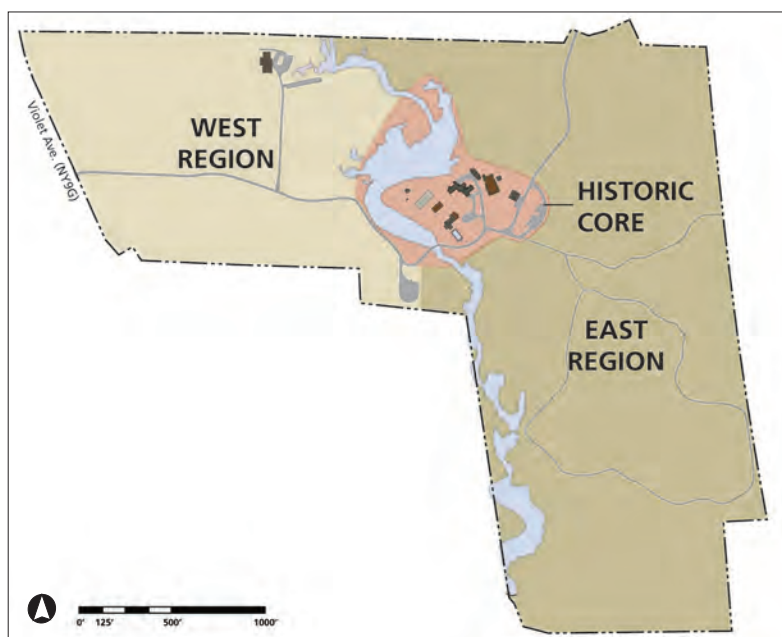
The methods used for this report follow *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (National Park Service, 1998). The general framework and concepts for this treatment plan were initially developed through a State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) landscape architecture studio held during the spring of 2008.<sup>2</sup> Based on consultation with the park, the studio developed a treatment approach for the Val-Kill landscape and identified key treatment tasks necessary to enhance its historic character.<sup>3</sup>

This report is organized into three chapters. The first establishes a framework for treatment based on the park's enabling legislation and purpose, National Park Service cultural resource management guidelines, current park planning efforts, and the findings of CLR Volume I (Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis & Evaluation, 2005). This framework articulates a treatment philosophy that describes the intended character of the landscape, establishes a primary treatment approach, and identifies a treatment date for use as an objective



benchmark for assessing historic character. Based on the treatment philosophy, the second chapter describes general treatment recommendations, which address issues impacting the overall historic character of the landscape. The third chapter provides guidelines and tasks necessary to retain, enhance, and reestablish the historic character of the landscape. The report concludes with a summary table of treatment tasks identifying priorities, and an appendix with source documents, additional information, and an updated existing conditions plan (Drawing 4, Appendix E).

Treatment guidelines and tasks are organized by three landscape character areas: west region, east region, and historic core (fig. 0.2). These are taken from CLR



**Figure 0.2. Approximate boundaries of the three landscape character areas at Val-Kill used to organize treatment recommendations. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)**

Volume I, except that the orchard has been included in the west region instead of the historic core due to its location and agricultural character. Tasks are documented on a treatment plan for each of the three character areas (Drawings 1– 3).

#### **West Region**

The west region character area encompasses the gently rolling lands between the Fall Kill creek and Violet Avenue, excluding the southwest bank of Val-Kill Pond. It is comprised largely of historic agricultural fields whose extents have been reduced over the years by successional growth in wet areas. A narrow

two-way entry road, Val-Kill Lane (officially Val-Kill Park Road), runs east from Violet Avenue, passing along the north side of a field to the bridge over the Fall Kill. A visitor parking lot is located near the bridge within the bounds of a historic orchard, the remainder of which has recently been replanted. Administrative facilities for the park’s non-profit partner, Eleanor Roosevelt Leadership Center at Val-Kill, Inc., are located within the successional woods north of the drive, at the end of a gravel road where a caretaker’s residence once stood.

#### **East Region**

The east region character area encompasses the site east of the Fall Kill, excluding the developed area which makes up the historic core. The east region is characterized by a rocky, rugged topography at the foot of Dutchess Hill, and is covered primarily by old second-growth forest. Stone walls predating Roosevelt family ownership run throughout the region, hinting at a distant agricultural past. Also present are the remnants of several historic forest plantations established

under the direction of FDR, and a cleared utility right-of-way beneath high-tension power lines. The forest is also crossed by a network of narrow earthen roads, some of which now dead-end at the park property boundary. Branching off the dead-end road which historically led up the slopes of Dutchess Hill to FDR's Top Cottage is a contemporary foot trail built to restore the historic connection that was blocked by a housing development. The east region also includes a small area on the west bank of the Fall Kill which borders a private residential neighborhood, and is essentially inaccessible from the remainder of the park.

### **Historic Core**

The historic core character area comprises the developed domestic heart of Val-Kill that includes Val-Kill Cottage (Mrs. Roosevelt's home, also known as the Factory), Stone Cottage, and several outbuildings that are surrounded by lawn, specimen trees, and gardens; recreational features including a swimming pool, tennis court, and play sets; and flagstone walks, unpaved driveways, and a parking lot in the adjoining woods. The primary access to the area is from the main entrance road (Val-Kill Lane), and there is a secondary rear entrance from Roosevelt Road in the subdivision to the north. The adjoining upper and lower sections of the Val-Kill Pond, as well as the west bank of the lower pond and the bridge over the Fall Kill, are included within the historic core character area.<sup>4</sup>

## **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW <sup>5</sup>**

Roosevelt family association with the Val-Kill site began in 1911, when FDR purchased the 191-acre property known as Bennett Farm that adjoined the east side of his parents' country estate, Springwood. The farm was bisected by Violet Avenue, with the farmhouse and barns on the west side of the road, a tenant house in the middle of the fields to the east, and old pasture and forest east of the Fall Kill. Within the old pasture was the future site of the Val-Kill cottages, which at the time was covered in red-cedar, gray birch, and other old-field successional trees. Here, the Roosevelts cleared a small area as a picnic spot. During one visit in fall 1924, Mrs. Roosevelt and her friends Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman lamented that it was their last outing of the season. When FDR suggested the three friends build a cottage of their own along the banks of the Fall Kill, the idea for the Val-Kill retreat was born. Together with Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman, Mrs. Roosevelt signed a lease with FDR for their use of the site, comprising approximately eight acres of the Bennett Farm.

Improvements at Val-Kill, which took its name from the Dutch derivation of Fall Kill, meaning "valley stream," began in 1925 with construction of a swimming pool and a cottage (fig. 0.3). Known as Stone Cottage, the building was designed by FDR and Henry Toombs, later architect of the presidential library, in the Dutch



**Figure 0.3.** The beginnings of Val-Kill, looking northeast across the bridge to the construction site of Stone Cottage, 1925. (Photograph NPx 4822 4039, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

Colonial style. Stone Cottage served as a weekend retreat for Mrs. Roosevelt and a full-time home for Misses Cook and Dickerman, but from its earliest days, the Val-Kill partners envisioned the property as more than simply a peaceful country home. Building upon the shared political interests which had been the foundation for their friendship, the three women, along with FDR and another friend, Caroline O'Day, undertook a social and economic experiment in rural crafts, known as Val-Kill Industries. Much like FDR's intent for his forestry program that he had begun in 1911, the women's enterprise was envisioned as a way of support-

ing struggling local farmers by offering skills and supplemental income. The first improvement on the site dedicated to Val-Kill Industries was a simple two-story stucco building that housed forge and furniture shops, also designed by Toombs and known as "the Factory." Another building was erected along Violet Avenue to house the weaving shop (outside of the existing historic site), and another for a new forge near the Factory.

Val-Kill Industries remained in operation until May 1936, when it succumbed to the Great Depression. After the closing, Mrs. Roosevelt converted the Factory into her private residence and added a large wing (fig. 0.4). Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman retained Stone Cottage as their own residence, and developed a series of highly-maintained and refined gardens surrounding the building and adjoining swimming pool. The landscape around Mrs. Roosevelt's home remained relatively rustic and informal.

During the early years of Val-Kill, FDR continued to manage the land outside of the eight-acre leased area (historic core). He rented the farm fields west of the

cottages to his tenant, Moses Smith, and the woods east of the cottages he managed for forestry purposes. Under FDR's direction, the New York State College of Forestry established experimental forest plantations in 1930–31 in swampy land south of the road to Top Cottage, a short distance southeast of the cottages. These followed a large white pine plantation FDR had set out along the Fall Kill in 1914, north of the cottages. In 1937, FDR extended an old farm road through the woods east of Val-

**Figure 0.4.** Mrs. Roosevelt's cottage, showing wing added to the original factory building (section in right background), looking east, ca. 1945. (Dickerman Collection Slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)





Kill to access his Top Cottage retreat, which was completed in 1939. In 1940, he built a loop road through the southeastern part of the site to provide access to his managed forest and as a place to escape the pressures of his political life. During World War II, the Army established a security and communications system across the Roosevelt Estate to protect the president, including a jack-line jeep road on the southern part of Val-Kill extending off Creek Road, and possibly another at the northern part off the rear access road.

After FDR's death in 1945, Mrs. Roosevelt made the Factory her permanent home, and two years later in August 1947, she acquired title to the property and surrounding 820 acres from her husband's legal estate. She immediately sold the entire property to her son, Elliott Roosevelt, who was living at Top Cottage, subject to her right to life estate at Val-Kill. Just prior to these property transactions, Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman relinquished their interest in Val-Kill and left the property. This parting was purportedly caused in part by the increased presence of Mrs. Roosevelt's family, whose boisterous activities at Val-Kill conflicted with the women's desire for a serene environment. After their departure, the landscape of Val-Kill began to reflect a more informal aesthetic and a somewhat relaxed maintenance regime, which continued to characterize it for the remainder of Mrs. Roosevelt's lifetime. Throughout the 1950s, Val-Kill was the site of many picnics and outdoor gatherings for family, friends, dignitaries, and staff (fig. 0.5).

**Figure 0.5.** Mrs. Roosevelt during an outdoor gathering at Val-Kill, ca. 1955. To the left of Mrs. Roosevelt is her son, John Roosevelt, and to the right are Charles and Mildred Curnan, the caretakers of Val-Kill. (Private Collection of Susan Curnan)



In 1951, Mrs. Roosevelt's son John and his family moved into Stone Cottage, and the following year, he acquired half interest in the Val-Kill property, a 179-acre tract, from Elliott Roosevelt, subject to Mrs. Roosevelt's life estate in the eight-acre core; nine years later, Elliot sold his remaining interest to John Roosevelt's wife, Anne.<sup>6</sup> By 1952, Elliot had sold off all of the surrounding Roosevelt estate property to developers, who during the following decade built suburban residential subdivisions south, north, and east of Val-Kill. In ca. 1955, John

Roosevelt acquired lot 1 of the Harbour Hills subdivision to provide rear access to Val-Kill from the main road through the subdivision, Roosevelt Road. This same subdivision road severed the connecting road between Val-Kill and Top Cottage. Another change during this time was the construction of a large power transmission line that served the growing suburban population of the area. It resulted in clearing of a swath through the forest east and north of Val-Kill.



**Figure 0.6. Stone Cottage and the pool terrace patio showing years of neglect prior to restoration, looking north, 1978. (Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)**

Shortly before and following Mrs. Roosevelt's death in November 1962, John Roosevelt began making changes at Val-Kill by converting the property to tenant use. The Playhouse was the first to be converted into apartments, then Val-Kill Cottage, and finally Stone Cottage after John and Anne Roosevelt divorced and moved out in 1965. The landscape as it had existed under Mrs. Roosevelt was modified to further reduce maintenance and provide convenient access for tenants, although caretaker Charles Curnan continued to maintain flowerbeds and other features of the landscape. In 1964, John Roosevelt sold three acres of the north field to Curnan, who built a ranch-style house to replace the old tenant farmhouse along the entrance road. In 1970, John Roosevelt sold the 179-acre Val-Kill property, the last remaining piece of the former 1,500-acre Roosevelt estate. The new owners, who intended to develop the site as a senior housing complex, let the buildings and landscape deteriorate while they awaited approval of their project.

In the mid-1970s, a group of concerned citizens including members of the Roosevelt family and a Hyde Park non-profit group called Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill (ERVK) rallied to save the property and preserve Mrs. Roosevelt's legacy. Their campaign was especially timely in the context of the ongoing nationwide efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. These efforts led to designation of Val-Kill as a National Historic Site in 1977, saving Mrs. Roosevelt's cherished home from demolition, although the property was in need of major repair due to years of neglect (fig. 0.6). The buildings and other structures of the historic core were stabilized, restored, or rehabilitated, while a set of minor agricultural buildings located west of the Fall Kill and associated with former caretaker Charles Curnan were demolished due to advanced disrepair. The property was also adapted to public use through the addition of parking areas, signs, and rest rooms. The landscape was rehabilitated and some of the plantings that existed during Mrs. Roosevelt's lifetime were reestablished. Many of the features that reflected the once lively character of the landscape, notably the play equipment, tennis court, swimming pool, and pool terrace patio, were shuttered or left as remnants. In 1984, after significant repair and restoration, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site opened to the public. Additions to the landscape after this time included a visitor parking lot in the orchard and a building for the Eleanor Roosevelt Leadership Center at Val-Kill (ERVK) on the site of the 1960s-era caretaker's residence.

## **LANDSCAPE EVALUATION SUMMARY**

Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic site was administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places upon its designation in 1977. Two years later, the National Register documentation was accepted. It identified significance of the site under Criterion B in the area of Politics and Government, based on Eleanor Roosevelt's legacy as an activist for humanitarian and social causes, as well as her contribution to twentieth century American society and politics. The period of significance for Val-Kill was determined to extend from Mrs. Roosevelt's first direct association with the site in 1924 through her death in 1962.

The landscape, with its natural beauty and opportunities for recreation and contemplation, was not specifically documented in the National Register, but it clearly contributes to the environment which nurtured her unique personality and spirit. All landscape features that predate Mrs. Roosevelt's death in 1962 and retain integrity contribute to the historic character of the landscape. Non-contributing features are those that were added after the period of significance or that have lost historic integrity. These are limited to the Eleanor Roosevelt Leadership Center at Val-Kill building, parking lots, successional woods that have grown up on historic fields, and park lights, signs, and other contemporary furnishings. The surrounding suburban housing developments, built during Mrs. Roosevelt's latter years at Val-Kill, are part of the historic setting of the site.

## **PRIOR LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING**

Since the establishment of Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, the Val-Kill landscape has been the subject of a series of research, management, and planning efforts. These have included documentation by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1978 on Stone Cottage, the Factory (Val-Kill Cottage), and the bridge/dam over the Fall Kill creek. A historic resource study of the site, by park service historian Louis Torres, was completed in 1980.

In 1980, the National Park Service completed a General Management Plan to guide preparations for the anticipated public opening and subsequent management. The plan envisioned a landscape which would communicate to visitors the role Val-Kill played in Eleanor Roosevelt's life, and reflect its historic use. In keeping with this, recreational features and equipment were to be "restored to a usable condition and maintained," or reconstructed as in the case of a missing boat dock. The eastern woods and western fields were to be preserved and access to them maintained in order to offer visitors a range of settings for experiencing Val-Kill as Mrs. Roosevelt did. Less tangible, but also important, was a direction to "preserve the...ambience of Val-Kill for public enrichment and to provide a setting for programs and studies on issues that were of particular interest to Mrs.

Roosevelt.” The programmatic aspects of this mission were to be carried out in partnership with the non-profit group known today as the Eleanor Roosevelt Leadership Center at Val-Kill (ERVK).<sup>7</sup>

The General Management Plan directed that the entire period of Mrs. Roosevelt’s occupancy of Val-Kill be interpreted, and that the landscape be managed to reflect its general appearance at the end of the period in 1962.<sup>8</sup> An exception was made for the cutting garden, which was purportedly not maintained in 1962, and would be restored to an earlier date. Based on a series of public meetings and workshops, the plan also recommended that the restored cutting garden serve as the official memorial, which was required by the park’s enabling legislation, with “a memorial tablet. . .placed there to commemorate its significance.”<sup>9</sup>

In ca. 1979, the landscape architecture firm of Kane and Carruth, P.C. was commissioned to produce a comprehensive report on the historic landscape, including recommendations for treatment.<sup>10</sup> Based in part on this plan, the National Park Service’s Denver Service Center completed plans for rehabilitation of the landscape in 1984 that included new plantings around the buildings and in the gardens, and replacement of mature red pines around the pool terrace to restore the historic screening. These plans were only partially carried out. The cutting garden was reconstructed, but no memorial tablet was installed.<sup>11</sup> Re-evaluation of the visitor shuttle from the Home and Library led to the decision to allow visitors to arrive by their own vehicles, which required construction of a second parking lot in the orchard.

Since the public opening in 1984, the park has undertaken additional studies to expand the understanding of Val-Kill’s cultural resources and update management recommendations. Studies included an inventory of the woody plant material of the historic core dating to 1995, field preservation guidelines completed in 2004 to address critical preservation issues, Cultural Landscape Report Volume I completed in 2005, and a Historic Resource Study published in 2011 that documented the history of the entire Roosevelt estate, with a focus on FDR’s forestry work. In 2010, a new General Management Plan for all three units of Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, including Val-Kill, was approved. This plan is discussed in Chapter 1 as one of the primary documents for guiding treatment of the Val-Kill landscape.



**INTRODUCTION ENDNOTES**

1 Landscape maintenance is typically addressed in a separate National Park Service document known as a Preservation Maintenance Plan.

2 The studio was led by Distinguished Teaching Professor George W. Curry and Historical Landscape Architect John Auwaerter. Students participating in the studio were Emily Clark-Watson, Alex Kuzmik, Jim Pagano, Douglas Richards, and Bryne Riley.

3 The studio's findings were based on a meeting with park staff held at the beginning of the studio on February 1, 2008 to discuss issues and opportunities. The findings were presented at SUNY ESF on May 8, 2008. Park staff attending the presentation included Sarah Olson, Superintendent; Carol Kohan, Deputy Superintendent; Dave Hayes, Integrated Resource Manager; Anne Jordan, Chief Curator; Scott Rector, Chief of Interpretation; and Henry Van Brookhoven, Facility Manager. Lisa Nowak, Historical Landscape Architect, and John Hammond, Historical Landscape Architect at the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation were also in attendance.

4 National Park Service, *Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, Draft General Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Boston: National Park Service, 2009), 47. The General Management Plan was finalized in 2010. The limits of this character area are approximately equivalent to the historic core Management Zone identified for Val-Kill in the General Management Plan. The major departure is that the entire historic extents of the pond are included in the character area, while only the lower pond is included in the management zone.

5 This section is based on John Auwaerter and John F. Sears, *FDR and the Land: Roosevelt Estate Historic Resource Study* (Boston: National Park Service Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 2011), and Lisa Nowak, *Cultural Landscape Report for the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Volume I* (Boston: National Park Service Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 2005). This volume includes the Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis and Evaluation.

6 Eleanor Roosevelt essentially never owned title to Val-Kill, aside from a brief moment in 1947.

7 National Park Service, *General Management Plan for Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site* (National Park Service, 1980), 19.

8 *Ibid.*, 26.

9 *Ibid.*, 19, 26, 27.

10 Kane and Carruth, P.C., "Comprehensive Report on Historic and Cultural Landscape, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York" (Unpublished report prepared for the National Park Service, 1980).

11 Instead of the cutting garden serving as the legislated memorial, the park manages the entire site as the memorial.

# 1. FRAMEWORK FOR TREATMENT

This chapter describes the framework within which the landscape treatment guidelines and tasks in this report have been developed. Based on park legislation, mission, policies, and planning, the framework supports a treatment philosophy that calls for preserving and enhancing the historic character of the landscape as it had developed by the late 1950s, at the height of Eleanor Roosevelt's life at Val-Kill.

## **ENABLING LEGISLATION, MISSION, AND POLICIES**

The preamble of the enabling legislation creating Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site (1977) provides the foundation for the landscape treatment philosophy recommended in this report.

[I]n order to commemorate for the education, inspiration, and benefit of present and future generations the life and work of an outstanding woman in American history, Eleanor Roosevelt, to provide, in a manner compatible with preservation, interpretation, and use thereof by and for the general public, a site for continuing studies, lectures, seminars, and other endeavors relating to the issues to which she devoted her considerable intellect and humanitarian concerns, and to conserve for public use and enjoyment in a manner compatible with the foregoing purpose an area of natural open space in an expanding urbanized environment, the Secretary of the Interior... is authorized to establish the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site.<sup>1</sup>

The enabling legislation also dictated that a monument or memorial to Eleanor Roosevelt be erected on the site, although it was not specific as to location or design.

In addition to the enabling legislation for the national historic site, treatment for the Val-Kill landscape is guided by the larger mission of the National Park Service "...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (Organic Act of 1916).<sup>2</sup> The application of this mission to cultural landscapes is articulated in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, which in turn are interpreted within a hierarchy of regulations and management policies. As a cultural resource, management of the Val-Kill landscape is defined by 36 CFR Part 2: Resource Protection, Public Use and Recreation (Preservation of Natural, Cultural, and Archeological Resources). The application of these regulations to cultural landscapes is

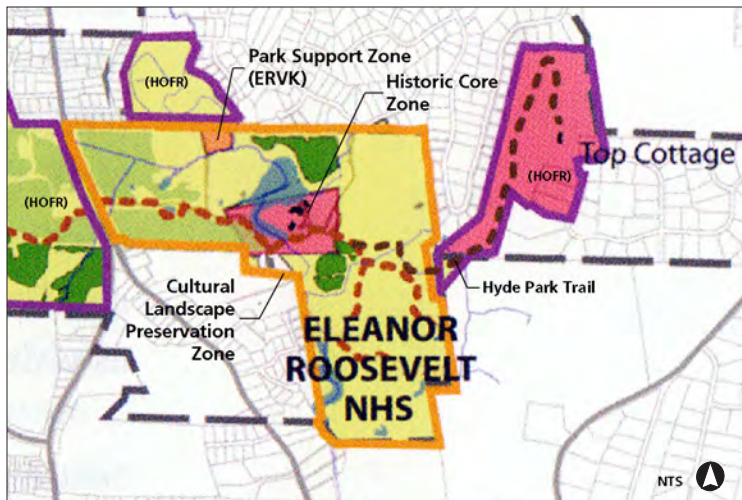
contained within National Park Service Management Policies (2006), Director's Order #28 (Cultural Resource Management), and National Park Service Resource Management Guidelines (NPS-28).

NPS-28 provides guidance on management of a number of issues related to cultural landscape preservation. These include biotic systems, which are defined as plant and animal communities associated with human settlement and use. NPS-28 directs management of specimen vegetation such as trees, hedges, and orchards to ensure health and vigor and, if appropriate, provide for propagation of the next generation, especially for rare plants or those unavailable in commerce. For natural and land-use systems such as woods and agricultural lands, NPS-28 calls for managing landscape patterns to allow for natural dynamics and crop rotation. Exotic plant species, which are often found in cultural landscapes, should be monitored and controlled to avoid spreading and disrupting adjacent natural plant communities. In addition to biotic systems, NPS-28 states that historic circulation features are to be rehabilitated to accommodate health and safety codes (notably the American with Disabilities Act) in ways that minimize impacts on historic character.<sup>3</sup>

## **RELATIONSHIP TO PARK PLANNING**

The new 2010 General Management Plan (GMP) for the jointly-managed Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites supersedes the 1980 General Management Plan for Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site as the primary planning document for directing treatment of the cultural landscape during the long-term. According to the new GMP, the purpose of the Val-Kill site is: "To commemorate and perpetuate the lifework of Eleanor Roosevelt, and to preserve and interpret the place most central to her emergence as a public figure, so that current and future generations can appreciate her life and legacy as a champion of democracy and human rights."<sup>4</sup>

The new GMP articulates an over-arching goal that all resources significant to the purposes of the three park units be protected and preserved, with cultural and natural resources maintained in good condition and the parks' settings remaining unimpaired. At Val-Kill, the plan identifies the eight-acre developed area including the cottages and outbuildings as the "Historic Core Zone," one of three zones within the site (fig. 1.1). The plan calls for the Historic Core to be managed for preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or adaptive re-use, with changes to the historic landscape permitted to accommodate basic visitor services, safety, and resource protection. New development is allowed in this zone, but is limited to what is necessary to provide fundamental services such as visitor contact facilities, trails, trailheads, parking, and interpretive media. The remainder of the site, with the exception of a small "Park Support Zone" providing operating space for



**Figure 1.1: The General Management Plan map showing three management zones for Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site (area outlined in orange): Historic Core Zone (pink shade), Park Support Zone (ERVK, orange shade), and the Cultural Landscape Preservation Zone (yellow shade). Areas outlined in purple are part of the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site. (Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, *Draft General Management Plan*, 2009, map 2-1, annotated by SUNY ESF.)**

park partner organization Eleanor Roosevelt Leadership Center at Val-Kill (ERVK), is identified as the “Cultural Landscape Preservation Zone.” In this zone, resources are to be managed to preserve key character-defining features, physical attributes, biotic systems, and historic land uses. Management actions are to be carried out with the goal of maintaining the historic character and appearance of cultural resources while encouraging native species and natural diversity. New development may occur in the Cultural Landscape Preservation Zone,

but only what is necessary to provide visitor services, which in this zone includes trails, trailheads, parking, and interpretive media. For both zones, the GMP states that all new development must follow the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and remain sensitive to the historic character and setting of the landscape.<sup>5</sup>

The selected alternative of the GMP (Action Alternative 2) calls for making the parks relevant to a broader audience through encouraging greater public participation in park activities, while enhancing the historic character of park resources. For the cultural landscape, resource management is to focus on enhancing historic character and perpetuating historic land uses while allowing for compatible alterations to support more educational or utilitarian purposes. The plan establishes 1924–62 as the period of interpretation for the Val-Kill cultural landscape, with ca. 1960 as the treatment date.<sup>6</sup> Recommendations relevant to Val-Kill include:

- Working collaboratively with partners to protect the park’s historic setting
- Rehabilitating designed landscapes with major missing features indicated through interpretive media or physical elements
- Rehabilitating historic field and forest patterns by removing woody successional growth from some overgrown areas and reintroducing agricultural land uses where practical
- Perpetuating forest plantations through a range of treatments from conserving existing stands to establishing new plots according to best forest management practices
- Managing other woodlands through a range of treatments from reestablishing historic managed character in select areas to instituting current best ecological management practices

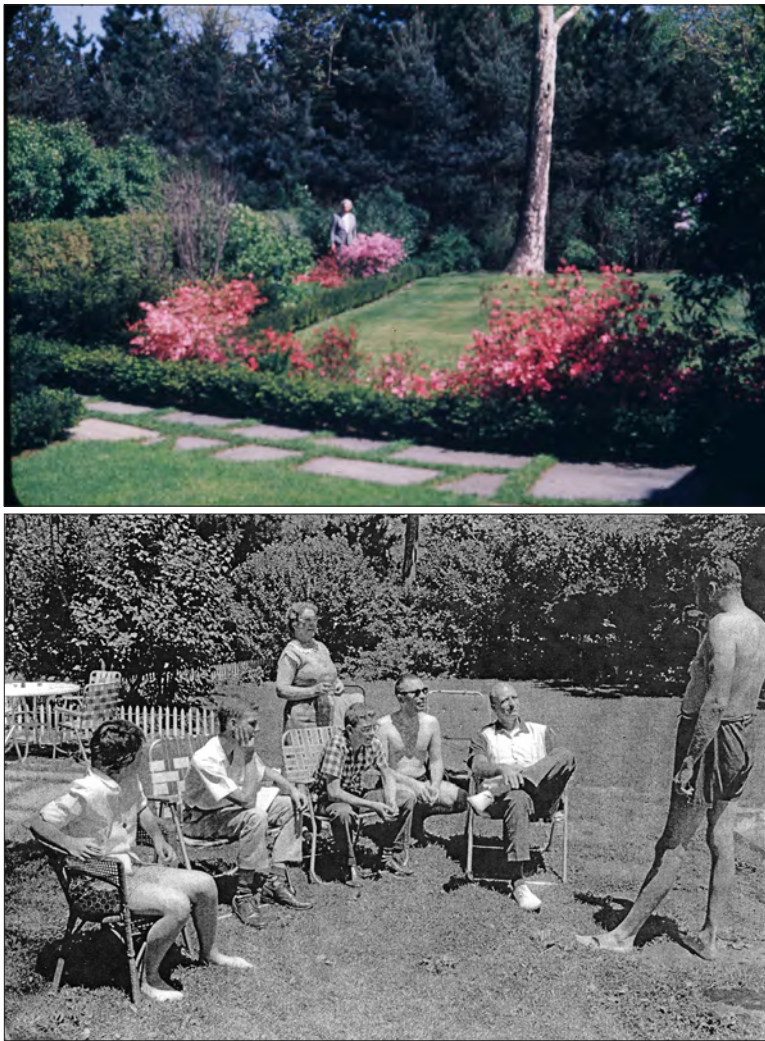
- Rehabilitating the appearance of historic roads and trails based on programmatic and interpretive needs
- Rehabilitating views to reflect their appearance during the period of significance
- Actively promoting the use of recreational trails within the constraints of resource management, including adding new segments to connect historic trails
- Retaining the cutting garden as the legislatively mandated memorial to Eleanor Roosevelt and rehabilitating it to better reflect its historic character while allowing for flexibility to enhance public use.<sup>7</sup>

## **TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY**

Because of the complexity of preserving and enhancing a cultural landscape such as Val-Kill, a sound philosophy is necessary to provide a consistent and justifiable treatment. For historic landscapes, a treatment philosophy defines an overall goal of enhancing historic character and perpetuating those characteristics and features that convey historic significance based on the landscape's historic integrity, park policies and planning, natural resource protection, park operations, and other resource management issues.

The cultural landscape of Val-Kill has a distinctive character based not only on its physical attributes as a modest Hudson Valley country home that was part of the larger Roosevelt family estate, but also on its historic association with Eleanor Roosevelt. It was here where this great activist and humanitarian, in her own words, “emerged as an individual.” For Mrs. Roosevelt, Val-Kill was both a refuge from the world of politics and a place where politics could be conducted on a more personal level, whether in the form of a picnic for at-risk children, a hot dog roast with a foreign head-of-state, or a walk around the grounds, along the agricultural fields, or through the springtime woods with a visiting reporter. It was a place where people of all ages, races, socioeconomic groups, and nationalities could experience the peace and beauty of the countryside, and feel welcome and comfortable. When not serving a public role, Val-Kill was the place where Mrs. Roosevelt gathered family for holidays and weddings—the country counterpart to her several apartments, hotel suites, and townhouses in Manhattan that she occupied over the years following FDR's death.<sup>8</sup> As her friend Edna Gurewitsch remembered about the late 1950s, “In those years, [Eleanor Roosevelt] enjoyed life very much. She enjoyed parties, giving them. She was a wonderful hostess. She enjoyed good food. In the summer her cook made the most marvelous frozen Daiquiris, which she enjoyed. She was great fun. She laughed with real gusto.”<sup>9</sup>





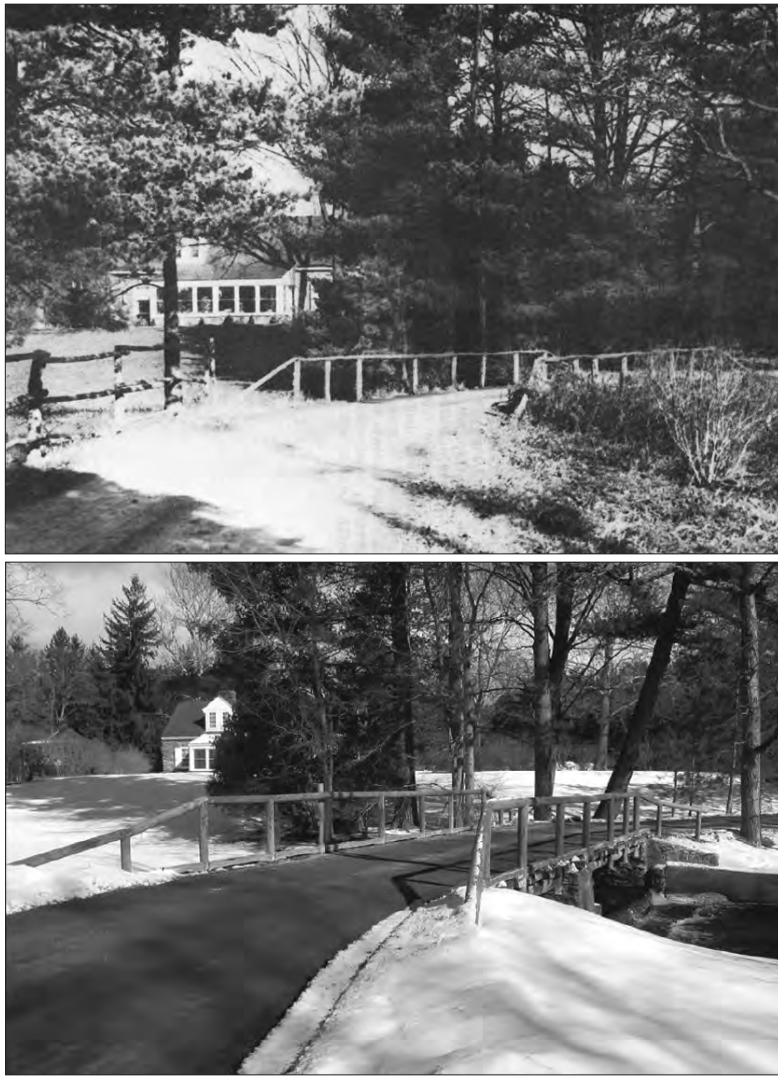
**Figure 1.2. Landscape character of the pool terrace area near Stone Cottage during the Cook–Dickerman period (top) compared with the more casual character of the late 1950s (bottom). The top photograph, ca. 1945, is looking south, and the bottom photograph, ca. 1958, is looking east. (Top: Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites; Bottom: Photograph 04-24 [2109], Dr. A. David Gurewitsch collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)**

Throughout the latter years of Eleanor Roosevelt’s life, the core of the Val-Kill landscape around the cottages was maintained with a casual appearance, in contrast to its earlier manicured condition when Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman lived at Stone Cottage prior to 1947 (fig. 1.2). After this time, the landscape was maintained, but an informality reflected in leggy shrubs, occasional high grass, rambling beds of perennials and annuals, concrete blocks for edging, and outdoor furniture in a variety of contrasting styles.

The fundamental treatment philosophy for the Val-Kill cultural landscape is historic preservation, where the historic characteristics and features of the landscape are retained and perpetuated for future generations. Treatment of Val-Kill will maintain the landscape as a historic site, but one that is a living legacy of Eleanor Roosevelt, where the uses and values she held most dear are continued in current park programming and operations. Preservation of the Val-

Kill cultural landscape will enhance the historic character of the landscape as it evolved through the later years of Mrs. Roosevelt’s life, to reflect the height of the landscape’s development under her stewardship and that of John Roosevelt, who lived at Stone Cottage. This approach will return many of the details to the landscape that were not addressed as part of the park’s rehabilitation of the site in the early 1980s, prior to public opening.

Treatment of the Val-Kill landscape is based on the concept of character management, in which historic built and designed features are preserved to reflect their historic appearance, while change inherent in natural systems and other dynamic resources is allowed to continue as it did historically based on historic intent and the preservation of broad landscape relationships. Preserving historic character does not mean freezing a landscape at a particular point in time, such as trying to replicate a landscape exactly as it appears in historic photographs, but rather, as an example, allowing trees to grow to full maturity while maintaining the larger spatial character and built features (fig. 1.3). Managing for historic character may also allow the introduction of contemporary features or allow for the modification of historic features where necessary to address other resource values



**Figure 1.3. A historic view from 1962 (top) and a recent view from 2003 (bottom) of the eastern approach toward Stone Cottage showing retention of overall historic character defined by patterns of spaces, circulation, buildings and structures, and vegetation. (Top: George I. Browne photograph, NPX 65 590 268, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; bottom: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)**

or park operations, provided the changes are subordinate to the historic landscape characteristics.

Implementation of this treatment philosophy will allow visitors to understand the landscape as Mrs. Roosevelt experienced it, but also to see the passage of time since her death in the patina of built materials, growth of vegetation, and site programming that makes connections between current humanitarian concerns and those advanced by Mrs. Roosevelt. The recommended treatment will continue uses that existed historically, such as agriculture in the west region, hiking and walking in the east region, and gardening, education, and passive recreation within the historic core. Education, in the legislated purposes of the park to continue Mrs. Roosevelt's humanitarian advocacy, is also carried out in the west region, within the non-historic landscape of the ERVK Center (Park Support Zone).

### **TREATMENT PERIOD**

For cultural landscapes, a treatment date or period is a reference point for character management—the time against which later changes are measured. Unlike a period of interpretation that tells stories over a broad span of time, a treatment period is a more concise timeframe that usually corresponds to the years near the end of the period of significance when a landscape reflects the full extent of its historic development, or best illustrates the park's significance and interpretive themes. It generally does not precede the addition of major features in the landscape (for example, if a building is added in 1950, the treatment period would not be earlier). The treatment period may also correspond to a time when a landscape was well documented in photographs, plans, or written materials.

The recommended treatment period for the landscape of Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site is 1955–60, when Val-Kill reached its full development and use under Mrs. Roosevelt's stewardship. During this time, the landscape was also managed by John Roosevelt and his family, who lived at Stone Cottage. By 1955, all of the historic landscape features were in place, except for the fence-



enclosed garden (rose garden) that John Roosevelt added for his mother in 1960. This treatment period, a refinement of the treatment date of ca. 1960 identified in the 2010 General Management Plan, is intended to better reflect the time prior to Mrs. Roosevelt's physical decline in the early 1960s when she was less involved in management of the landscape. This treatment period also allows use of photographic documentation from the second half of the 1950s that depict changes in annual plantings and other subtle details in the landscape.

The treatment period acknowledges that Mrs. Roosevelt continued to lead an active life after 1960 until several months prior to her death in Manhattan on November 7, 1962. During this time, she received presidential candidate Senator John F. Kennedy at Val-Kill in August 1960, served on the Peace Corps Advisory Board, chaired a public hearing on violence against civil rights workers, and chaired the Kennedy administration's commission on the Status of Women.<sup>10</sup> But by most accounts, however, Eleanor Roosevelt was no longer leading the active life at Val-Kill that she once did. In April 1960 after being hit by a car in Manhattan, she was diagnosed with anemia. By September 1961, her anemia worsened, and she soon was suffering from high fever and chills due to tuberculosis that spread throughout her body.<sup>11</sup> During her ill health, John Roosevelt continued his role in maintenance of the Val-Kill landscape (a role he had played since moving into Stone Cottage in 1951), but most likely became the primary caretaker and decision-maker. This change was especially evident in the cutting garden, a place that Mrs. Roosevelt cherished, but which was largely unmaintained by the early 1960s. At this time, John Roosevelt was beginning to make more significant changes to the landscape and its use, notably through conversion of the buildings to rental units. This began in ca. 1961 with conversion of the Playhouse into apartments, along with the addition of a laundry wing on Stone Cottage in place of the walled garden loggia built in 1936. This laundry wing (now removed) was accessible only from the exterior, suggesting it was intended for tenant use. Soon after Mrs. Roosevelt's death in November 1962, John Roosevelt also converted her cottage into rental units. Around this time, a drive (now removed) was built through the cutting garden from the rear entrance road, presumably for tenant use. These changes, occurring in part within the documented period of significance (1924–62), do not reflect the character and use of Val-Kill for most of Mrs. Roosevelt's lifetime, and therefore do not warrant preservation.<sup>12</sup>

The treatment period for Val-Kill is intended to reflect the history of the landscape as it developed through 1960, but not return the landscape or any individual features to a condition prior to the mid-1950s. Managing the landscape for an earlier character would conflict with such things as the dormer on Stone Cottage added in 1951, and the fenced garden added in ca. 1960, or would reinstate features that were removed during the historic period, such as the outer fenced garden at Stone Cottage removed in ca. 1947. The early years of Val-Kill, particularly the Cook–Dickerman period (to 1947) reflected a different character, particularly

around Stone-Cottage where the two women kept lush and manicured gardens that departed from the overall rustic character of the landscape. Most of these gardens remained through the late 1950s, but were maintained with a more informal character and were less vigorous in areas due to increased shade from maturing trees. Documentation from the years prior to 1955, including the Cook–Dickerman period, does, however, inform landscape treatment by showing the origins and original intent of the later landscape, particularly shrub and herbaceous plantings.

### **PRIMARY TREATMENT**

The philosophical basis for treatment in the National Park System is the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, with its four approaches: Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction. The primary or overall treatment for the landscape of Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site identified in the 2010 General Management Plan is Rehabilitation, defined as "...the act or process of making possible a compatible use of a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values."<sup>13</sup>

The Secretary of the Interior identifies the following ten standards under Rehabilitation:

1. A property shall be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal changes to its distinctive features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property is to be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property is to be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that has acquired historic significance in its own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new shall match the old in design, color, texture and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.

8. Archeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environs.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.<sup>14</sup>

Rehabilitation is the appropriate primary treatment for Val-Kill because of the ongoing need to adapt the historic landscape to contemporary park uses, and the legislated purpose of the park to continue Mrs. Roosevelt's humanitarian concerns through continuing studies, lectures, seminars, and other endeavors. While Rehabilitation allows for flexibility in treatment of the historic landscape, the emphasis will be on preservation and in-kind replacement. Under the umbrella of Rehabilitation, treatment of individual landscape features will include all four approaches (Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction), depending on historic integrity, interpretation, natural resource management, and park operations.

## **TREATMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

As expressed in the treatment philosophy, the overall goal of landscape treatment for all three character areas is to rehabilitate the landscape to enhance the historic character of the late 1950s, and to allow uses that continue Mrs. Roosevelt's humanitarian values. Objectives related to this goal vary in each of the three character areas—the west region, east region, and historic core—which reflect different aspects of Mrs. Roosevelt's most strongly-held values.

### **West Region**

Landscape treatment in the west region will preserve and enhance the historic rural character that reflects the agricultural way of life that Mrs. Roosevelt valued, as well as the landscape's agricultural use that dates back more than two centuries. The primary objectives of treatment will be to reestablish the open-space character that has been lost since 1960 to old-field succession, and to enhance the historic connection to the western half of the Bennett Farm across Violet Avenue (part of Home of FDR National Historic Site).<sup>15</sup> This treatment will not restore the exact limits of the open space that existed by 1960 due to new development and environmental issues, but rather return as much of the historic spatial character as possible. Additional objectives include minimizing the appearance of park development, notably the orchard parking lot, and enhancing views of the historic

core from the entrance road. The suburban development to the north of the field existed during the treatment period, and therefore does not require screening, unless conspicuous new development is introduced.

The Park Support Zone within the west region, site of the Eleanor Roosevelt Leadership Center at Val-Kill (ERVK), is a non-historic part of the landscape due to loss of historic integrity. The treatment objective for this small area (approximately two acres) is to maintain the landscape as a self-contained area that is screened from the surrounding historic landscape.

### **East Region**

Landscape treatment in the east region will maintain the quiet woodlands where Mrs. Roosevelt regularly walked and savored the beauties of the natural world, and where FDR had earlier practiced forestry and enjoyed respite from the public. The primary objective for the east region is to retain the forest and enhance the historic character of its cultural resources, including the roads, stone walls, and forest plantations, while allowing for public recreational and educational uses. Treatment should also interpret the changes that occurred to the landscape late in Mrs. Roosevelt's life, notably the suburban subdivisions that severed Val-Kill's connection to Top Cottage and surrounding farmland.

### **Historic Core**

Landscape treatment in the historic core will preserve and enhance the designed landscape that was the outward extension of Val-Kill Cottage (Mrs. Roosevelt's cottage) with its simple and casual décor, and that served as the place for family gatherings and for people of diverse backgrounds to learn about Mrs. Roosevelt's social and political causes. The primary treatment objectives for the historic core are to restore a lively domestic character to the landscape; maintain a well-tended, informal character to the gardens, shrubs, and foundation plantings; retain and expand the open water and open space on Val-Kill pond to maintain and enhance views toward the white pine plantation and agricultural fields; minimize the appearance of contemporary park development, notably signs, lighting, and parking; allow for universal access; and promote interpretation of the landscape. In addition, the cutting garden will be managed to programmatically convey it as a memorial to Eleanor Roosevelt.<sup>16</sup>

**CHAPTER 1 ENDNOTES**

1 Public Law 95-32: Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site Establishment Act, 95th Congress S.171, 35 May 1977.

2 Within the hierarchy of National Park Service policies, standards, and guidelines, management of the landscape as a cultural resource is defined by 36 *CFR Part 2: Resource Protection, Public Use and Recreation (Preservation of Natural, Cultural and Archeological Resources)*. The application of these regulations to cultural landscapes is contained within *National Park Service Management Policies* (2006), *Director's Order #28* (Cultural Resources Management), and *NPS 28 National Park Service Cultural Resource Management Guideline*.

3 *NPS-28 Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, Chapter 7: Management of Cultural Landscapes.

4 National Park Service, *Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, Draft General Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Boston: National Park Service, 2009), 6. The selected management alternative of the General Management Plan was approved in 2010.

5 *Ibid.*, 48, 49, 50.

6 *Ibid.*, xiv, 55, 71.

7 *Ibid.*, 71, 72, 78, 79, 83.

8 The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, "Questions and Answers about Eleanor Roosevelt," <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/teaching/q-and-a/q10.cfm> (accessed June 13, 2012). FDR and Eleanor Roosevelt's city residence was at 49 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street from 1908 until 1941. In 1958, Mrs. Roosevelt purchased a townhouse, together with Dr. A. David Gurewitsch and his wife Edna, at 55 East 74<sup>th</sup> Street.

9 PBS, "American Experience, Eleanor Roosevelt," program transcript, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/transcript/eleanor-transcript/> (accessed June 27, 2012).

10 National First Ladies' Library, "First Lady Biography: Eleanor Roosevelt," <http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=33> (accessed June 13, 2012).

11 Barron Lerner, "Charting the Death of Eleanor Roosevelt," *Fathom: The Source for Online Learning*, <http://www.fathom.com/feature/35672/index.html> (accessed June 13, 2012).

12 Lisa Nowak, *Cultural Landscape Report for Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Volume I* (Boston: National Park Service Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 2005), 128, 131–32. The CLR does not discuss the specific dates that John Roosevelt began to make changes for tenant use, but according to a photograph of the Laundry dated 1961, this occurred prior to Mrs. Roosevelt's death. An aerial photograph dated April 1960 show the hedge-enclosed cutting garden without a road cutting across it.

13 *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (Department of the Interior, 1995), <http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/> (accessed June 15, 2012).

14 *Ibid.*

15 The relationship of the Val-Kill fields to the rest of the Bennett Farm west of Violet Avenue has been lost due to old-field succession that has obscured the historic fields, as well as expansion of the highway.

16 *Draft General Management Plan* (2009), 71.





## 2. GENERAL TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of issues are impacting the historic character of the Val-Kill landscape and the ability of the park to carry out effective maintenance, interpretation, and other operations. The following section identifies these issues and provides general recommendations for future management, as a basis for the more specific treatment guidelines and tasks in Chapter 3.

### IMPROVE LANDSCAPE CONDITION

During Mrs. Roosevelt's lifetime, the Val-Kill landscape was well-tended, with roads graded, brush and debris removed along woods roads, shrubs pruned, and garden beds kept stocked with flowers and vegetables. Prior to the departure of Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman in 1947, the landscape, especially around Stone Cottage, had a lush and highly tended character. In later years, the condition of the landscape was more informal and less manicured. In the west region, continued agricultural use maintained the open character of the farm fields. In the east region, the forest plantations retained much of their managed character throughout Mrs. Roosevelt's lifetime, although active forest management ceased within a few years of FDR's death in 1945.

For the past three decades, the National Park Service has been a good steward of the Val-Kill landscape, but there has been a decline in the level of maintenance characteristic of Mrs. Roosevelt's years of residence. This is evident in overgrown fields, eroded roads, missing or sick plantings, and abandoned recreational

features (fig. 2.1). These conditions stem largely from inadequate funding, but are also related to changing policies toward natural resource management, damage from pests and invasive plants, and lack of maintenance in areas outside of the primary interpretive area of the historic core.

Overall, the Val-Kill landscape should have a well-tended character that is characteristic of historic agricultural and domestic uses. Recent funding has allowed

**Figure 2.1: Looking northeast at the tennis court, 2010. This shows the poor condition and missing components (net) that contrast with the historically well-maintained and lively character of the landscape. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)**





the park to correct several issues, such as deteriorated stone walks and building exteriors. Conditions that still warrant treatment to enhance the character of the landscape include removal of successional vegetation in historically open areas, replacement of overgrown or deer-browsed shrubs, correction of eroded and ungraded roads, repair of collapsed or buried stone walls, removal of debris along woods roads, and repair of recreational features, including replacement of missing components.

### **PROTECT AND ENHANCE HISTORIC SETTING**

The setting of Val-Kill has remained relatively consistent since 1962 (fig. 2.2). With divestiture, sale, and subdivision of surrounding Roosevelt property in the 1950s, major changes occurred during Mrs. Roosevelt's lifetime to the once rural setting. By 1960, most of the houses in the surrounding subdivisions had been built, and a few could be seen across the north field from Val-Kill Lane. Elsewhere, wooded buffers substantially screened views of new development from within the property boundary, and the parts of Val-Kill which Mrs. Roosevelt frequented most often, including the domestic core, the orchard, and the loop road through the eastern woods, retained a feeling of seclusion. Since 1962, the loss or changes in vegetation along certain segments of the property boundary has opened up non-historic views to neighboring homes, particularly across the upper pond through the white pine plantation.

The one major post-historic change to Val-Kill's setting has occurred across Violet Avenue (NY 9G) at the former Bennett Farm, which in 1960 still retained its open fields and farmhouse and barns that were visible from Val-Kill (see fig. 2.2). Most of the farm buildings were demolished in the 1970s, and the fields left to successional growth. Although the Roosevelt Farm Lane trailhead has opened up some of the fields, most still remain wooded, and the wooded margins along Violet Avenue disrupt the continuity of the open space that extended across the road to Val-Kill. The fields west of Violet Avenue should be restored to their historic extent, as directed by the 2010 General Management Plan.<sup>1</sup>

Across Creek Road from the southwest corner of the west region is a building constructed between 1933 and 1935 to house the Val-Kill Industries Weaving Cottage, and later became the Val-Kill Tea Room. It currently houses a restaurant, which has an auxiliary parking lot adjacent to the south field. The 2010 General Management Plan directs the park to work proactively to facilitate the protection and compatible use of the Val-Kill Tea Room by partners or others, and to interpret for visitors the history of the Tea Room and its relationship to Val-Kill Industries.<sup>2</sup> In the long-term, this strategy may involve restoration of the building and its surrounding grounds, and removal of lighting from the parking lot. In the short-term, the park should monitor this area to ensure that any future changes in



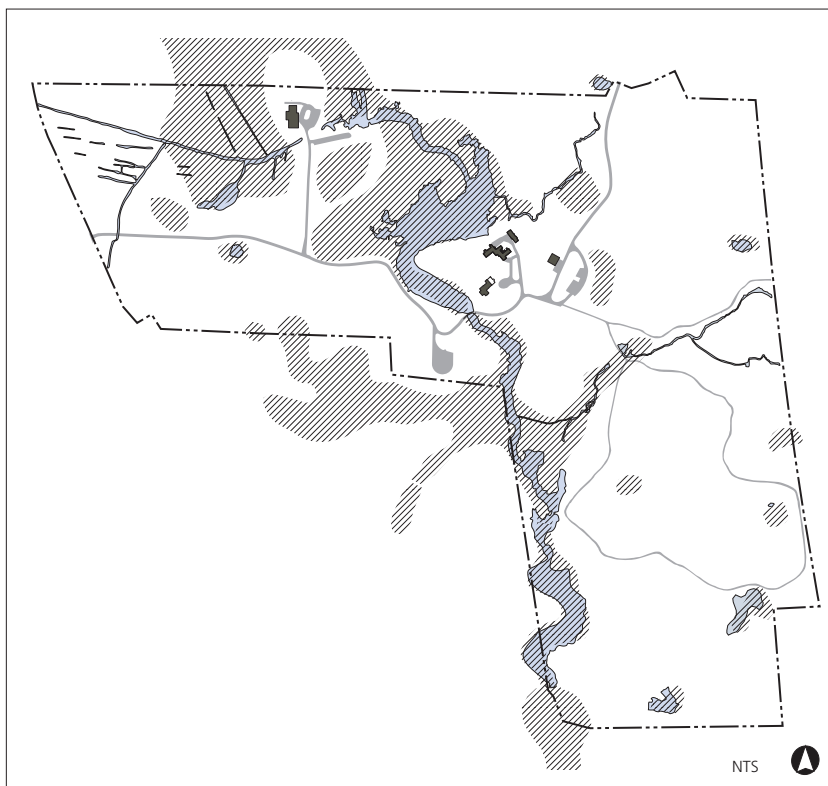
Figure 2.2: Aerial photographs of Val-Kill from 1960 (top) and 2009 (bottom) showing the setting surrounding the national historic site (red boundary line) has remained largely intact since the end of the historic period. (US Department of Agriculture orthoimagery, annotated by Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

vegetation along the property line to not open up incompatible off-site views to the restaurant parking lot.

Elsewhere, it is recommended that the park undertake a long-term strategy for protecting Val-Kill's historic setting in cooperation with the Town of Hyde Park and individual neighboring property owners for the undeveloped adjoining lands, particularly along the south, north, and east sides of the site. Consideration should also be given to restricting changes on existing developed lots that could intrude on the historic rural setting of Val-Kill, such as through light pollution, building enlargement, or clearing of woods that provide visual buffers. The park should also work with the New York State Department of Transportation to ensure that future improvements to Route 9G are compatible with the historic rural character of Val-Kill and do not further erode its historic connection to the Bennett Farm. Widening of the road, addition of lighting and traffic signals, installation of drainage structures and curbing, and removal or relocation of stone walls have the potential to adversely impact the historic rural character of Val-Kill by creating a more suburban appearance to the landscape.

### REESTABLISH HISTORIC FIELD AND FOREST PATTERNS

**Figure 2.3: Map of approximate extents (hatched areas) of wetlands per most recent National Wetland Inventory data. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)**



Patterns of fields and forest were historically defining features of the Val-Kill landscape, but they have been altered through natural succession resulting from cessation of agricultural use and changes in maintenance. Aside from altering historic spatial patterns, changes to fields and woodland edges can also impact

other landscape features. Examples include the Norway spruce row along the north side of Val-Kill Lane and the white pine plantation (Plot D) at the upper pond that are now in competition with the adjacent deciduous woods, threatening the health of these historic trees.

Fields and woodland edges should be maintained to their approximate limits as documented in ca. 1960 (see fig. 2.2). Some change to field edges due to growth of trees is an inherent dynamic of the landscape, but encroachment by new trees in areas historically managed as field is not recommended. Most areas of successional growth should be cleared to reestablish historic open space. Once trees and



shrubs are removed, a regular maintenance regime will be necessary to prevent their re-establishment. This may include cyclical clearing of woody vegetation during the winter when the threat posed to wildlife by a brush hog or similar equipment could be minimized, or the introduction of grazing livestock in historic pastures (north field) that would keep down woody vegetation.

Clearing and pasturing will need to take into account potential impacts to endangered species, notably the Blanding's Turtle, which is designated threatened in New York State and was last sighted at Val-Kill in 2003.<sup>3</sup> Protection of wetlands will also require careful consideration. Much of the land where reestablishment of historic fields is warranted, such as in the area north of Val-Kill Lane, is classified as either wetland or wetland buffer zone, along with scattered areas in the east region where forestry work may occur (fig. 2.3). As a federal agency, the National Park Service must comply with federal wetland regulations, and is directed by the Army Corps of Engineers to comply with state New York State wetlands regulations.<sup>4</sup> The park should also consult with county and town authorities in developing an ecologically-sound regime of vegetation removal and management, and educate the public on the reasons for tree removals well in advance of project implementation to avert potential adverse reactions.

The Central Hudson Power line corridor that cuts through the forested east region of Val-Kill presents another issue with maintaining historic field and forest patterns (see fig. 2.2). Since it was built in ca. 1955 during the historic period, it is appropriate for the power line and its clearing to be maintained. However, as discussed in chapter 1, should the power line be abandoned, it would also be appropriate for the park to return the corridor to its forested condition, since it is not associated with the areas of significance for Val-Kill and does not contribute to the intended historic character of the landscape. In reestablishing the forest cover, the portion of the power line corridor adjoining the white pine plantation (Plot D) should be replanted with white pine to reestablish the historic extent of the plantation.

### **PERPETUATE HISTORIC MANAGED VEGETATION**

Planted and managed vegetation at Val-Kill, including specimen trees, shrubs, herbaceous plantings, vines, and lawn, has changed since the historic period through the onset of diseases and pests, natural growth and decline, inadequate maintenance, and new understanding of complex ecological systems. Managed vegetation was dominated during the historic period by native plants such as sycamore, birch, arborvitae, eastern red-cedar, red and white oak, and eastern white pine. Exotics including Norway spruce, Douglas fir, Scots pine, and a variety of non-native flowering shrubs, perennials and annuals, and turf grasses also characterized the cultural landscape during the historic period.

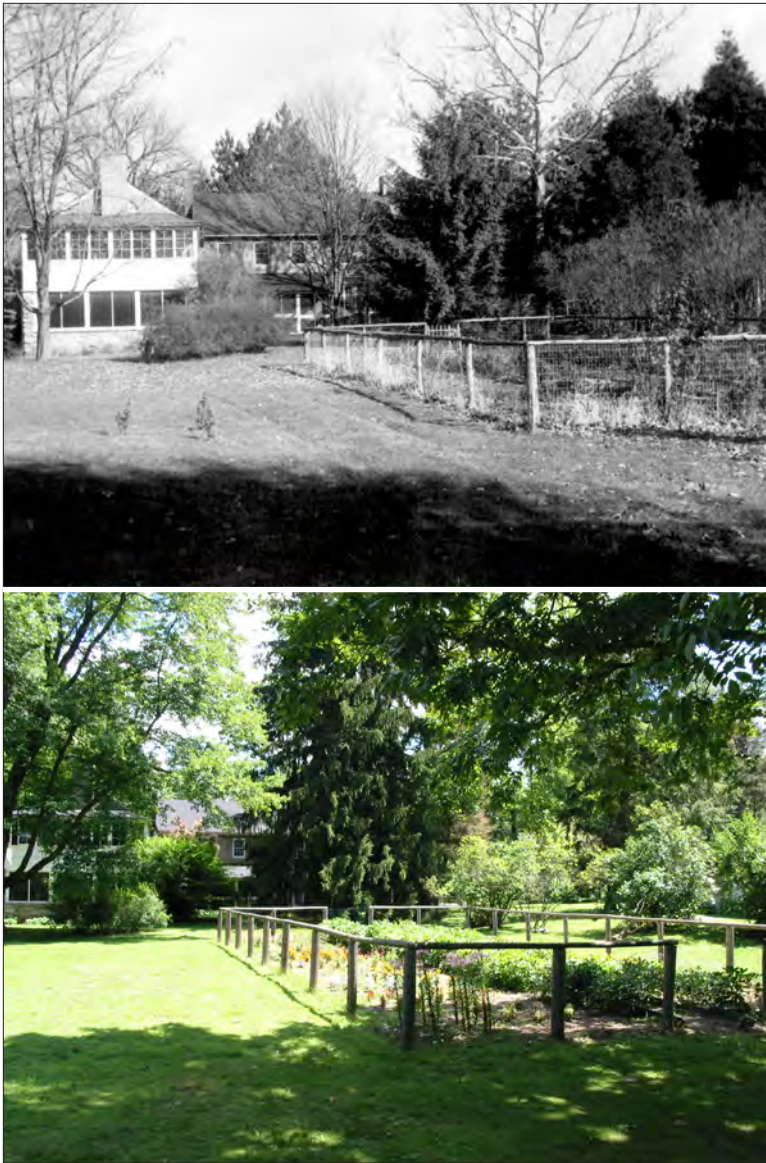


Figure 2.4. Historic views of the fenced garden looking east toward Mrs. Roosevelt's Cottage from 1962 (top) and 2003 (bottom) showing historic character of the vegetation and how it has changed over time. Growth and decline is an inherent cycle of the cultural landscape. (Top: George I. Browne photograph, NPx65 590 267, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; bottom: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

In general, treatment of managed plant material should be limited to perpetuating the palette used historically. While no planting plans for Val-Kill have been located, historic photos, oral histories, and other sources such as Mrs. Roosevelt's syndicated "My Day" newspaper column provide documentation of the historic planting palette. Additionally, a plant inventory undertaken in 1995 identified a number of trees and shrubs within the historic core which were dated to the historic period but have since been lost.<sup>5</sup> Where historic plantings are known to have existed but the species or variety is not known, it would be appropriate to use a species of a similar character.

Historic plants should be maintained for as long as possible. Remove plants only when they are in advanced decline, unable to be kept in good condition consistent with their historic form, pose a safety hazard or potential for damage to other historic features, or are an incompatible addition made after 1962. Non-historic specimens planted after 1962 or which have self-sown may be retained provided they do not detract from the historic character

of the landscape. Historic exotics should be maintained and perpetuated in the landscape, unless, like Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) or Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), they have been identified as invasive species which pose a threat to the local ecosystem. In such cases, substitute a compatible non-invasive species. Replacement plantings should be made soon after the historic specimen has been removed and in the same location.

## TREES

Manage specimen trees and groves to allow for natural growth, which generally enhances historic character and provides visitors with a tangible sense of time passage (fig. 2.4). Where replanting or replacement is necessary, use plant material of a caliper sufficient to reestablish historic character as quickly as possible. Groups of trees, such as the row of Norway spruce near Val-Kill Cottage or the

arborvitae that line the road near the bridge over the Fall Kill, should be managed to retain and perpetuate their historic massing. Where individuals in the group are lost, they should be replaced in-kind provided the growing conditions are adequate. If a majority of the group has been lost or is in decline, it may be appropriate to replace the entire group at once. Mulch rings should not be used around mature specimen trees, but are appropriate to protect establishing young trees. Use a dark, earth-colored mulch.

### **SHRUBS AND HEDGES**

Where shrubs have grown into trees or become excessively leggy since the historic period, consideration should be given to pruning back to the historic form unless doing so would damage the plant. In many instances, deciduous shrubs may be pruned back severely in order to return to the historic dimensions, but evergreen shrubs generally cannot. Use of mulch should be limited to shaded areas directly beneath the canopy that would have been bare earth historically.

### **GARDEN BEDS**

Documentation on the historic varieties and configuration of ornamental herbaceous plantings is not comprehensive. Historic species and varieties should be used wherever possible, if known; if the historic plant variety is not known, then the preferred treatment is to use plants that were commercially available prior to 1962. If historic plants are not available, are prone to disease, or present a maintenance burden, it may be appropriate to substitute a modern variety if it is similar in character to the historic plant. New flowerbeds should not be introduced where none existed historically.

### **VINES**

Vines, including climbing hydrangea, wisteria, honeysuckle, and Boston ivy, were historically maintained on Stone Cottage, Val-Kill Cottage, the tennis court backstops, and the barbecue. Where vines have disappeared, they should be reintroduced if growing conditions allow. On the buildings, vines may be removed or cut back if current maintenance does not permit frequent pruning to keep them from damaging paint finishes or causing other building conservation problems.

### **LAWN**

The lawn at Val-Kill during Mrs. Roosevelt's later years had a well-established character with a variety of grasses and broad-leaf plants, and was rough in certain areas, particularly in shaded areas around the tennis court and barbecue. Although it is popular today to turn lawn into no-mow or groundcover for



ecological reasons, all areas historically maintained as lawn or cut grass, primarily in the historic core, but also at the site of the tenant house and along road shoulders, should be kept mown. Maintenance of a “Class A” quality lawn, requiring pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers to produce a uniform appearance, is not appropriate to the historic character of the Val-Kill landscape, with the exception of the small patch within the walled garden. Although the lawn was not highly maintained, allowing for bare and worn patches, or grass

to encroach over walks and roads, is not compatible with the historically maintained character of the landscape.

Preparation of a preservation maintenance plan that directs routine and cyclical maintenance of vegetation would be a valuable tool in managing the historic character of Val-Kill’s ornamental plantings.

### **ENHANCE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF ROADS AND WALKS**

Circulation features at Val-Kill were historically informal in design, but well-maintained. Since the end of the historic period, the roads and walkways throughout the site remain, but have changed in character due to changed use and decreased maintenance. The advent of private vehicles and busses led to changes to the entrance road through paving and lowering of the vertical profile, while decreases in maintenance and conversion to pedestrian use led to erosion of the unpaved roads in the historic core and east region, including loss of surface, profile, and defined edges (fig. 2.5). Paved walkways and patio areas

have deteriorated through a combination of increased pedestrian use, lack of maintenance, and environmental factors such as frost and root heaves. The park has recently completed repairs to the walks, but additional work remains to be done.

All historic roads and walks should be maintained to preserve the appearance of active use and be kept open at a minimum for pedestrians, as loss of use often leads in time to loss of the physical feature. If it is necessary to block vehicular



**Figure 2.5: Deteriorated condition of Val-Kill roads, showing the road to Top Cottage (Hyde Park Trail) looking east with its segmented and narrowed roadbed (top), and the loop drive at Stone Cottage, looking west with its eroded surface and edges, 2012. (SUNY ESF)**



use, then inconspicuous post bollards should be used. Historic roads presently maintained as trails, notably the Road to Top Cottage (Hyde Park Trail) and the Loop Road (Eleanor's Walk) should be maintained to retain the historic character defined by road surface and width.

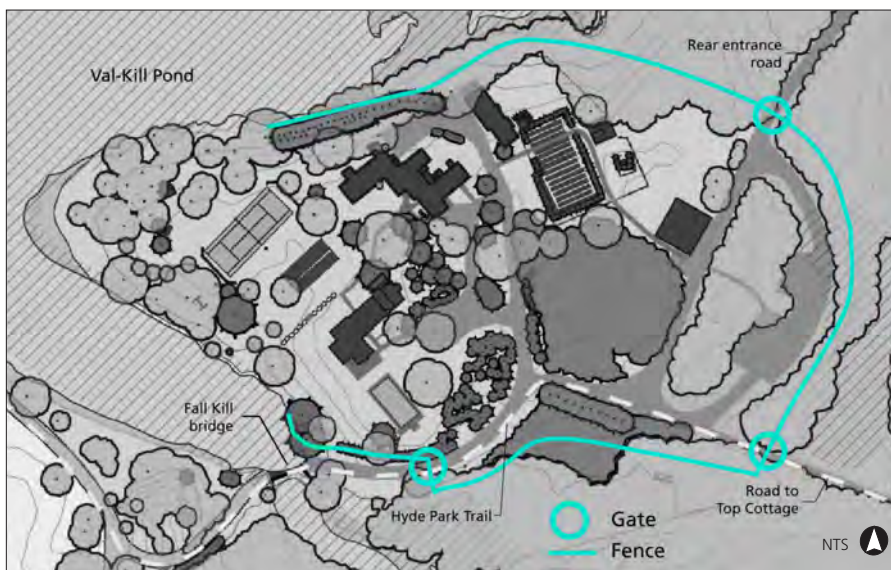
Routine maintenance is necessary both to preserve historic character and ensure accessibility and visitor safety. Unpaved roads and pathways should be graded on a regular basis to maintain the surface, edges, and profile suitable for safe vehicular and/or pedestrian uses. Roads within the historic core should receive additional maintenance to retain a maintained appearance through regular raking, grading, weeding, and edging. Since there were historically no paved roads within Val-Kill, the optimal treatment is to return existing paved surfaces to their historic earthen/gravel surface. The park's current use of this surface type on the Roosevelt Farm Lane may make it a more viable option for Val-Kill. Where asphalt or other pavements are used for maintenance or accessibility, then the surface should be as close as possible to the historic color and texture.

All outdoor circulation at Val-Kill should meet federal standards for universal accessibility to the greatest extent possible unless meeting such standards would threaten or destroy the landscape's historic character. Natural topography may also preclude full accessibility in certain areas of the park. Ensure that roads and walks are of adequate width and slope, and minimize tread obstacles such as gaps or protuberances. Generally, each trail must have a minimum clear width of 36" and a slope of 8.33% or less (for additional guidance, see Appendix B). Unpaved roads and walks with compacted earth, well-consolidated gravel, or stone-dust surfaces can be universally-accessible provided the surface is firm and sufficiently stable to allow movement of a wheelchair.

Tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever are an ongoing concern in eastern New York, including Dutchess County. It is generally recommended to keep vegetation trimmed back from either side of trails in order to minimize potential visitor contact with disease-bearing ticks.<sup>6</sup> Ticks are found in high grasses along the south field and Central Hudson power line corridor, as well as in scrub characteristic of forest understory. While there is no absolute rule for how large a buffer is necessary, a 3' wide strip on either side of a footpath is reasonable. Roads used for pedestrian purposes have a built-in buffer because of their width, but a cleared strip of one to two feet at the vegetated shoulder is still advisable, and would be compatible with the historic managed character of the landscape.

## PROVIDE EFFECTIVE DEER CONTROL

Landscape damage from deer browsing has become a major issue in recent decades as the deer population in Dutchess County has increased due to agricultural decline, expanding forest cover and suburban gardening, decreased hunting, and a lack of natural predators. Once primarily a problem during harsh winters, deer browsing of horticultural plantings is now a concern year-round. The park currently maintains 6'-high deer fencing around the perimeters of the orchard and cutting garden. While this system has been generally effective, it leaves many other plantings in the historic core, including herbaceous plants and shrubs, unprotected. The fencing also detracts from the historic character of the landscape.



**Figure 2.6. Potential location of a site-wide deer fence around the historic core to protect shrubs and herbaceous plantings that are susceptible to deer browsing year-round. (SUNY ESF)**

Deer control should ideally utilize an integrated pest management approach, employing multiple means including exclusion, scare devices, and/or repellants.<sup>7</sup> The park should consider a professionally-designed deer control system which may use one or more of these methods depending on costs, the constraints of the site, maintenance, and dynamics of the deer population. A site-wide deer fence around the historic core would provide the most compatible and comprehensive coverage for the landscape. A potential location for this fence could extend through the woods around the historic core, and would most likely not need to be along the banks of the pond so that the views from the cottages would be unaffected (fig. 2.6). Fencing could be 7' high fine-gauge polypropylene netting attached to trees through wooded areas, which would be largely invisible from a distance. Gates would be required at the rear entrance road, road to Top Cottage, and at the western entrance to the historic core, preferably away from the Fall Kill bridge in a more inconspicuous spot. Such site-wide fencing, effectively used as historic sites including The Mount in Lenox, Massachusetts, would permit removal of the deer fences around gardens and individual shrubs, which detract from the historic character of the landscape, and allow for reestablishment of historic flowerbeds without additional fences. Given its separate location, the orchard would need to retain its own deer fence. However, once the trees are mature, the fencing may not be necessary, unless the orchard is managed for fruit production.

Deer control should ideally utilize an integrated pest management approach, employing multiple means including exclusion, scare devices, and/or repellants.<sup>7</sup> The park should consider a professionally-designed deer control system which may use one or more of these methods depending on costs, the constraints of the site, maintenance, and dynamics of the deer population. A site-

Until such a site-wide system can be implemented, deer fencing should be maintained around vulnerable plantings throughout the year, using the least visually intrusive manner possible. Individual evergreen shrubs or young trees may be protected by wrapping them in dark colored plastic netting, which may be necessary only during the winter months. This system should be installed in a way that prevents birds from becoming caught in the netting.

### **MAINTAIN COMPATIBLE PARK FURNISHINGS**

The existing non-historic park furnishings consist of benches, a picnic table, waste cans, light standards, and signs in a range of types and styles. Overall, park furnishings (small-scale features) should visually recede in the landscape, unless they reestablish features that existed historically. Park furnishings are necessary as part of Val-Kill's current use as a public historic site, but where they are modern additions, they should be compatible with the domestic character of the landscape, inconspicuous, and restricted to only where necessary.

### **SEATING AND PICNIC TABLES**

Historically, there was a variety of casual outdoor furniture in the historic core, most of which was set out seasonally or for special occasions. By the late 1950s, these included standard wood picnic tables, rustic wood slat benches, and painted metal tables and folding web chairs on and around the pool patio (fig. 2.7). There were also older painted wrought-iron patio chairs, and a log near the barbecue



Figure 2.7. Historic lawn furniture in the historic core: modest wood picnic table, rustic slat bench, and painted metal tables with webbed aluminum chairs. (Left: Photograph Px54-426, ca. 1952, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; right: ca. 1958 photographs, private collection of Susan Curnan)



that was used as a bench. Existing non-historic park benches are in a range of styles and types, including wood slat, pipe-frame, and cast-aluminum Victorian.

Outdoor furniture was an important part of the landscape's historic character and should be returned where it existed historically, including near the barbecue and tennis court, on the porch lawn outside Val-Kill Cottage, and on the pool patio. Furniture that serves primarily contemporary park needs and is placed where none existed historically should use a unified design that is compatible but distinct from the historic furnishings. A wooden slat bench, such as one recently installed



**Figure 2.8.** Left: Example of an existing park bench that is appropriate as a contemporary addition to the landscape (a backless bench would be less conspicuous); Right: example of a rustic log bench that would be appropriate as a contemporary addition along trails outside the historic core. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

near the bookstore, is an appropriate design that recalls the rustic furniture used historically, and is durable and comfortable design befitting public use (fig. 2.8). Along trails and other areas remote from the historic core, rustic log benches would be appropriate.

In general, contemporary outdoor seating should not be installed in the historic core, except where most needed by visitors, such as at the parking lots, in the cutting garden, or where the park shuttle and tram pick up and discharge passengers. These benches should be positioned in inconspicuous locations, such as next to a hedge, behind a shrub, or against a structure.

## SIGNS

The current signs at Val-Kill vary across the site and include a large park entrance sign on Violet Avenue, simple metal blue and white signs within the historic core, various standard traffic signs, and rustic unpainted wooden trail signs in the east region (fig. 2.9). In addition, small rectangular signs are nailed to trees along the Loop Road in the east region that mark interpretive stations on the Hyde Park Explorer's "Eleanor's Walk Trail." Each of the individual styles is generally compatible with historic character of the landscape, but the range of styles makes them more conspicuous than necessary, and less intentional.

Consider developing a system of signage that has a common theme, based upon the National Parks Service's *UniGuide* standards, which were employed in the design of the current park entrance sign with its brown face and black top band. Such a system would help unify the site and enhance orientation. For example, all signs could use a common font and format with a consistent title or emblem representing Val-Kill, but employ different materials or colors depending on their location.

Since there were no signs historically in the landscape with a few possible exceptions, they should be inconspicuous to the extent feasible, and installed



**Figure 2.9.** Recent photos of signs throughout the site showing variety of styles. The sign at left uses the current NPS Uni-Guide design standards. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

only where necessary for visitor orientation. Installation of signs in the historic core have the potential to impact historic character given the intimate scale of the landscape. Avoid nailing signs to trees; if necessary, use a spring-mounted system that allows for growth of the tree.

## OUTDOOR LIGHTING

Freestanding light fixtures were not historically used in the landscape, with the exception of a single light standard that stood along the flagstone path near Val-Kill Cottage (fig. 2.10). Site lighting was most likely provided by building or tree-mounted fixtures. Although the contemporary light poles currently used within the historic core are simple in design, they are incompatible with the historic character of the landscape due to their institutional design and raised concrete footings, particularly where they stand in the open without a backdrop of trees.

As a general guideline, minimize outdoor lighting and avoid use of freestanding light standards, except in the non-historic landscape surrounding the ERVK center. Where outdoor lighting is deemed necessary, fixtures should be inconspicuous. Building or tree-mounted lights, which may have historic precedent at the site, would be appropriate provided they are mounted in a way that does not damage the trees or buildings. Where a freestanding light standard





**Figure 2.10.** Left: Historic light standard along the walk to Mrs. Roosevelt's cottage, ca. 1961; Right: existing park light standards, 2003. (Left: Photograph NPx65-330a, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; right: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

is required, fixtures should be both simple and domestic in design and blend into the surrounding landscape, such as through use of wood poles with simple luminaires, similar in overall character to the historic standard. Avoid diffusion and light pollution in order to maintain the nighttime darkness characteristic of the historic residential and rural landscape. A comprehensive site lighting study should be undertaken to further develop these guidelines.

## EXPAND LANDSCAPE INTERPRETATION

**Figure 2.11.** The site of the historic tenant farmhouse showing a part of the agricultural history of the cultural landscape that is currently uninterpreted, looking southeast, 2010. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)



The park currently addresses the Val-Kill cultural landscape in its interpretative program, but the focus is primarily on the buildings and certain recreational features within the historic core. The landscape of the west region is essentially uninterpreted, and while the natural resources of the east region are well-

addressed in the self-guided podcast tour called "Eleanor's Walk," the podcast only briefly touches upon cultural resources. The podcasts developed for other trails on historic Roosevelt estate lands do interpret FDR's forestry activities, the estate's tenant farmers, and the eventual transformation of much of the historic estate lands into suburban development. These important themes should also be addressed at Val-Kill, so that visitors not walking the other trails may still appreciate

the rich land-use history of the site, as well as Val-Kill's context within the larger Roosevelt estate.

Interpretation of the orchard, the fruits and vegetables historically grown in the cutting garden, and the continuous working of the west fields by tenant farmers could speak powerfully to Eleanor Roosevelt's values regarding the productive use of land (fig. 2.11). It could also deepen and expand the existing narrative of her support for small farmers, currently focused on the founding and operation of Val-Kill Industries.

As recommended under guidelines for park furnishings, interpretation should be based on ranger-led tours, and on self-guided hardcopy or digital programs rather than on permanent fixtures such as interpretive waysides. However, in remote areas such as the site of the tenant farmhouse, or the pond along the loop road (Eleanor's Walk) where FDR liked to stop, installation of interpretive signs may be appropriate provided they are designed and located in an inconspicuous manner. Signs identifying FDR's forest plantations and the limits of the stands, which may have existed historically, could greatly aid visitor understanding of these important but often overlooked resources.

## CHAPTER 2 ENDNOTES

1 National Park Service, *Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, Draft General Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Boston: National Park Service, 2009), 50. This plan was adopted in 2010 (no final report was printed).

2 *Ibid.*, 78.

3 *Ibid.*, 50.

4 Dave Hayes, Integrated Resource Manager, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, comment on draft treatment plan, June 17, 2011. The NPS is technically exempt from state and local permitting requirements except in situations where Congress clearly indicates otherwise, such as activities affecting water pollution discharge. Memo, Anthony R. Conte, Regional Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, to Nancy Nelson, Superintendent, Minuteman National Historical Park, February 18, 2004.

5 National Park Service, “Historic Plant Inventory for Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site” (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, in cooperation with the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, 1995).

6 Kirby C. Stafford III, Ph.D, “Tick Management Handbook” (Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, 2007), <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/resources/handbook.pdf> (accessed June 10, 2011).

7 Lance Gegner, “Deer Control Options,” *Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas*, 2003, <http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/deercontrol.pdf> (accessed June 10, 2011).

### 3. TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND TASKS

This chapter provides recommended actions for implementing the prescribed treatment philosophy of enhancing the historic character of the landscape during Mrs. Roosevelt's later years, ca. 1955–60, according to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The chapter is organized according to the three character areas of the site: west region, east region, and historic core. Due to the large number of tasks within the historic core, this area is organized into four smaller sections. Each character area begins with treatment guidelines that address overall issues affecting the park landscape and the larger setting, and is followed by specific treatment tasks. Each task begins with a summary of historic conditions that is based on the CLR site history unless otherwise noted, followed by existing conditions and recommended treatment. Preservation (maintenance and repair) is the default treatment for landscape features not specifically addressed. At the end of the chapter is a summary table of prioritized treatment tasks, followed by three treatment plans (Drawings 1–3) for each of the character areas that locate and illustrate treatment tasks.

#### **WEST REGION**

The west region, with its rural character defined by fields and woods, serves as the entry experience for the majority of visitors to Val-Kill. It is bordered by Violet Avenue on the west, and private property on the north and south sides. Eleanor Roosevelt was a strong believer in the productive use of land, as reflected in her syndicated newspaper column “My Day,” in August, 1945:

I have never felt in any way interested in a country place just as a country place. I feel that land should produce; and if you have a little extra money, so that you will not starve when experiments go wrong, you should try experiments in the hope of benefitting farming as a whole for your neighbors. The custom which existed for a time in this country, of having large places which cost a great deal of money and produced nothing beyond what one family used on their table, has always seemed to me a very wasteful tradition, and I am glad that it is rapidly disappearing.<sup>1</sup>

This portion of Val-Kill continued in agricultural use by tenant farmers and members of the Roosevelt family throughout the historic period. Today, it is some of the last remaining farmland in an area of suburban subdivisions and commercial strip development.

## **GUIDELINES**

Maintaining an open, rural character is central to preserving the historic character of Val-Kill's west region. The south field was historically used for cultivation or hay, while the wetter north field was also used at one time for cultivation or hay, but during Mrs. Roosevelt's later years, was most likely kept as pasture. As identified in the 2010 General Management Plan, the preferred method for maintaining the historic rural character of the landscape is through continuing historic agricultural uses. This may involve a combination of grazing and crop production, such as through a cooperative arrangement with a local farmer or other partner. If such an arrangement is not feasible, the open character should be maintained through mowing. Whatever method used to maintain open character, field and forest patterns should reflect historic conditions of the late 1950s, unless there are compelling management or environmental reasons. These include the need to screen incompatible views or preserve critical wildlife habitat. The ecological functions provided by the wetlands in the region must be balanced with the importance of preserving the fields' historic open character.

The drainage ditches in the north field pre-date FDR's acquisition of the property in 1911. They remain largely intact, but continued sedimentation may require dredging at some point in the future so that the system continues to drain. Within the north field, the sheep pond and the short earthen road to it were constructed in the mid-1960s after Mrs. Roosevelt's death. While the pond is thus a non-contributing landscape feature which would be appropriate to remove, it is compatible with the agricultural character of the west region and may be retained for its ecological function and possible utility if grazing animals are returned to the site.

The setting of Val-Kill changed considerably during the latter years of the historic period during the 1950s and early 1960s as neighboring parcels of the Roosevelt estate were sold out of the family and developed. The small suburban houses on Franklin Road along the northern boundary of the west region (part of the Patrick subdivision) and the Central Hudson power line were built during the 1950s and were therefore visible from Val-Kill fields during the historic period, so screening is therefore not necessary. However, new development within these lots, ranging from new buildings, lighting, or addition of new landscape features such as white vinyl fencing, should be monitored for impact on Val-Kill's historic setting. Screening with vegetation may be necessary.

While there has been little new development surrounding the west region since 1962, the park should monitor the large tract of privately-owned land that adjoins the south side of the west region (see fig. 2.2). The park should work with the Town of Hyde Park and/or land trusts to ensure development does not encroach on Val-Kill's historic setting through zoning or acquisition of conservation easements by third parties.



As discussed in Chapter 2, the historic spatial connection between Val-Kill and the former Bennett Farm west of Route 9G (now protected as part of the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site) should be reestablished by clearing the successional woods which have grown along Route 9G since 1960. Val-Kill was historically part of the Bennett Farm, and during Mrs. Roosevelt's later years, the Bennett Farm retained its rural character, although it was no longer owned by the Roosevelt family (the property was sold to developers in 1952, but a proposed

shopping center was never built).

This site was also the hub of the short-lived Val-Kill Farms venture undertaken in the late 1940s by Elliott Roosevelt, with Mrs. Roosevelt's support.

The frontage of Val-Kill along Violet Avenue was historically mown grass between the road and stone walls, without curbs, paved shoulders, or roadside trees. The park should work with the New York State Department of Transportation to ensure that



**Figure 3.1.** The main entrance to Val-Kill, looking south along Route 9G, 2010. The widened shoulders and curbs detract from the historic rural character of the entrance (the flowerbeds have since been removed). Across the street is the modern entrance to Roosevelt Farm Lane, the park road to the FDR Home and Presidential Library. The area to the right of the road was historically mostly open field. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

future highway improvements maintain and enhance the rural character of the landscape (fig. 3.1). Additional widening of the asphalt roadbed and shoulders, installation of light standards, curbing, or large traffic signs, and planting of roadside trees, shrubs, or flowerbeds would not be compatible with the historic character of the landscape (see also recommendations for historic setting in Chapter 2).

## TASKS

Treatment tasks for the west region are shown on Drawing 1 and identified by the prefix WR.

### WR-1. Clear the North Field

The field north of Val-Kill Lane is characterized by uneven topography and a fairly high water table, with deep, rich soils that made it good for cultivation and pasture. FDR's tenant farmer Moses Smith, farmed this field until approximately 1947, and during the 1960s, John Roosevelt and Charles Curnan grazed sheep there.<sup>2</sup> Some areas had become scrubby by the late 1950s, but most of the field remained open. Since grazing of the north field ceased in the early 1970s, most of the field was abandoned and natural succession has reduced the size of the open field by approximately one-half, thereby altering the spatial organization of the landscape. The historic experience of traveling down Val-Kill Lane surrounded by farm fields



**Figure 3.2. Encroachment of successional woods across the north field since the end of the historic period, as shown in historic aerial from 1960 (top) and recent aerial from 2009 (bottom). (US Department of Agriculture orthoimagery, annotated by Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)**

on either side has been lost, along with views from the historic core looking west across the field.

To reestablish the historic open character of the north field, clear the majority of successional woods to restore the extent of the field evident in the 1960 aerial (fig. 3.2). Retain and protect the planted Norway spruce, arborvitae, and Scots pine along Val-Kill Lane and the site of the tenant farmhouse (see also task W-2). Retain part of the successional woods as a visual buffer around the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill to screen this non-historic development from the west region and the historic core. The exact extent of this buffer and need for supplemental plantings will need to be determined in the field based on a detailed visual analysis, but an approximation is shown on Drawing 1. Individual and groves of older trees should be left in the field as shown on the 1960 aerial, including apple trees that are located northwest of the sheep pond, and a line of scattered trees near the Fall Kill.

The existing drainage ditches, which date back to the early agricultural history of the property, should be retained and maintained so that the north field does not flood or become excessively wet. The existing sheep pond, a non-historic

constructed water feature dating to the mid-1960s, may be retained. It would also be appropriate to remove the pond and restore the area to its previous relatively level grade with a ditch, provided there are no adverse environmental concerns. The nearby non-historic road trace and remnant barbed-wire and wood-post fencing (not shown on plan) may be removed, or retained to reflect the past agricultural use of the landscape.

Removal of the successional woods will convert the existing wetland areas (delineated on Drawing 1) from swamp to marsh or wet pasture, which are conditions that existing historically. The existing wetlands must be protected, preferably by undertaking tree removal during winter when the ground is frozen. Clearing of the woods will require consultation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), under the state Freshwater Wetlands Act, which covers wetlands over 12.4 acres.<sup>3</sup> It is anticipated that the DEC would support the tree removals, provided it can be demonstrated that the wetlands will not be adversely impacted.<sup>4</sup>

After the successional woods are removed, the preferred method of perpetuating the open character of the north field (to keep down woody vegetation) is to reintroduce grazing. This could involve a resident flock of animals such as sheep or goats maintained through a cooperative agreement with a local farmer, although consideration would have to be given to the visual impact of the type of enclosures and support facilities necessary for such an operation. Barbed-wire and locust post fencing, the type used historically, would be appropriate, or a modern system that is inconspicuous, such as electric fencing. Alternatively, livestock such as goats could be brought in on a temporary basis specifically to browse brush and keep down woody vegetation. Annual mowing such as currently practiced at the west end of the north field would also maintain open character if a grazing operation is not infeasible. Equipment that is able to mow on uneven and wet ground, such as a brush hog, would be necessary.

#### **WR-2. Enhance Historic Character of the South Field**

During the historic period, a variety of crops including hay, wheat, rye, corn, and asparagus were grown in the south field.<sup>5</sup> Almost the entire field, from Violet Avenue to the Fall Kill, was cultivated, apparently laid out in rows running roughly north-south, perpendicular to Val-Kill Lane. The exceptions were the banks of two small ponds or wet areas along the north and south edges of the field, where woody vegetation grew. Currently, the historic open character is maintained through mowing for hay, with round bales often scattered across the field (fig. 3.3).

The current use as a hay field maintains the open spatial character of the landscape, but does not fully convey the historic agricultural use of the south field, since visitors often view a hay field simply as a natural meadow or overgrown lawn. The preferred strategy for enhancing the agricultural character of the





**Figure 3.3. The south field, looking southeast from Val-Kill Lane, 2010. In the middle of the field are round hay bales. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)**

south field and perpetuating Mrs. Roosevelt's belief in making land productive is to reintroduce cultivation of field crops through a lease or cooperative agreement with a farmer or non-profit organization. This is a strategy advocated in the 2010 General Management Plan, and is currently practiced at other national parks, including Minuteman National Historical Park and Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The cultivated area should follow the general limits of the area visible on the 1960 aerial (fig. 3.4). However, the eastern end of the field should be kept as a hay field to allow its occasional use for overflow parking. Rotation of crops that leaves certain sections fallow or as a hayfield, would be appropriate. As shown on Drawing 1, the crops in the cultivated areas should generally be oriented with rows perpendicular to Val-Kill Lane. The crops historically grown in the south field would be most appropriate for reintroduction to the site, but others may be considered provided they are compatible with the historic character of the landscape. These should be limited to herbaceous crops, which can be plowed or mown at the end of the season. Vineyards, orchards, or community gardens, for example, would not be appropriate because they would alter the spatial organization of the field and may require permanent built features such as fences or trellises.

If the south field cannot be used for cultivated crops, then it should continue to be maintained as a single hay field. While it is not known how the Roosevelts baled hay by the late 1950s (when they did raise hay), it was most likely not through machinery that produced large round bales, which are a contemporary technique that became popular in the late twentieth century. These round bales are compatible with the rural character of Val-Kill, but are not historically authentic. Hay was most likely processed using a machine that produced small rectangular bales, which would have been stored in a barn because they do not shed water, or temporarily stored in the field as haystacks, which shed water. These two techniques are more labor intensive and may not be feasible if the field is actively hayed by a farmer.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to continued agricultural use, the historic character of the south field should be preserved by retaining vegetation to screen the restaurant parking at the southwest corner of the field. This parcel had been part of the south field prior to its subdivision from the Roosevelt estate in 1949 when the Val-Kill Tea Room was sold off. By 1960, the parcel was still apparently undeveloped and was part of



Figure 3.4. Top: the south field in 1960, showing limits of cultivated area, apparently with a cover crop. Bottom: the south field in 2009 showing its use as a hay field, and the growth of trees around the parking lot across from the restaurant (Val-Kill Tea Room). (US Department of Agriculture orthoimagery, annotated by SUNY ESF)

the open space of the south field (see fig. 3.4). Since then, the existing asphalt lot was constructed and trees allowed to grow up along its boundary with the historic site. In 2008, the parking lot was expanded and the grade raised by approximately 4' along the park boundary, which pushed fill against the trees between the lot and the south field. While these trees are not historic, they do visually buffer the parking lot, which is lit at night. The added fill will most likely kill the trees within several years. The park should ensure that the lot remains screened from the south field and entrance to Val-Kill by planting an additional row of trees and low-growing shrubs, using the species found in the adjoining woods.

As discussed under guidelines for enhancing the historic setting, the trees that have grown up on the field directly across Violet Avenue (within the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site), which was historically part of the same open space as the south field, should be removed to reestablish the setting shown on the 1960 aerial (see fig. 3.4).

### WR-3. Enhance Historic Character of Val-Kill Lane

Related Tasks: WR-4, WR-5, HC-1

Val-Kill Lane was historically a narrow earth and gravel-surfaced farm road that was oiled annually to control dust and potholes, with narrow mown shoulders (fig 3.5).<sup>7</sup> By the time the National Park Service acquired the property in 1977, the condition of the road had deteriorated badly. In the early 1980s in preparation for public opening, the park widened the road and lowered the roadbed near the





**Figure 3.5. Historic and existing views of Val-Kill Lane. Left: looking west from near the tenant farmhouse, ca. 1955. With Mrs. Roosevelt is Dr. Gurewitsch's mother. Note narrow mown shoulders on either side of the road. Right: looking from the same location showing widening, lowered profile, and chip-seal surface, 2012. (Folder G-4, Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; SUNY ESF)**

tenant farmhouse and in a few other spots to reduce slopes for public vehicular use. In 2000, the park paved the portion of the road west of the bridge in asphalt finished with a chip-seal coat to ease winter maintenance and increase durability. State improvements to Violet Avenue altered the alignment of the entrance and added curbs.

The existing asphalt chip-seal surface has a rough character that recalls the historic surface, but is lighter and more even-toned (see fig. 3.5). The preferred treatment for enhancing historic character in the long-term is to remove the asphalt and return to an earthen-gravel surface, such as the surface used on the recently built Roosevelt Farm Lane trail head road across from Val-Kill (NYS DOT Section 411, Stabilized Gravel Surface Course; with asphalt on grades of 8% or above to prevent erosion). In addition to its aesthetic quality, a gravel surface would enhance the visitor experience by providing the sound and feel of the historic road, and may help to calm traffic by keeping speeds down. Since the park is already maintaining gravel roads, maintenance of the same surface on Val-Kill Lane may be more feasible than it was in the past. The durability of the surface for use by large busses would need to be considered.

The historic character of Val-Kill Lane would be further enhanced by maintaining 2' wide mown shoulders throughout its length to provide the historic maintained character (see fig. 3.5). The mown shoulder on the south side may be further widened to accommodate the Hyde Park Trail (see WR-4). In addition, the non-historic asphalt curb and yellow warning stakes along the small wetland hollow should also be replaced because they detract from the historic character of Val-Kill Lane. These were added in 2009 when the park stabilized the steep drop-off to the hollow. In place of the asphalt curb and stakes, it is recommended that a

timber guiderail be installed following the specification of the railing on the road to Bard Rock at Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site (fig. 3.6). This rustic timber guiderail is compatible with the rural character of the landscape and is more durable than the asphalt curb, and will visually recede in the wooded setting. An engineering study may be necessary to determine if the ground can support the timber posts. If further stabilization of the slope is necessary, use of subsurface iron sheet piling would avoid additional visual intrusion.

The entrance of Val-Kill Lane at Route 9G should be maintained with a modest rural character. Since this was historically a farm road, ornamental plantings are not appropriate around the entrance. Maintain the ground between the edge of the road and the stone walls as mown grass, not as flowerbeds (the flowers added in 2011 are not being replanted). Future improvements should explore the possibility of removing the curbs, which lend the entrance a more developed character. If an edge treatment is necessary to guide traffic or for maintenance, consider using stones or flush stone curbing.

**Figure 3.6. Proposed treatment of barriers along the wetland hollow on Val-Kill Lane. Left: existing asphalt curb and markers looking west, 2010. Right: timber guide rail on road to Bard Rock at Vanderbilt Mansion, 2012. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)**

The existing width of Val-Kill Lane is not sufficient for two-way traffic. Vehicles generally have to slow down and pull partly onto the grass shoulders to allow another vehicle to pass. This system has been working and helps to calm traffic. Widening the paved surface would adversely impact the historic character of the landscape and features such as the roadside stone wall and trees. Instead, maintain stable and flush grass shoulders to allow vehicles to pull off the pavement when necessary.



#### **WR-4. Maintain Mown Shoulder for Hyde Park Trail**

Related Tasks: WR-3, 5

The Hyde Park Trail, which crosses the Western Region along Val-Kill Lane, serves as the primary pedestrian route through the site. Pedestrians generally walk on the road, but an off-road route would provide an alternative that avoids vehicle

conflicts. In the past, the park has maintained a mown path along the north edge of the south field, but not consistently.

It is recommended that the south shoulder of Val-Kill Lane be mown to a width of approximately 6' to provide an off-road route for the Hyde Park Trail (this is an expansion of the approximately 2' wide mown shoulder maintained historically). The trail route should have an even surface and the grass maintained at a short height suitable for walking. The 6' width allows 2' to 4' from the edge of the road as the trail, and additional 2' to provide a tick buffer with the adjoining hayfield or cultivated crops. Actual widths may vary due to the terrain and other features that require the trail to remain on the road, or be farther back from the road. This will be necessary at a steep bank and ditch in the shoulder that extends approximately 150' east of Violet Avenue, around roadside trees, and at the steep bank along the roadside pond. Here, the mown trail should circle the edge of the woods, and then return to the road shoulder. The mown corridor may also need to veer into the south field at two depressions along the road near Val-Kill Pond. Minor filling and grading may also be required in areas to establish sufficient trail/shoulder width.

#### **WR-5. Retain and Replant Trees along Val-Kill Lane**

Related Tasks: WR-3, 4

During the late 1950s, the north side of Val-Kill Lane was lined by deciduous trees, Norway spruce, open field, and a hedge of arborvitae around the site of the tenant farmhouse (see fig. 3.4). Some of these trees have since been removed, while many others have grown in or been replanted. The line of deciduous trees along the south side of the Val-Kill Lane near the entrance have been lost. White pine and additional Norway spruce were planted along the road after 1960, and volunteer trees grew in the open fields.

To reestablish the character of the trees along the road, remove or prune volunteer deciduous trees that are crowding the Norway spruce (the volunteer woods on the north side of the Norway spruce are recommended for removed under task WR-1). The mature deciduous trees, primarily along the western end of the road and near the entrance, are historic features and should be retained. Replant Norway spruce where they have been lost, as evident in the 1960 aerial (fig. 3.4) and by stumps on the ground. Plant approximately five deciduous trees along the south side of the road near Violet Avenue, as shown in the 1960 aerial and extending off the existing tree. Since the historic species are not known, use species found in the area, such as red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*). Remove the white pine trees near the entrance to reestablish the deciduous character of the row, and the Norway spruce and other trees where there was open field west of the tenant farmhouse.





Figure 3.7. View looking northeast towards the bridge and dam over the Fall-Kill showing east end of rail fence that existed by the late 1950s, photographed ca. 1962. (George I. Browne photograph, NPx 65 590 268, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

#### WR-6. Reconstruct Fence along Val-Kill Lane

During the late 1950s, the north side of Val-Kill Lane along the pond east to the bridge was bordered by a post and rail fence (fig. 3.7). The western terminus was about where the road and the pond shore diverged.<sup>8</sup> The fence may have protected ornamental plantings along the west bank of Val-Kill pond from grazing livestock, or kept livestock out of the pond.

Based on historic photos, reconstruct the fence in its historic location, for a running length of approximately 400'. Build the fence of unmilled and stripped logs, using approximately 6" diameter posts and three, 4" diameter overlapping rails nailed to the posts.

The logs were most likely rot-resistant cedar or locust. The fence should be built approximately 5' from the edge of the road, and extend to, but not engage, the bridge railing.

#### WR-7. Repair Stone Walls

Related Tasks: ER-9, HC-21

The dry-laid stone walls in the west region are remnants of early agricultural use of the site during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when they served as fences and boundary markers. In ca. 1931, an opening with mortared piers was made in the wall along the south boundary of the Bennett Farm to mark the entrance to the Val-Kill orchard. Today, the cap on one of the orchard piers is missing and sections of the walls have collapsed, including those that are visible to the public (fig. 3.8). Weeds and volunteer trees are growing out of the walls in places.

The vertical realignment of Val-Kill Lane undertaken in the 1980s partially buried

parts of the wall that lined the road. These issues not only impact the historic integrity of these structures, but also the historically maintained character of the landscape.

All stone walls and the orchard pier should be repaired, with collapsed sections rebuilt using the original stones and dry-laid masonry techniques. Give priority to the most visible sections, particularly along Route 9G, Val-Kill Lane, and at the

Figure 3.8. Collapsed and buried sections of stone wall at the front of Val-Kill, looking north along Violet Avenue, 2011. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)





Figure 3.9. Looking west on Val-Kill Lane showing recommended treatment of the stone wall, where segments have collapsed or been buried due to raising of the roadbed. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

orchard. Ensure adequate drainage by rebuilding or installing culverts (drainage from Violet Avenue appears to be undermining the stone wall bordering the south field). Rebuild the buried portions of wall along Val-Kill Lane to their previous relative height of approximately 36" above the road surface by stacking additional layers of dry-laid stone on top of the existing stones (fig. 3.9). The stone used should match the character of the existing materials as closely as possible.<sup>9</sup> There are certain locations where the altered vertical alignment of the road has resulted in very steep shoulders, and it may be dif-

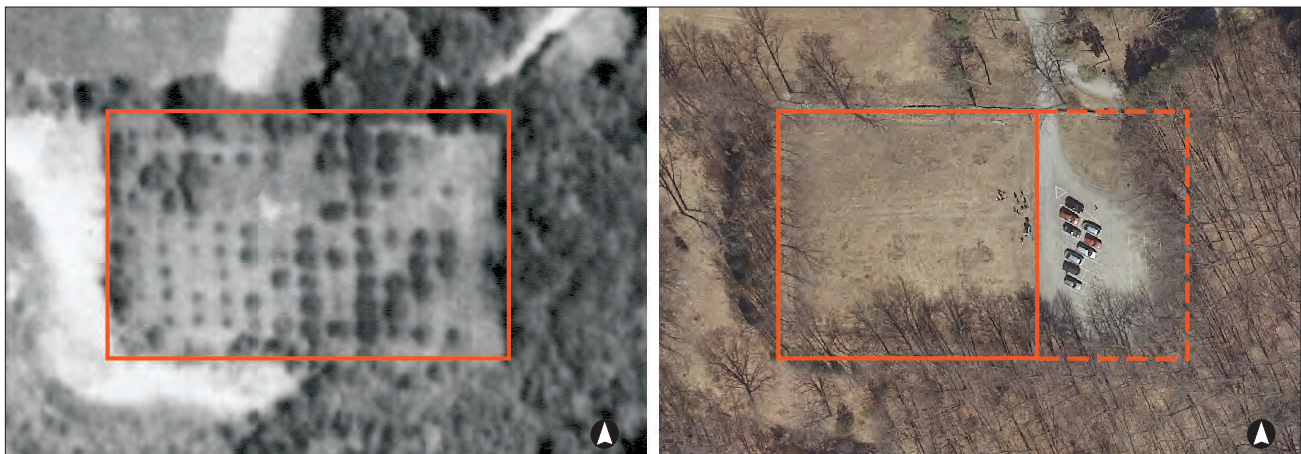
ficult to raise the wall height in these locations using the traditional dry-laid stone methods. A mortared base would be appropriate for these locations if it is not visible from the road.

#### WR-8. Enhance Historic Character of the Orchard

Related Task: WR-9

The orchard was established in 1931 by the three Val-Kill partners on the Tompkins Farm property belonging to FDR outside the bounds of their eight-acre lease.<sup>10</sup> Former caretaker George Curnan recalled that in the 1950s and 1960s, the orchard contained a variety of apple and pear trees, as well as raspberries, blueberries, and grapes.<sup>11</sup> The orchard was maintained through the 1960s, at which time it was lined by trees along the stone wall to the north; woods to the south and west had been recently removed (fig. 3.10). The orchard was abandoned after John Roosevelt sold the property in 1970, and it had fallen into advanced decline by the time the National Park Service took control of the property in 1977. Most of the trees were removed over the following decade. In 1985, a visitor parking lot was built in the eastern third of the orchard field, and was later enlarged to accommodate buses. The few surviving fruit trees were removed in 2009 when the remaining portion of the orchard was replanted with young apple and pear trees laid out

Figure 3.10. Changes in the Val-Kill orchard. Left: historic aerial from ca. 1960 with orchard intact. Right: recent aerial from ca. 2005 showing loss of trees and addition of the parking lot. The orchard trees have since been replanted. (Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)





along the lines of the original grid. Deer fencing is maintained around the perimeter of the orchard. Clumps of raspberry plants still grow along the stone wall on the north side of the orchard.

The orchard was an important part of the Val-Kill cultural landscape and should be restored to the greatest extent possible. The recommended relocation of the parking lot (see WR-9) will reestablish more of the historic character of the orchard as viewed from the entrance road because it will shift the lot to the back of the orchard and allow for reestablishment of the two easternmost rows of trees. If at some point in the future the parking lot is no longer needed, it should be removed and the orchard restored to its historic extent.

Manage the orchard to convey a sense of productive agricultural use. Such use provides an opportunity to partner with a farmer or organization, along with leasing of other agricultural lands at Val-Kill, as recommended in the General



**Figure 3.11.** The open-bowl orchard tree scaffold recommended for the Val-Kill orchard trees. (Lowther, 1914, from Susan Dolan, *A Fruitful Legacy*, 2009)

Management Plan. Mow the ground and maintain the tree scaffolds in an open-bowl style, where the leader is removed to create a short, spreading form with branches relatively low to the ground for convenient harvest (fig. 3.11). To allow for mower access, lower branches may be pruned higher, but should be a maximum of approximately 6' above the ground. The open-bowl scaffold was common between 1880 and 1945 in smaller and non-commercial orchards, and the Val-Kill orchard continued to be maintained in this way through the 1950s.<sup>12</sup> Photos taken of the remaining fruit trees in 1972 corroborate this as the basic form maintained during the historic period. Replace trees as necessary to maintain the geometric layout of the orchard. Preserve the existing raspberries along the stone wall and supplement with new plants sufficient to provide a continuous run. If the existing parking lot is not relocated (see WR-9), consider adding a hedge of highbush blueberry along the western side of the lot to provide some visual screening from the visitor approach on Val-Kill Drive.

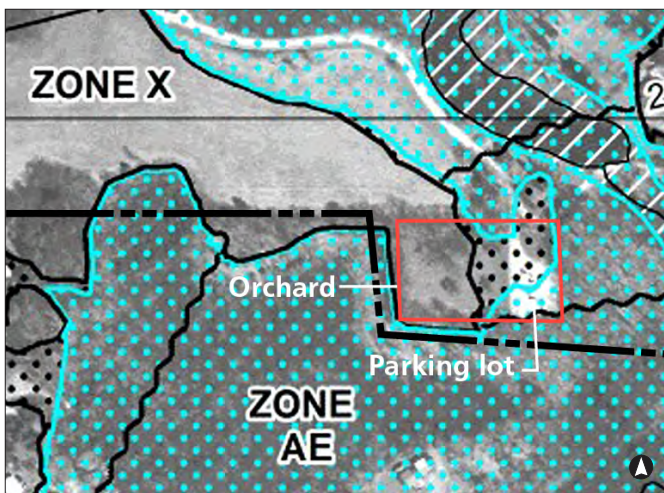
The existing deer fencing is necessary to protect the young trees. Once the trees mature, the need for deer fencing should be reevaluated, with the goal of removing the fencing or installing a less conspicuous method of deer exclusion.

The park should work with a local land trust to secure an easement on the adjoining private property to the south and west to ensure that development does not alter the wooded setting of the orchard. The property line is approximately 10' beyond the edge of the woods, so new construction on this property could be highly visible from within the historic site.



3.12. The parking lot as viewed along the visitor approach, looking southeast along Val-Kill Lane, 2012. (SUNY ESF)

the orchard and Val-Kill's rural landscape is to relocate the parking lot to the southwestern part of the orchard so that it is out of the primary viewshed along the entrance road (fig. 3.14). Move the existing fruit trees to the present site of the parking lot to form rows that reestablish the historic eastern side of the orchard (soil remediation may be necessary prior to planting). As the orchard matures, the parking lot will be concealed when the trees are in leaf. Plant a hedge of highbush blueberry along the northern edge of the lot to provide additional screening and



3.13. Current FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map) showing 1% floodplain area (blue dots) and 0.02% floodplain area (black dots) relative to the existing parking lot and the historic limits of the orchard (red line). Zone X is outside of the floodplain. (Federal Emergency Management Agency, Dutchess County FIRM Maps, May 12, 2012 effective date, annotated by SUNY ESF)

reintroduce fruit historically grown in the orchard. The proposed relocation retains the existing entry drive into the lot, and extends it south. The new lot would provide space for 16 cars and 3 busses, with overflow parking possible along the entrance drive shoulders (current lot capacity is 12 cars, 3 busses). Extend the existing walkway to the south and west between the rows of orchard trees, which will allow visitors to walk through the productive agricultural landscape that Mrs. Roosevelt valued.

This task will also move the parking lot out of the 1% floodplain and most of the 0.2% floodplain.

Shifting the parking lot into the woods east of the existing lot, where it would be more fully screened and allow for reestablishment of the full extent of the orchard, is not feasible because it would locate the parking almost entirely in the 1% floodplain. National Park Service policy discourages construction within 1% floodplains due to ecological concerns and the need to preserve capital improvements.<sup>14</sup>

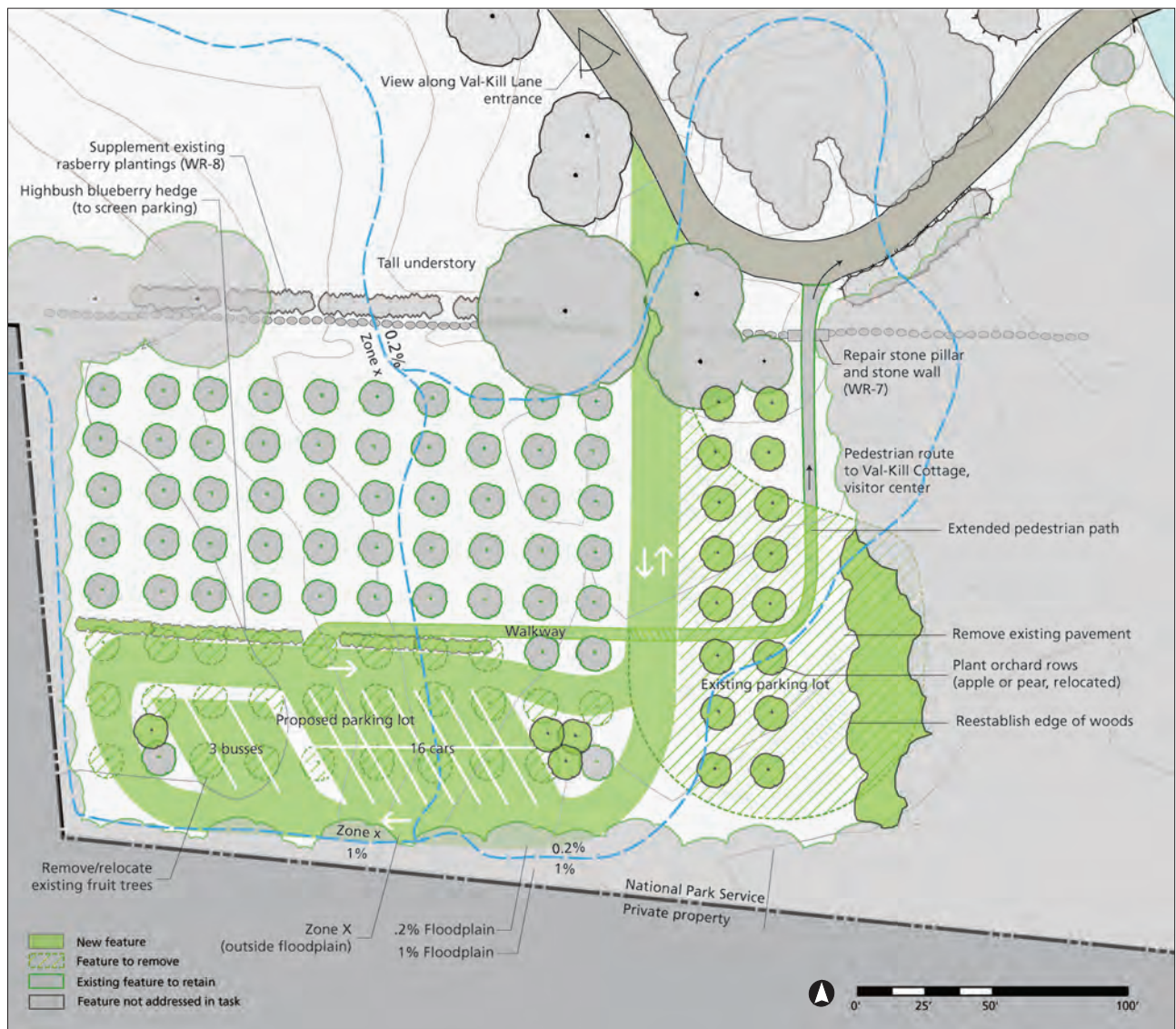
#### WR-9. Relocate Orchard Parking Lot

Related Task: WR-8

The orchard parking lot, built in 1985, occupies approximately one-third of the historic orchard (see fig. 3.10). On the approach along Val-Kill Lane, the parking lot, rather than the historic orchard, dominates the view (fig. 3.12). Approximately half of the existing lot is in a 1% floodplain, while the remainder is in the 0.02% floodplain (fig. 3.13).<sup>13</sup>

The recommended treatment for enhancing the historic character of





3.14. Conceptual plan for redesign of the visitor parking lot to enhance the historic character of the orchard, improve screening, and shift the lot out of the floodplain. (SUNY ESF)

Additional investigation of the existing topography and other site conditions will be necessary to develop detailed construction drawings. Grading for the new parking lot may require the addition of a retaining wall along the south side, where the grade drops steeply.

#### WR-10. Interpret Site of Tenant Farmhouse

North of Val-Kill Lane, about halfway between Route 9G and the bridge over the Fall Kill, is the site of the Bennett Farm tenant farmhouse (fig. 3.15). This small nineteenth-century building was occupied by tenants of the Roosevelt family through ca. 1964, when it was replaced by a new house for Charles Curnan, the Val-Kill caretaker, to the north. In addition to the farmhouse, several small outbuildings existed in the area to shelter livestock. The tenant farmhouse was removed in the 1960s, but was an important part of the historic agricultural



**Figure 3.15.** The tenant farmhouse, looking southwest across the access road at the east side of the building (south field in background), ca. 1930. (Dickerman Collection, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)

landscape and contributed to the vernacular character of Val-Kill. There are currently no structural remnants visible, but there are traces of the historic land use in the mown area and associated plantings. These trees include several Scots pines and a row of arborvitae along the road. The site, although uninterpreted and largely unmanaged, is in a prominent location at the entrance to the recently developed ERVK center.

Although the tenant farmhouse existed during the treatment period, current park planning does not call for reconstruction of this building. In terms of enhancing historic character, an appropriate treatment would be to reconstruct the building if sufficient documentation exists. If the need for additional space arises, such as for ERVK, it may also be appropriate to construct a contemporary building on the site that matches the size, massing, materials, and location of the historic building. In either case, an archeological survey would be needed prior to construction to document and evaluate remnants of the historic building and associated features.

In the absence of building reconstruction, the existing site should be interpreted. Incorporating the farmhouse site into the park's interpretive program would provide visitors with a greater understanding of the historic vernacular landscape. The preferred method of interpretation would be as part of a self-guided tour similar to that currently offered for the woodland roads of the east region.

The tenant farmhouse site could also be enhanced for interpretive purposes by retaining and perpetuating the plantings and open space that are remnants of

**Figure 3.16.** Examples of contemporary brick foundation footprints and building corner posts that could be used to interpret the site of the Val-Kill tenant farmhouse. These examples are from Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park in Virginia. (SUNY ESF)



the historic landscape, notably the arborvitae row and Scots pine trees. Keep the site mown to distinguish it from the surrounding meadow/pasture (to be reestablished under ER-1), and replant the missing the west leg of the arborvitae hedgerow (visible on 1960 aerial, see



fig. 3.4). This will help to articulate the historic spatial limits of the tenant house area.

Given the lack of documentation on the site, an archeological survey could greatly aid understanding of the physical history and use of the site. Archeological evidence could establish the exact footprint of the house and outbuildings, location of walks and drives, and deposits that help tell the story of tenant life at the Bennett Farm and Val-Kill. These findings could be used for interpretive interventions in the landscape, such as revealing foundation remnants. If they are too fragile or incomplete, the building footprint could be outlined in a contemporary material such as brick or stone blocks, or the corners of the building could be marked with posts (fig. 3.16).

## **EAST REGION**

The east region of Val-Kill is a forested, rocky landscape at the foot of Dutchess Hill that is a marked contrast to the agricultural and gently sloping character of the west region. Mrs. Roosevelt often walked along the woods roads in this area, much as visitors still do today. She often remarked upon her joy of observing nature here, as she wrote in her “My Day” column shortly after her last Thanksgiving at Val-Kill in November 1961:

This is the time of year to rejoice in the smell of burning leaves, to regret the loss of the color which is now completely departed from the trees, but to admire the lacy silhouette that the bare branches make against the sky. I am one of those who enjoy the changes of season, finding in each of them many things of great beauty, and I could not help thinking as I walked in the woods how foolish we are, poor human beings, to want to destroy such a beautiful world.<sup>15</sup>

The east region also retains a strong imprint from FDR’s lifetime, when he managed the oak-hemlock forest for timber production, set out three forest plantations, and constructed woods roads and access roads to neighboring parts of the estate, including his retreat, Top Cottage at the top of Dutchess Hill. Forest management ceased within a few years after his death in 1945, but the managed character of the forest remained largely intact throughout Eleanor Roosevelt’s lifetime, with the exception of development of adjoining parcels and construction of the Central Hudson Power Line in the 1950s.

## **GUIDELINES**

Overall treatment objectives for the east region are to perpetuate the historic wooded setting, preserve remnants of the managed forest and war-time security features associated with FDR, and enhance recreational use of the historic roads.

During much of the historic period through the mid-1950s, a network of farm and woods roads, along with presidential security roads dating to World War II, connected the Val-Kill domestic core to the other Roosevelt lands to the east and north. These connections were lost as the surrounding lands were sold; the loop road (Eleanor's Walk) is currently the only woods road that does not extend into a housing development or other private lands. The most notable loss was the road to Top Cottage, which was cut off by the southern tip of the Harbour Hills housing development soon after 1953. The park has recently constructed a foot trail (part of the Hyde Park Trail) outside of Roosevelt estate lands to establish a pedestrian connection between Val-Kill and Top Cottage. Although the Harbour Hills development occurred during Eleanor Roosevelt's lifetime, it would be appropriate to reestablish the road to Top Cottage should the necessary property become available, given the road's historic importance in the history of the Roosevelt estate, and the current operational need to establish more direct access between Top Cottage and Val-Kill.<sup>16</sup> Until it can be restored, the road to Top Cottage and other road remnants in the east region, notably the war-time security roads, should be preserved, even if they are not actively used for vehicles or pedestrians.

While the stone walls scattered throughout the east region reflect that the land had once been cleared and used for agriculture, most of this area had reforested by the Roosevelt period of ownership. In order to maintain the historic wooded setting, future neighboring development should not visually encroach further on the east region. Views from the loop road are particularly vulnerable as it runs directly along the eastern property boundary where there is a large forested tract of undeveloped privately owned land. This was not historically part of the Roosevelt estate and is thus outside of the Home of FDR National Historic Site legislative boundary. The NPS should work with a third party, such as a land trust, to secure an easement on such lands to prevent development that is visible from within the site.

On the west side of the Fall Kill is a small area of park property, approximately two acres, that is privately maintained as part of the neighboring residential lots off Sucato Drive and Lyons Drive. This area, which was developed in the 1950s, is characterized by lawn and is clearly visible from the loop road. Eleanor Roosevelt most likely saw these houses during her walks through the woods. Although the residential landscape is partially on park property, the development is appropriate as part of the historic setting of Val-Kill since it existed prior to 1962. The adjoining pond and dam on the Fall Kill, also located within park boundaries, was built in ca. 1965 by one of the neighboring property owners.<sup>17</sup> Due to its later date, it would be appropriate in the context of the landscape's historic character to allow the Fall Kill to return to its natural course through this area. The dam may be part of an historic bridge (ca. 1942) that carried a war-time jeep road across the Fall Kill.

The Central Hudson power line corridor, which cuts a wide swath across the east region, was added in ca. 1955 during the historic period, but the Roosevelts were not involved in its development and its therefore lacks historic significance, except as part of the setting. It therefore is appropriate in the context of the cultural landscape to retain the corridor, or if the power line is abandoned, it would also be appropriate to allow the corridor to return to its former forested condition.

## TASKS

Treatment tasks for the east region are shown on Drawing 2 and identified by the prefix ER.

### ER-1. Enhance Historic Character of Trail Roads

The roads that FDR maintained and expanded in the east region prior to his death in 1945 were intended for vehicular use, but are now used primarily as trails.

FDR drove his Ford sedan along these roads, and they were also used by trucks and farm equipment as part of forest management that included tree planting, thinning, and harvesting of timber. The road to Top Cottage, built in 1937 along portions of an earlier farm road, was the primary road in the east region, and



Figure 3.17. Mrs. Roosevelt and Edna Gurewitsch on the road to Top Cottage, looking west toward the cottages, showing intact roadbed, ca. 1958. (Photograph 04-24 1969, Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

was wider and more substantially built than the woods roads. The loop road, built in 1940 at FDR's bequest, made a circle through the Tompkins Farm part of the site. The wartime security jeep roads, which were built in ca. 1942 and extended across the north and south portions of the east region, were probably little more than two-track clearings through the woods.

After the President's death, Mrs. Roosevelt walked the roads on a daily basis whenever she was in Hyde Park. Although rougher

in character than the roads of the historic core, the woods roads still retained their well-defined roadbed through the end of the historic period (fig. 3.17).<sup>18</sup> Today, the road to Top Cottage is part of the Hyde Park Trail and the loop road is designated as Eleanor Walk. Both have lost their historic character as roads due to encroachment of vegetation, loss of graded surface, and erosion. The other road in the east region, the rear entrance road (Val-Kill Park Road), is maintained as a vehicular road.



**Figure 3.18.** The road to Top Cottage looking east from the historic core showing erosion of roadbed into a narrow trail, 2012. The white lines indicate the limits of the recommended reestablished roadbed, including the section enlarged by current vehicular use. (SUNY ESF)

To reestablish the historic character of the road to Top Cottage and the loop road, and to improve current pedestrian use, remove encroaching vegetation and repair eroded sections through correction of drainage and addition of fill material. Grade the roadbeds to reestablish an even surface, and keep the surface free of debris. Trim back limbs and other obstructing vegetation along the shoulders. The western end of the road to Top Cottage within the historic core, adjacent to the east parking

lot, requires realignment to allow the historic road to read as a continuous feature. Currently, the vehicular part of the road to Top Cottage and the trail section appear as separate features (fig. 3.18). The unused section of the road to Top Cottage that extends east of the Top Cottage Trail to the Harbour Hills development should also be repaired and maintained.

Archeological testing may be necessary to determine the historic widths of the roadbeds, which should be approximately 10' for the road to Top Cottage and 8' for the loop road. Drainage systems, including ditches and culverts will need to be examined and repaired as necessary. Waterbars or new ditches may be necessary in washed-out areas. Sections of the loop road are constructed on relatively steep slopes, and it passes by a number of small ponds, vernal pools, and streams which can flood in periods of high precipitation. These two factors have resulted in significant erosion along parts of the road's length. New culverts are needed in particular at the beginning of the loop road and at the south end near the pond.

Portions of the loop road do not meet slope requirements to be considered an accessible trail. However, the road to Top Cottage and the portion of the loop road which passes by plantation Plots 31 and 32 may be sufficiently level to meet accessibility standards. The park should consider developing these segments as a universally-accessible experience within the wooded portion of the Val-Kill which Mrs. Roosevelt so valued.

#### **ER-2. Survey and Preserve Wartime Security System Remnants**

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the Army began construction of an extensive security system for President Roosevelt's Hyde Park estate that included cable barriers along roads and property lines, electric security eyes, communications cables, and jeep roads that extended from the Hudson River to Top Cottage and beyond.



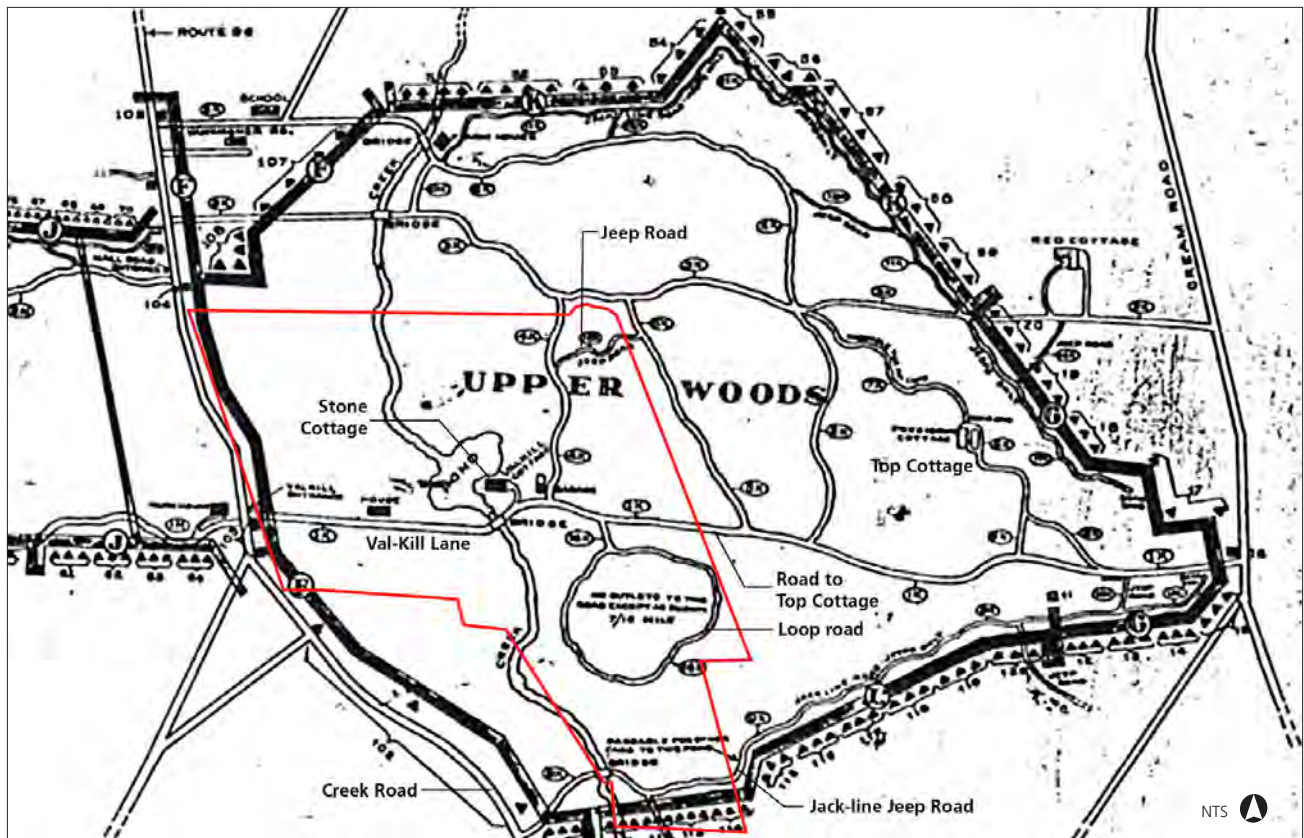


Figure 3.19. Detail of the federal government's war-time security system map of the Roosevelt estate made around 1942 showing the two jeep roads that crossed the Val-Kill site (outlined in red). The map is not to scale. (Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, annotated by SUNY ESF)

Two jeep roads crossed the east region of Val-Kill, which was within the security zone identified as the Upper Woods (fig. 3.19). The lower road, which followed a communications jack line, ran east from Creek Road, crossed the Fall Kill, skirted the south property line, and then presumably crossed onto private property to reach the east end of the estate at Cream Street. Another jeep road branched to the south just after the Fall Kill crossing. At the north end of the east region, a short jeep road, apparently just a connector road, ran from the rear entrance road and another woods road that became part of Roosevelt Drive within the Harbours Hills subdivision. These were probably two-track roads cleared through the woods, with areas of cut and fill, and were abandoned upon the end of World War II.

These security roads are important vestiges of Val-Kill's association with FDR and should be preserved. Since the precise route of these roads has not been identified, they should be surveyed and added to the park's GIS database. The survey should also identify and document any surviving associated features, such as cable barriers and telephone lines along the southern road. Access to the northern road should be from the rear entrance road; to reach the south road will require use of the Central Hudson power line corridor. After the roads are surveyed, the roadbeds should be cleared of encroaching vegetation to maintain their character as circulation features. Because both roads dead-end at the park property boundaries, they are not good candidates for use as recreational trails.

However, the park should consider providing visitors access to one or both of these roads for interpretative purposes.

### ER-3. Preserve and Interpret Forest Plantations

Related Tasks: ER-4, 5, 6

Forestry was one of FDR's great passions—a conservation practice that he believed would sustain rural economies by providing productive use of woodlots and worn-out farmland. At Hyde Park, FDR managed his woodlots for timber production, and reforested hundreds of acres of former farm fields with tree



**Figure 3.20.** Plot D, the 1914 white pine plantation that Mrs. Roosevelt called the “Secret Woods,” 2008. The stand retains its historic monoculture and even-aged character. (SUNY ESF)

plantations. Most of these were characterized by monocultures of conifers that were planted in even rows typical of reforestation practices in the early twentieth century. FDR also experimented with different types of trees, and used his forestry work to demonstrate benefits to other farmers. To these ends, in 1929 he entered into a cooperative relationship with the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University (now SUNY ESF) to establish demonstration and experimental plantations on his estate, most of which were near Val-Kill along the well-traveled Violet Avenue.<sup>19</sup>

Three of FDR's sixty-four forest plantations are within the current Val-Kill site, in the east region. These include one of FDR's earliest plantations, a large plot of white pine (Plot D) set out in 1914 north of the Fall Kill, and two smaller plantations south of the cottages planted in black walnut and northern white-cedar (Plots 31, 32). These two were initially established as experimental plantations in 1930–31 by the College of Forestry, and were later

replanted with tulip poplar and Scots pine. Tulip poplar was FDR's favorite tree, and he wanted to demonstrate its usefulness as a timber species.

Eleanor Roosevelt often walked in Plot D, which she referred to as the “Secret Woods.” By the 1930s, the trees had grown high enough to be visible from her cottage, as she wrote in her “My Day” column in August 1937:

When autumn comes I shall be able to sit there [in her office at the cottage] and work and look at the trees which border the swamp and which will turn red and gold and brown. There will be plenty of dark green also from the pine plantation which my husband planted several years ago, and which shows up now back of a thin fringe of swamp maple and oak, bordering the very edges of the wet ground.<sup>20</sup>

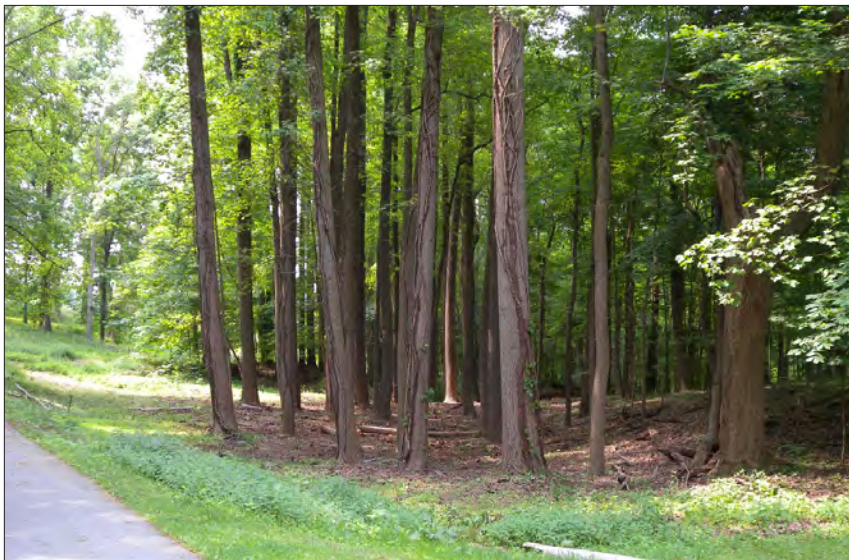
Management of the plantations for forestry purposes ceased within a few years of FDR's death in 1945. However, the white pine plantation retained much of its managed character because it had been maintained for a longer period of





**Figure 3.21.** The 1931 tulip poplar stand within Plot 31, showing volunteer trees that are obscuring the plantation trees, photographed 2010. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

**Figure 3.22.** FDR's 1917 tulip poplar plantation near the Home (Springwood) showing recent clearing of volunteer deciduous trees to enhance the historic managed character of the stand, 2011. (Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)



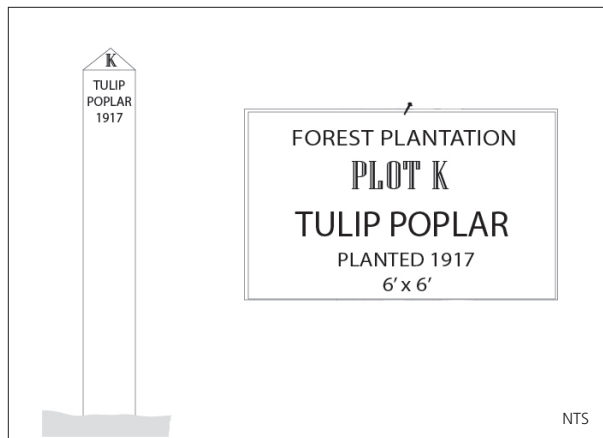
time than the others, allowing the white pine to successfully establish as single-species stand (fig. 3.20). Mrs. Roosevelt also reportedly had hardwoods and undergrowth kept out of this stand even after her husband's death.<sup>21</sup> Due to their experimental nature and less ideal growing conditions, Plots 31 and 32 have lost many of their plantation trees, although stands of Scots pine and tulip poplar remain, along with scattered northern white-cedar and a few black walnut trees. Volunteer

deciduous trees have grown in throughout the two plots, making the original species and planting patterns difficult to discern (fig. 3.21).

The plantations at Val-Kill should be perpetuated and interpreted because of the connection they represent Val-Kill's early history and its integration with the larger estate, and because they reflect the high value both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt placed on conservation and the productive use of land. There is significant archival documentation on these plantations, particularly the College of Forestry's work on the experimental plots, that would provide excellent interpretive material.<sup>22</sup> The 2010 General Management Plan calls for a range of treatments for FDR's forest plantations, including perpetuating their historic managed character, demonstrating modern forestry practices, and maximizing habitat values.<sup>23</sup> The park is currently developing a forest stewardship plan for the historic Roosevelt estate lands which will address the details of these various management strategies. While treatment for each forest plantation will ultimately

be decided in the context of this comprehensive plan, the following are initial recommendations for the three plots within the Val-Kill landscape:

**Plot D (Secret Woods):** Enhance the historic managed character and visibility of the stand by removing competing hardwoods, downed trees, and limbs. Prolong the lives of the historic white pines as long as possible. If a majority of the trees are lost due to age or a major storm, it would be appropriate to replant all



**Figure 3.23. Suggested design for post (boundary) and signboards to identify forest plantations. (SUNY ESF)**

or part of the plantation to perpetuate an even-age single-species stand. Manage deciduous trees along the periphery of the planation facing Val-Kill Pond to ensure that they do not obscure the plantation trees from view of Val-Kill Cottage, or shade them.

Plots 31 and 32: Enhance the historic managed character and visibility of remaining intact stands of plantation trees, particularly the tulip poplar, by removing competing hardwoods, downed trees, and limbs. The park has recently (2011) done similar work to FDR's first tulip poplar plantation, Plot K, located near the Home (fig. 3.22). The

younger volunteer trees that are between the tulip poplar stand and the road to Top Cottage should be removed to increase the visibility of the plantation (several larger trees may be left; the 1960 aerial shows this area mostly open, with a few scattered trees). Given their historic use as experimental plantations, a portion of these plots where most of the original trees have been lost would be an appropriate location to demonstrate current best practices in forestry. Alternatively, portions of the plantation sites could be cleared and replanted to reestablish the historic cycle. If the historic species were not well-adapted to the site, or if the growing conditions have changed significantly (e.g., wetter soils), an alternative species may be substituted.

In whatever management alternative is selected, the historic plantations should be marked to identify their name, date of planting, species, and spacing, as well as the boundaries of the plot.<sup>24</sup> While FDR's forest plantations were historically marked, no documentation has been found on the appearance of these markers. An appropriate contemporary design may include a placard sign and boundary posts (fig. 3.23). The markers should be consistent for all of FDR plantations at both historic sites.

#### **ER-4. Build Interpretive Trail to Plots 31, 32**

Related Task: ER-3

Plots 31 and 32, established in 1930–31 as experimental plantations by the New York State College of Forestry and later restocked, are the only remaining plantations of their type within the two national historic sites.<sup>25</sup> As such, they present a unique opportunity to tell the story of FDR's interest in the scientific and experimental aspects of forestry.

A road trace into Plots 31 and 32, the original access road, provides a good route for the recommended interpretive trail, which should be developed along with implementation of the stand improvements under task ER-5. This route is readily accessible off the road to Top Cottage (Hyde Park Trail), just a short distance from the Val-Kill historic core. Analysis of the existing road and ground conditions will



be necessary to determine the route, which may require boardwalks in wet areas. The relatively level topography suggests accessible trails are possible. Interpretation along the trail could be provided through plantation markers as recommended under ER-3, inconspicuous waysides, ranger-led tours, and hand-held media that would provide hikers the opportunity to take the short detour through the stands.

#### **ER-5. Build Interpretive Trail to Plot D (Secret Woods)**

Related Task: ER-3

Plot D, the 1914 white pine plantation, was a special place for Eleanor Roosevelt. It was just a short distance from her cottage and framed the northern view looking across the upper part of Val-Kill pond. Mrs. Roosevelt loved to bring her grandchildren and other young visitors into the dark, mysterious woods. As she wrote in her “My Day” column the summer of 1945:

I told my young six-year old guest that I would show him our ‘secret woods,’ a wonderful pine grove where the needles have been falling for so long that you can sink in and walk almost noiselessly and where everything around you looks mysterious. You can imagine almost anything just across the brook or just behind the next tree.<sup>26</sup>

The following October, FDR’s forestry advisor, Nelson Brown, made this recommendations for the plantation’s management, which closely followed Mrs. Roosevelt’s interests:

[The plantation] should be thinned, removing the dead decadents and crooked trees and leaving the larger and more vigorous specimens to form the final stand. The crown cover is definitely closed and the forest floor is covered with a nice mat of pine needles. This should make a very attractive picnic or recreational area for the children and this thinning can be done very simply and cheaply, the felled trees being used for fuel wood...<sup>27</sup>

Despite its historic recreational use, the Secret Woods is currently inaccessible to visitors. There are no maintained trails into the woods, and a stream running along its southern and eastern edges separates it from the historic core. There is no physical trace and little archival documentation on the route Mrs. Roosevelt walked through the woods, or from where she accessed the woods.

To enable visitors to access and appreciate the Secret Woods, create an interpretive trail that originates in the historic core just northeast of Mrs. Roosevelt’s cottage. Analysis of existing topography and hydrology will be necessary to design the final route. Primary access is recommended from the north side of the Playhouse (bordering the flagstone terrace), and the rear (east) side of the cutting garden. The first 100’ of the trail will need to be located on a boardwalk and bridge constructed over the stream that flows between the plantation and the historic core (fig. 3.24). The rest of the trail should be constructed with a firm and stable surface that is universally-accessible to the greatest extent possible (see Appendix



**Figure 3.24. Visual simulation of the boardwalk segment of the proposed Secret Woods interpretive trail, looking north from the historic core with the white pine plantation in the background. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)**

B for further details on accessible trails). However, there should be a spur that is on the needle-cover of the forest floor to allow visitors to have the experience Mrs. Roosevelt described in her “My Day” column. Consider opening a view of Val-Kill Pond from within the plantation, where the trail comes near to the shore. Construction of the trail should be undertaken in conjunction with management recommendations for the planation under task ER-3 and the park’s forthcoming forest stewardship plan.

Design details for the trail should be consistent with those already in use elsewhere in the park, recalling the rustic character of the fence along Val-Kill Lane and the bridge over the Fall Kill, with simple wooden planking and log railings if necessary. These railings may be required where the boardwalk has a drop-off of more than two feet. Signage for the trail should be simple and inconspicuous, and tied into the overall system of interpretation for the east region. Consider incorporating quotes from the numerous “My Day” columns in which Mrs. Roosevelt discussed nature at Val-Kill (see Appendix A).

**Figure 3.25. View north from Val-Kill Pond showing houses along Carlyle Road visible through the understory of Plot D (Secret Woods), 2011. These houses were not visible during the historic period. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)**



#### **ER-6. Screen House on Carlyle Road**

Related Task: ER-3

The white pine trees in Plot D (Secret Woods) once extended to the northern boundary of the former Bennett Farm. When the Central Hudson power line was installed in the mid-1950s, a 100’-wide right-of-way was cleared through

the plantation parallel to the property boundary, but enough vegetation remained to screen the neighboring Harbourn Hills subdivision, built beginning in ca. 1953, from the historic core. Since the end of the historic period, the natural raising of the plantation canopy along its narrow section (it is only a few rows of trees deep at this point), along with removal of vegetation along the park property boundary, has resulted in the adjacent house at the end of Carlyle Road being visible across the pond from the historic core and adjoining

areas during the winter months (fig. 3.25). In the summer, the deciduous woods between the plantation and pond screen the house.

To screen views of the house on Carlyle Road all year, plant trees and shrubs along the park property boundary on the north side of the Central Hudson right-of-way, where none presently exist (adjoining the house). The appropriate species will need to be determined based on field inspection of available space and growing conditions. The vegetation should be coniferous to block winter views, and be deer resistant, or be enclosed by deer fencing. The park should also contact the power company to explore the possibility of reducing the width of the cleared zone at the plantation. If there is determined to be sufficient space, plant one or more rows of white pine along the northern edge of the plantation to reinforce this narrow section of the plantation and provide additional screening.

#### **ER-7. Improve View into Loop Road Pond**

The small pond near the southwest corner of the loop road (Eleanor's Walk trail) was a special spot for FDR and Eleanor Roosevelt (fig. 3.26). FDR had the road built in 1940, following a closed circuit through the woods south of the cottages and bordering the pond to take advantage of the natural setting and view. Referring to this pond, Nelson Brown, FDR's forestry advisory, reminisced:

One of his favorite rendezvous [sic] was a little pond that, strangely enough, was located near the top of a hill between his swimming pool [Val-Kill pool] and the Creek Road. He outlined a road to his foreman and made a little circuit road around [to] the pond. We often drove to that spot and rested there for half hour or more while the Secret Service cars at a respectful distance waited to see if he would drive off the road through the woods or across the fields or to some spot where the ordinary motorist would never think of driving...<sup>28</sup>

**Figure 3.26.** Current view looking south from the loop road to the pond that was a favorite spot for the Roosevelts, 2011. The brush is recommended for thinning to open up the historic view. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)



In the decades after FDR's death, the loop road was part of Mrs. Roosevelt's daily walks at Val-Kill. The pond remained one of the natural beauties along the route. While no photos of the pond from the late 1950s have been found, it is likely that Mrs. Roosevelt maintained the view between the road and the pond. Today, the

understory between the pond and the road has grown up and blocked most of the view. The pond may also have had more open water than it does today.

To make this spot the destination for visitors as it once was for the Roosevelts, open up the view to the pond. Its location approximately halfway along the trail circuit makes the pond an ideal place for visitors to stop to rest and observe nature. Selectively remove brush from the woods between the pond and the road, and along



the edges of the pond, and install a rustic bench, such as a log bench (see General Treatment Recommendations) near the roadside. Consider removal of woody vegetation in the water along the edges of the pond facing the road. Continue to thin the understory on a five-year basis to maintain the view.

#### **ER-8. Remove Non-Historic Materials from Dump**

Located in a small hollow on the northeast side of the loop road (Eleanor's Walk trail) is a trash dump containing materials of mixed age (fig. 3.27). The dump



**Figure 3.27.** Looking east from the loop road to the dump area, believed to contain both historic and post-historic material, 2011. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

originated during the Roosevelt era, but tenants at Val-Kill who resided on the property after Mrs. Roosevelt's death in 1962 most likely used it as well. Since there is a lack of conclusive documentation on the dump, archaeological research is needed to determine its historic value. Once sufficient documentation is available, remove surface refuse determined to post-date Mrs. Roosevelt's period of occupancy. Identify the dump site to visitors if this does not put the resource in danger from potential souvenir-seekers.

#### **ER-8. Preserve and Interpret Stone Walls**

Throughout the woods in the east region are dry-laid stone walls, located along current and former property boundaries and around old pastures. Although inconspicuous in the forested landscape, these stone walls are significant for reflecting historic patterns of land ownership and agricultural uses. While most of the walls are hidden deep in the woods, several adjoin trails, such as along Eleanor's Walk (loop road). Many, but not all of the walls, are presently identified in the park's GIS database. Undertake a survey to locate all walls and assess their condition. While the walls do not need to be in pristine condition, they should be repaired to ensure their long-term preservation. Work may include rebuilding collapsed sections and removing obscuring debris. Also consider addressing the walls in interpretive materials, or marking sections that denote specific spaces or boundaries, such as "Tompkins Farm east boundary" for the wall that borders Eleanor's Walk.



## HISTORIC CORE

The historic core is the domestic heart of Val-Kill encompassing the eight acres that Eleanor Roosevelt leased from her husband and later her sons Elliott and John. Here on the eastern bank of the Fall Kill, Mrs. Roosevelt developed a country retreat and experiment in craft industry with Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman, and later made Val-Kill a home of her own. Nancy and Marion maintained extensive manicured gardens surrounding Stone Cottage, while the rest of the core was a simpler and less developed landscape. In the years after the two women left in 1947, the landscape began to reflect a more casual character and increased recreational use. This was the landscape where Eleanor Roosevelt hosted picnics for foreign dignitaries and groups of schoolchildren, and where her family and guests played tennis, swam in the pool, relaxed on the patio, and rowed in the pond. Val-Kill was often full of activity, especially during the summer as she wrote in a 1947 “My Day” column:

(W)e all joined at the pool, where a whole collection of children were congregated. I think if one did not enjoy children, dogs and noise, several hours of each day would seem like pandemonium. Fortunately I like it and apparently my household stands up well under it, so the summer is a pleasant time for all of us.<sup>29</sup>

## GUIDELINES

Overall treatment objectives for the historic core are to restore a lively character to the landscape, enhance or reestablish the historic character of plantings, repair roads and walks, preserve and enhance views, and accommodate contemporary use and access in a way that is compatible with the historic domestic character of the landscape. While the residential landscape that evolved under Mrs. Roosevelt was casual, it should nonetheless have a well cared-for appearance.

While the landscape of the historic core retains its overall historic character, deferred maintenance, changes in growing conditions, and onset of pests and disease has led to loss or deterioration of certain details. In addition, when the park initially rehabilitated the landscape in the early 1980s, plans were drawn up to reestablish many of the ornamental plantings, but these were not fully implemented. Plans for reestablishing plantings in certain areas, notably the walled garden and the north and east sides of Stone Cottage, were never developed, presumably due to lack of available documentation.

Portions of the historic core today also lack the lively and welcoming spirit that characterized Eleanor Roosevelt’s home due to deterioration and disuse of a number of recreational and domestic landscape features, including the swimming pool, pool terrace patio, caretakers yard, walled garden, tennis court, stone

barbecue, and play equipment. Restoration of these features is key to enhancing the historic character of the landscape. The recommended treatment approach will result in a landscape that continues to convey its historic use while addressing contemporary constraints of maintenance and visitor safety. While the full reinstatement of historic activities including picnicking, swimming, and boating may not be feasible, the park should convey the extent to which these activities characterized the historic landscape. This may be accomplished by rehabilitating recreational features to a working appearance so that they still reflect their essential function and character. In addition, compatible outdoor furniture should be provided to enhance visitors' opportunities to partake in passive recreation, which was also an important historic activity at Val-Kill.

Aside from outdoor furniture, there are five built features that have disappeared from the landscape of the historic core since Mrs. Roosevelt's death: a small wooden dock at the foot of the Stone Cottage lawn, a light standard near Val-Kill Cottage, a greenhouse at the north end of the cutting garden, and a bathhouse and path off the southeast corner of the swimming pool.<sup>30</sup> The dock and light standard are recommended for reconstruction, but there is inadequate documentation on the greenhouse and bathhouse to allow for reconstruction. The greenhouse, built prior to 1940, was a vernacular lean-to type with a vertical back wall and two shed roofs of different slopes above hot and cold sections. The framing was painted white and the ventilating sashes were glazed with glass, while the rest of the roof and front walls were sheathed in an opaque material.<sup>31</sup> The bathhouse is partially visible in historic aerial photographs and appears to have been roof-less and approximately 8' by 10', with an access path of large stepping stones. If further documentation on these features is found, it would be appropriate to reconstruct them in order to more fully reflect the historic pool terrace landscape.

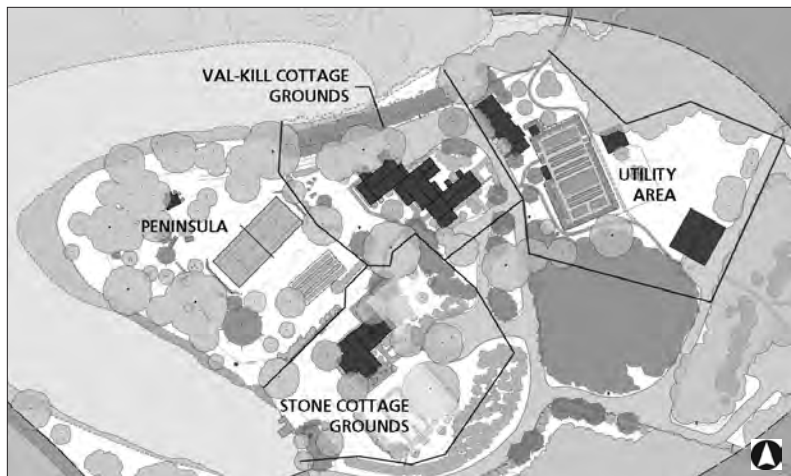
The woods on the knoll south of the cutting garden, covered primarily in conifers with some oaks, is shown on the 1960 aerial as open field. This condition was apparently a recent clearing, the reason for which is not known. The knoll is shown as wooded in all earlier photographs, except during the earliest years of Val-Kill. Since this was a very late change to the landscape, it is not recommended that the knoll be cleared, although it is recommended that the trees along the northern edge be cleared or pruned back to decrease shade on the cutting garden (see HC-39).

The tasks involving shrubs and herbaceous plants that are subject to deer browsing require that the issue of deer protection be resolved prior to implementation (see General Treatment Recommendations). For the purposes of this section, it is presumed that a site-wide deer fence will be installed.

Certain cultural landscape features within and adjoining the historic core have been altered in Val-Kill's transition from residential to institutional use, and due to the park's need to balance historic preservation with other resource values.

As elsewhere on the site, new features that are needed to address current uses, such as signs, lights, and parking lots, should be compatible with, and subordinate to, the historic character of the landscape. Balancing natural resource values, as elsewhere at Val-Kill, often poses the greatest challenge. The Val-Kill Pond has lost a substantial part of its open water surface to emergent wetland plants and siltation (some of the open water in the upper pond had already been lost by 1960). Due to costs and environmental laws, returning the upper pond to its maximum open-water extent is not recommended.

Treatment tasks for the historic core are shown on Drawing 3 and identified by the prefix HC. Garden and shrub plantings are illustrated through detail plans



**Figure 3.28.** Map showing areas of the historic core used to organize treatment tasks. The landscape outside of these areas is addressed under Core-Wide Tasks. (SUNY ESF)

within the text as indicated on Drawing 3. The treatment tasks are organized into the following sections (fig. 3.28): Core-Wide Tasks, which addresses issues that impact more than one area in the historic core or its periphery involving roads, vegetation, and small-scale features; Stone Cottage Grounds, the area around Stone Cottage once maintained by Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman that includes the front lawn down to the pond, walled garden, and pool terrace; Val-Kill Cottage Grounds, the area surrounding

Mrs. Roosevelt's home, including the current visitor center; the peninsula, the lawn area surrounded by Val-Kill Pond that contains the tennis court, barbecue, fenced garden, and doll house; and the utility area containing the cutting garden, playhouse, and stable-garage.

## CORE-WIDE TASKS

### HC-1. Repair and Maintain Drives

Related Tasks: HC-2, ER-1

The drives in the historic core were built in the 1920s and 1930s with compacted earth and gravel on gently curving alignments that complimented the rural setting. They had no known edge treatment or gutters. The drives were graded and oiled to maintain an even surface and control dust, but during the 1950s generally did not have manicured edges (fig. 3.29).<sup>32</sup> Winter conditions included rutted and muddy areas, such as near the parking area at the back of Mrs. Roosevelt's cottage (fig. 3.30). Today, the drives retain their historic alignment, but have lost historic character due to lack of regular grading, encroachment of vegetation, eroded edges, loss of crown, and poor drainage. Repair of the drives is necessary not only



**Figure 3.29 (left).** Mrs. Roosevelt with her 1958 Fiat 1200 on the driveway in front of the Val-Kill Cottage garage (current rest rooms) showing good condition of the roads in the historic core, looking west, ca. 1958. (Photograph 04-24 1694, Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.)



**Figure 3.30 (right).** The drive at the rear (east) side of Val-Kill Cottage, looking west showing winter conditions and parking spots, ca. 1960. Visible to the right of the porch is a white two-rail fence that bordered a shrub bed. (Photograph NPx 65 590 269, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

to reestablish historic character, but also to provide universally accessible pedestrian routes.

Return all roads within the historic core to their historic width and even surface. Return widened areas to grass, and reestablish a crown in the road profile to enhance proper drainage. Archeological testing may be required to determine the historic widths of the roads. Most within the historic core appear to have been approximately 10', with the exception of the Stone Cottage driveway circle and the dual driveway between Stone Cottage and Val-Kill Cottage's garage, which were closer to 8'. Maintain the portion of Val-Kill Lane east of the bridge at approximately 15' to accommodate its occasional two-way traffic.

In addition to minor narrowing as indicated on Drawing 3, make the following changes in width, alignment, and roadside plantings:

1. Return the island in the Stone Cottage circle to its historic alignment.
2. Reestablish the triangular island at the intersection of the rear entrance road and the road to Top Cottage. Plant a red oak tree (*Quercus rubra*) in the center of this island.<sup>33</sup>
3. Reestablish the small circular island in the drive at the rear of Val-Kill Cottage, near the Playhouse. Plant a disease-resistant American elm (*Ulmus americana*), such as "Valley Forge" in the center. Create a raised island, approximately 10' wide, edged by concrete blocks and planted with annuals such as marigolds and petunias, as shown in a 1959 photograph (fig. 3.31).<sup>34</sup>
4. Reestablish the historic border of forsythia along the east side of the island between the parallel drives south of the visitor center (Val-Kill Cottage), extending south from the existing forsythia, and replant two



missing red-cedar trees. Trim branches in the trees across the road (east side) to improve light conditions for the forsythia.<sup>35</sup>

Although the roads by the 1950s did not have sharp edges, the existing edges are much more eroded and washed-out, with gravel spread into the grass, or grass encroaching well into the roadbed. As a general rule, keep the road/grass edge within a 6" margin. The drive and walk to the visitor center in Val-Kill Cottage, as the main public entrance to the site, should be especially well maintained. The present eroded edges of the drive and weedy grass here suggest a lack of care.

For eroded, heavily used, and poor-draining roads such as the Stone Cottage circle, consider removal and installation of a new surface. "Driving Surface Aggregate," developed by Penn State's Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, is a specially-processed crushed-stone aggregate that produces a durable and well-draining surface.<sup>36</sup> Although such a new surface would initially have a more even and highly maintained character than was characteristic of Val-Kill in the 1950s,

encroachment of grass along the edges and weathering of the surface would reestablish the historic character within several years.

Once the roads are repaired, institute an annual maintenance program that may include periodic light grading and raking to maintain an even, well-draining surface, and reseeding adjoining lawn areas eroded by cars, pedestrians, and snow removal. More substantial grading may be necessary in early spring to correct damage from winter plowing and freeze/thaw cycles.

**Figure 3.31.** Eleanor Roosevelt in the drive at the rear of Val-Kill Cottage, looking east showing the elm in a raised island edged by concrete blocks, 1959. (Private collection of Margit Kohl)



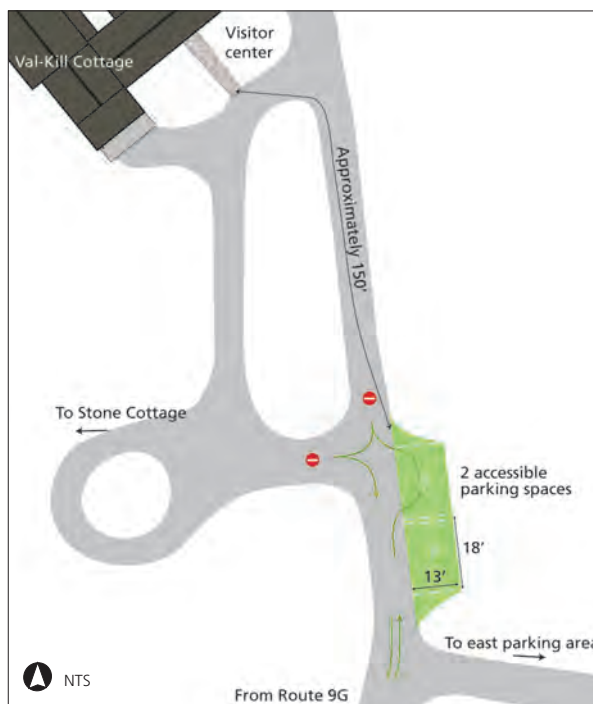
## **HC-2. Improve Accessible Parking**

Related task: HC-1

The two primary universal-access parking spaces for the site are located on the southwest side of the stable-garage off the park's rear entrance road (Val-Kill Park Road). The existing spaces are undefined and within an area surfaced in course gravel that does not meet accessibility standards. The current layout interferes with the walk to the visitor center, which serves as the primary access for visitors arriving via the park shuttle (Roosevelt Ride) that stops at the stable-garage, and for park staff and visitors using the east parking lot. The 2010 General Management Plan proposes opening the stable-garage for interpretation and other programmatic uses, so the existing parking would also conflict with use of the adjoining side door as an entrance into the building.

A number of alternative sites for accessible parking were explored to address Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility guidelines that call for accessible parking to be located on the shortest accessible route from the building being served (visitor center).<sup>37</sup> Use of the historic parking area at the back of Mrs.

Roosevelt's Cottage was determined to be difficult for visitors to find, and to pose safety issues due to the heavy pedestrian traffic between the buildings. Roadside parking immediately south of the visitors center and cutting garden would



**Figure 3.32 (top).** Conceptual plan for redesign of the primary accessible parking on the south side of the stable-garage. (SUNY ESF)

**Figure 3.33 (bottom).** Alternative conceptual plan for relocation of the primary accessible parking to the shoulder of the road south of the visitor center. (SUNY ESF)

require drivers to exit by driving around the oblong island where there is also pedestrian traffic. The following two alternative concepts were determined to be feasible (these will require further analysis and design development):

1. Retain the existing location of accessible parking next to the stable-garage (approximately 250' from the visitor center), but shift it south away from the side entrance to the building and the walk to the visitor center (fig. 3.32). Delineate two spaces at the minimum 8' width and a 5' center aisle that meets accessibility guidelines. This redesign would require removal of some trees in the adjoining woods. These trees post-date the historic period. This location would retain accessible parking outside of the main part of the historic core, and be along a primary road where the park shuttle has a stop.

2. Relocate the accessible parking spaces to the side of the drive to the visitor center (approximately 150' from the visitor center), south of the loop drive at Stone Cottage (fig. 3.33). Use the existing grass shoulder as space for two parallel parking spaces, 18' long and 13' wide (8' stall plus 5' aisle on one side or the other), following accessibility guidelines. Given the limited use of the roadway, it may be possible to narrow the 13' width, which would help to reduce the visual impact of the spaces. This alternative would introduce parking within the main part of the historic core, and require removal of one or two trees that may date to the historic period. It would also require a difficult three-point turn to exit from the spaces to avoid pulling around the drive to the visitor center

where there is pedestrian traffic. These parking spaces could also be configured as pull-in rather than parallel (8' stalls with 5' aisle between), which would entail an easier two-point turn, but require grading and removal of trees that post-date the historic period.

In both alternatives 1 and 2, the parking surface should be compacted earth and gravel similar to the road, for a firm and stable surface that meets accessibility standards. Keep signs identifying the spaces as accessible parking to the minimum size required, and erect them on inconspicuous wood posts.

### **HC-3. Repair and Maintain Walks**

Related Tasks: HC- 13, 15

To connect the cottages and drives, stone walks were constructed during the 1920s and 1930s. These were built of gray flagstone of random rectangular sizes that were set into the lawn with grass joints; the Stone Cottage entry walk, as rebuilt in ca. 1936, featured even-sized stones with grass joints. The walk between the cottages was removed after Mrs. Roosevelt's death, and was rebuilt by the park in the 1980s with narrower joints. Around this time, a new entrance walk was added to the visitor center in the rear wing of Val-Kill Cottage. In 2010, the walk between the cottages was rebuilt with new stones that were the width of the walk with very narrow joints for improved accessibility. The Stone Cottage entry walk retains its wider grass joints, which are presently maintained without grass.

The preferred treatment for the walks is to retain the remaining historic paving stones and allow grass to grow approximately 1" to 2" over the edges and joints for the maintained but not manicured appearance that existed historically. If grass joints are incompatible with public accessibility, it is appropriate to remove the grass, but allow grass to overlap the outer edges of the walks. Consider excavating the joints on the Stone Cottage walk approximately 1/4" below the surface and plant moss to fill in the gaps to a level flush with the stones, to maintain vegetated joints.

### **HC-4. Restore Rustic Railings on Fall Kill Bridge**

The bridge and dam over the Fall Kill, rebuilt from an earlier farm bridge in 1924, consists of mortared stone and concrete abutments, a wood-plank deck, and wood railings. The bridge originally had log curbs, but these were replaced by the early 1950s with railings made of pipe or narrow milled posts, and then by rustic unmilled railings, most likely after a flood in 1953 (fig. 3.34).<sup>38</sup> These rustic railings, approximately 4' tall, consisted of posts and a single top rail made of stripped logs (probably cedar), with the end sections angled downward to shorter posts. The bridge deck and railings were replaced in the 1980s, at which time the railings were rebuilt with milled, 75-mm diameter pressure-treated poles that had a less rustic appearance. Wood curbs were also added. The bridge abutments and piers





Figure 3.34. Rustic railings on the Fall Kill bridge that most likely date to the 1950s, photographed 1978. (Historic American Building Survey, NY-5666)

are scheduled for repair and reinforcement in 2013.<sup>39</sup>

To restore the historic rustic character of the bridge, replace the non-historic railings with stripped, unmilled cedar logs that match the visual character of the historic railings that existed in the 1950s. The existing post spacing and rail height appears to be consistent with historic conditions. This work could be undertaken when repair and replacement of the existing railings becomes necessary.

#### HC-5. Replace Val-Kill Lane Red Pine Border

Related Task: HC-40

In ca. 1930, rows of native red pine trees (*Pinus resinosa*) were planted along both sides of Val-Kill Lane on the approach to Stone Cottage, and along adjoining parts of the Stone Cottage circle and road to Top Cottage (fig. 3.35). These bordered a preexisting mixed grove of conifers and deciduous trees southeast of the Stone



Figure 3.35. Aerial photograph of Val-Kill looking southeast showing original planting of red pine along Val-Kill Lane and Stone Cottage circle, along with adjoining mixed grove, September 1938. (Rex Hardy photograph, LIFE archives photograph 17835031, annotated by SUNY ESF. Copyright Time, Inc. All Rights Reserved)





Figure 3.36. Looking south across the pool showing the young, unclipped red pine border, 1941. (Photograph NPx 73 113 70, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

Cottage circle. The red pine trees, probably leftovers from FDR's annual reforestation orders from the state nurseries, matured into a dense screen around the pool terrace and gardens south of Stone Cottage. The trees were allowed to grow naturally and were not clipped (fig. 3.36). By the early 1960s, the lower canopy had thinned, opening views between the pool and the road (fig. 3.37). This canopy was lost entirely in subsequent years. To reestablish the spatial enclosure to the pool terrace and Stone Cottage circle, most of the original trees north of Val-Kill Lane were replaced in-kind in

1984. This replanting did not replace the mixed grove.<sup>40</sup> Today, the replacement red pines are not vigorous and a number have been lost, resulting in loss of the historic screening function of the border. The decline is most likely due to poor drainage, lack of thinning and pruning, and increased shade from the woods on the south side of the road.

Red pine are vulnerable to a number of diseases and pests, especially at the warm extent of their range. Currently, red pine scale (*Matsucoccus resinosae*), a pest most likely introduced in New York in 1939, is decimating red pine stands in low-elevation areas of southeastern New York where hot and humid summers are becoming more frequent.<sup>41</sup>

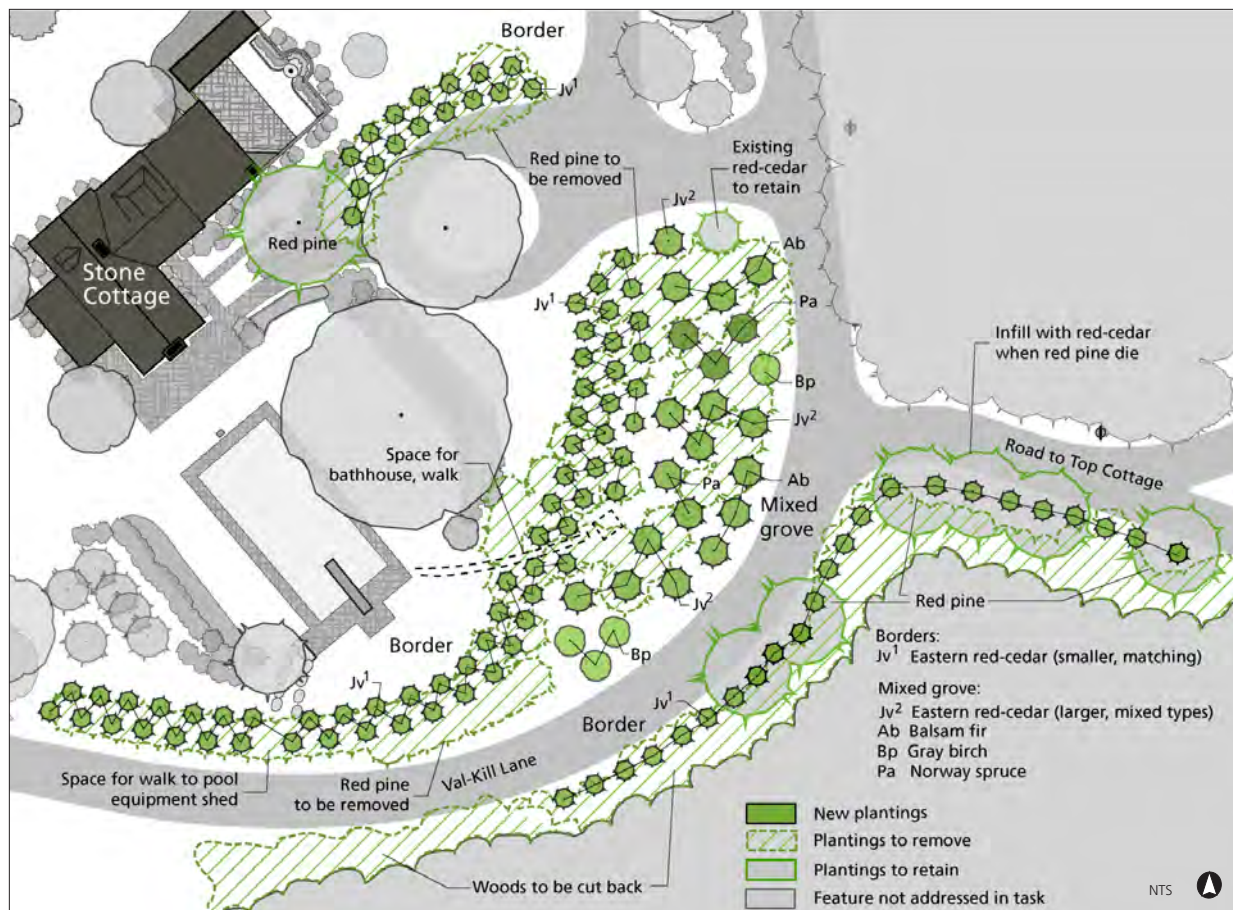
#### Replacement Species

To reestablish the historic design intent of the red pine border, the preferred treatment from a cultural landscape preservation perspective is to retain red pine due

to its distinctive character and close association with forestry in the 1930s. However, due to the scale threat, an alternative species is appropriate. Use Eastern red-cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), which is a native species found historically at Val-Kill (fig. 3.38). It can produce a dense, medium-size evergreen border that reestablishes the overall character of the historic border. Use the species, or a cultivar that is widely pyramidal rather than narrowly conical, and dark green in color (such as "Hillspire" or "Can-aertii") to more closely reflect the massing of red pine.<sup>42</sup> Other species with a character

Figure 3.37. The red pine border showing later loss of lower limbs, looking southeast, ca. 1964. At left is Susan Curnan and at right is Joanie Roosevelt. (Private collection of Susan Curnan)





**Figure 3.38. Conceptual planting plan for replacement of the red pine border along Val-Kill Lane using Eastern red-cedar, and replanting of the adjoining grove with several different species. (SUNY ESF)**

closer to red pine, such as white pine, jack pine, and black pine, have disease issues, may not thrive in the moderate drainage and partial shade conditions of the site, would be difficult to manage as a border, or are species not historically found at Val-Kill.

If pest and disease issues are corrected in the future, it would be appropriate to return the Val-Kill Lane border to red pine.

For the mixed grove southeast of Stone Cottage circle, use red-cedar plus white spruce (*Picea glauca*), balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), and gray birch (*Betula populifolia*).

#### Location

Follow the limits evident in the 1938 aerial, using a double row along the southern part of the border next to Val-Kill Drive that turns inward and broadens east of the pool into multiple rows (fig. 3.38). A separate double row is along the north side of the Stone Cottage Circle. The mixed grove should fill in the space between the border and Val-Kill Lane. Retain an opening around the site of the bathhouse and the walk to it (location needs to be verified), and at the walk to the pool equipment shed.

A single row of red-cedar should also be planted along the south and west sides of Val-Kill Lane and the road to Top Cottage to replace and reestablish the pine borders there.

Minor shifts in location to improve growing conditions may be appropriate provided the change does not impact adjoining plantings, such as the planned shrubs and trees on the pool terrace (see HC-16).

#### Site Preparation and Planting

Prior to planting, assess soil and light conditions. Eastern red-cedar prefer full sun and moderately well-drained soils, dry to average conditions, and a pH range of 6.0 to 8.0.<sup>43</sup> This may require shifting the existing location of the border off low wet areas bordering Val-Kill Lane, and trimming the woods or removing trees along the south side of Val-Kill Lane to increase light levels. This trimming and tree removal is especially needed to provide adequate light levels for the replacement border along the south side of Val-Kill Lane and west side of the road to Top Cottage.

The healthy red pine trees remaining from the original ca. 1930 planting, including one large specimen near Stone Cottage and several in the row along the east side of Val-Kill Lane and south side of the road to Top Cottage, should be retained and protected during the replanting. Apply dormant oil, insecticidal soap, and other measures to fight red pine scale if it appears on these trees.

For planting, use the largest red-cedar stock available, that minimizes ground disturbance and impacts to adjoining vegetation, and allows for the quick establishment of the border. Depending on the size of the stock, space the trees approximately 6' apart and staggered by row to permit a quick establishment of a visual screen. For the mixed grove, use stock that is larger than the border if possible, to reestablish the size difference evident in the 1938 aerial (see fig. 3.35).

#### Management

Maintain the border with a mulched understory, using a natural dark-colored mulch that does not extend beyond the canopy. Eastern red-cedar are moderately deer resistant, and therefore should not require protection, although damage through deer contact and rutting when the plants are young may be an issue.

Do not clip the red-cedar into a formal hedge, but instead retain the overall natural form. Depending on the variety of red-cedar, consider light trimming on top to promote a fuller, horizontal massing rather than a pointed conical shape. Consider managing the border to a height of between 15' and 20' to limit shade on plantings in the pool terrace garden. Red-cedar generally respond well to trimming provided it does not extend back to wood without foliage.<sup>44</sup> Pruning



should retain full-light levels at the base of the plant to keep branching to the ground level. Remove dead branches to maintain a well-tended appearance.

Depending on the spacing of the red-cedar, thinning may be required to promote horizontal rather than vertical growth.

If in the long term the lower canopy of the red-cedar is lost and the trees no longer provide the desired screening, consider the following alternative treatments:

1. Interplant with young red-cedar, provided growing conditions are adequate.
2. Add a supplemental row of red-cedar, notably facing the pool terrace and along the north side of the Stone Cottage circle.
3. Replace all of the trees on a cyclical basis, such as every 25-35 years. If this alternative is selected, use of red pine should be revisited.

#### **HC-6. Plant Flowering Spring Bulbs**

Related Tasks: HC-7, 16, 17, 27

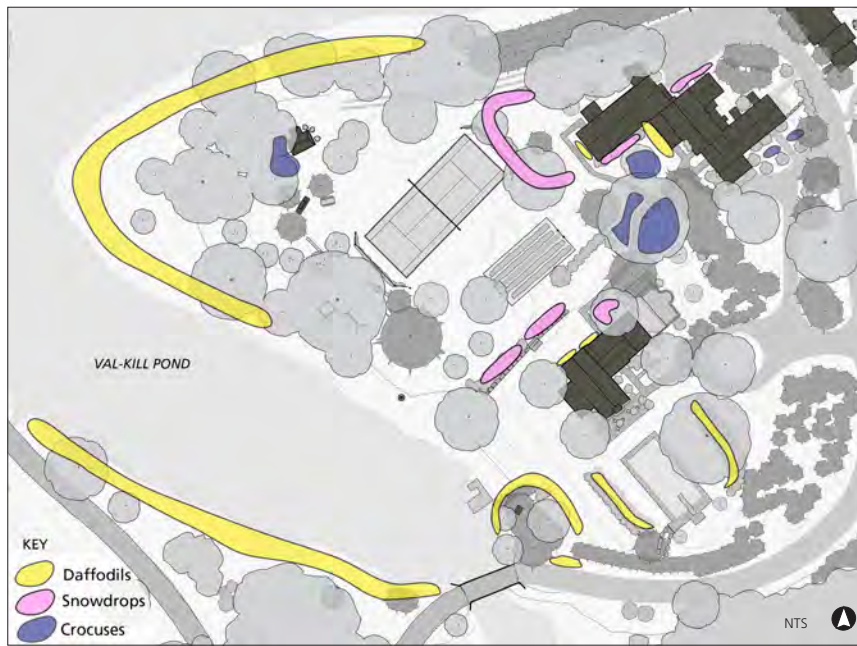
Mrs. Roosevelt loved flowering bulbs and had great quantities of them planted around the cottages, even in the last years of her life. Most of these were in the area around her house and in view of her sleeping porch, while others were in the pool terrace garden and around Stone Cottage. Snowdrops were planted along the base of the spirea hedge on the west side of Val-Kill Cottage, and crocuses in the surrounding lawn. In a May 1953 “My Day” column, Mrs. Roosevelt wrote that the people who cut the grass were “...complaining that I have too many bulbs scattered over my lawn.”<sup>45</sup> In another column from April 1958, she remarked:

I went to Hyde Park from New York last Friday afternoon. It was a lovely day and Saturday was really like spring. I ran around looking for snowdrops under my hedge and tried to find some crocuses that I had planted, but in the latter search I was entirely unsuccessful.<sup>46</sup>

Daffodils were also described as being present in the thousands around Stone Cottage, the pool, and along the edge of the pond. Tulips, anemones, and grape hyacinth were also purportedly planted around the cottage in the late 1950s.<sup>47</sup> Many of these bulbs have been lost since Mrs. Roosevelt’s lifetime.

To reestablish spring bulbs in the landscape, plant daffodils (*Narcissus spp.*), spring crocuses (*Crocus spp.*), and snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) throughout the historic core in lawn areas, beneath shrubs, and in garden beds (fig. 3.39). Tulips and anemones are not recommended due to likely loss from deer browsing. The bulbs should be planted in naturalistic groupings and not in geometric patterns. Identify surviving spring bulbs that may date to the historic period, and if possible use the same varieties. If matches are not possible, use varieties that were commercially available between the 1920s and 1950s. These bulb plantings should





**Figure 3.39. Conceptual planting plan for spring bulbs in the historic core and banks of Val-Kill pond. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)**

sycamore tree along the path between the cottages. Maintain an annual inventory of bulbs, and monitor for damage and loss. Apply rodent deterrents such as bloodmeal and restock bulbs in the fall as necessary.

be coordinated with proposed shrub and herbaceous plantings around Val-Kill Cottage and the pool terrace garden. Additional bulb plantings include daffodils around the grove of trees near the dock site and the portion of the east shore of the pond that was not historically maintained as mown lawn; snowdrops alongside the spirea hedge around the Val-Kill Cottage porch lawn, and under the row of lilacs against the low stone retaining wall; crocuses in the lawn area between the flagstone path and Val-Kill Cottage, and under the

#### **HC-7. Reestablish Plantings on Southwest Bank of Val-Kill Pond**

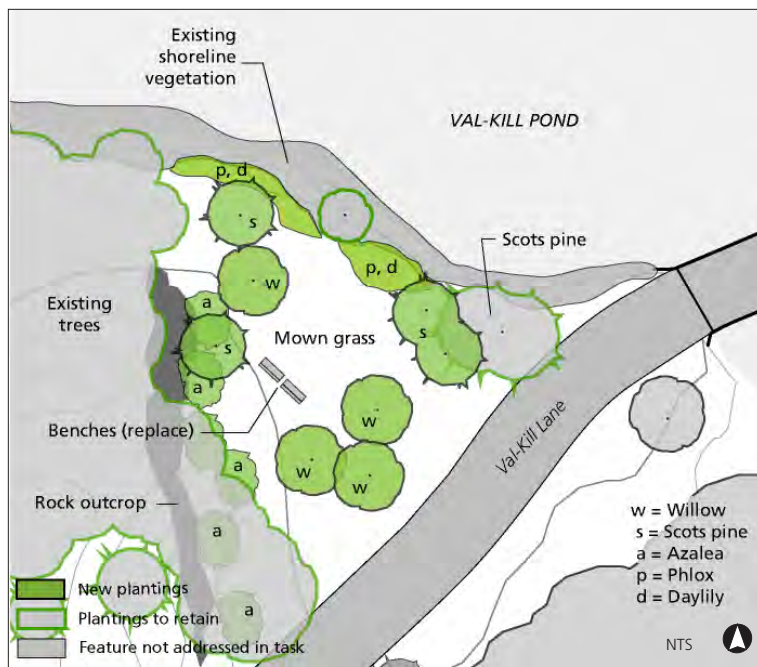
Related task: HC-6, HC-8

The southwest bank of Val-Kill Pond, off the northwest side of the Fall-Kill bridge bordering a large rock outcrop, was historically maintained as an informal woodland garden. A mix of native oaks and other trees created a shady grove around the outcrop, where azaleas, rhododendrons, and perhaps columbine and ferns were established in the understory during the early years of Val-Kill. In the more open lower area close to the pond were black willows and Scots pine, and masses of daylilies and pink and white phlox that provided a picturesque view

**Figure 3.40. Early plantings on the southwest bank of Val-Kill Pond, looking southwest from the Stone Cottage lawn, ca. 1940. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)**



from the Stone Cottage lawn (fig 3.40). By the 1950s, some of the trees had apparently been removed, making the middle of the area more open.<sup>48</sup> While it is not known whether Mrs. Roosevelt actively maintained the plantings in this area after Mss. Cook and Dickerman left Val-Kill in 1947, the willows, shrubs, and perennial flowers likely persisted on their own for some time, and large masses of daffodils have been described here as well.<sup>49</sup>



**Figure 3.41. Conceptual planting plan for the southwest bank of Val-Kill Pond. (SUNY ESF)**

Today, most of these plantings have been lost and the area is kept mown, though wild columbines and ferns still exist.

Due to the lack of documentation from the late 1950s, the overall treatment for the southwest bank is to reestablish the massing of trees and ornamental herbaceous plants that existed between the 1930s and 1950s (fig. 3.41). Plant two Scots pine next to the existing Scots pine tree (replace in-kind if dying), another two near the rock outcrop and the shore, and several black willows in the open ground. At the base of the rock outcropping beneath the oaks, plant scattered clumps of azaleas. Since no information exists on historic varieties, use

natives and varieties that were available prior to 1960. Other native understory shrubs may also be introduced in naturalistic clumps in the shade area around the rock outcropping, and the existing columbine and ferns should be retained and expanded. Reintroduce naturalistic planting beds above and adjoining the existing shoreline vegetation using masses of daffodils (see HC-5), pink and white phlox, and daylilies. Keep down tall woody vegetation from the bank of the pond to maintain sight lines, except for one existing shrub toward the center of the garden.

A pair of contemporary wood and metal pipe benches exists below the rock outcropping, overlooking the pond. Though simple in design, these benches have an institutional appearance and are incompatible with the historic domestic character of the Val-Kill landscape. Replace them with a more compatible design (see General Treatment Recommendations).

#### Preliminary Plant List for the Southwest Bank

Azaleas (*Rhododendron canescens*, *R. viscosum*, and/or *R. indicum*)  
 Black willow (*Salix nigra*)  
 Columbine (*Aquilegia spp.*)  
 Daffodil (*Narcissus spp.*)  
 Daylily (*Heemerocallis spp.*)  
 Ferns (from existing plants)  
 Garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*)  
 Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)

**HC-8. Mow Banks of Val-Kill Pond**

Related task: HC-7, HC-9

The banks of the Val-Kill Pond ellipse (original section) were historically kept mown to maintain views from the cottages across the water. Prior to 1947, the eastern bank along the Stone Cottage lawn between the dock and the swing set was manicured lawn right down to the water's edge. To the north, vegetation was kept low with no trees or tall shrubs to obstruct views. The southwest bank was also kept largely clear, with the exception of several willows and other trees. By the 1950s, the eastern bank was no longer kept as manicured lawn down the pond, but the vegetation was kept mown, and high brush was kept cleared around the rest of the peninsula.<sup>50</sup> In recent years, woody vegetation was allowed to grow up around the shore of the peninsula, and tall grasses and shrubs lined the bank along the Stone Cottage lawn. In June 2010, most of this vegetation was cleared, except for some volunteer deciduous trees growing along the Norway spruce row north of Val-Kill Cottage (fig. 3.42).

**Figure 3.42. East bank of the lower Val-Kill Pond looking north showing mown conditions to retain open space and views, 2011. (Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)**



Continue to keep vegetation low along the entire shore of the pond within the historic core. Between the historic dock and play areas, keep the vegetation mown to the water's edge to retain the open character of the Stone Cottage lawn, connection with the water, and views across the pond to the southwest bank. On the banks of the peninsula to the north, cut back all woody vegetation on a semi-annual basis to maintain an open character and views of the pond from the picnic area

around the barbecue. These banks should be primarily wetland grasses and other low-growing plants. Remove the volunteer deciduous trees growing within the Norway spruce row to reduce competition on these historic trees.

**HC-9. Maintain Open Water on Val-Kill Pond**

Related Task: HC-8

The Val-Kill Pond was created in ca. 1930 through damming of the Fall-Kill creek. At first, the pond was a narrow ellipse encircling the historic core peninsula, and in 1937, it was enlarged by dredging the wetlands north to the white pine plantation (Plot D/Secret Woods), creating the upper pond (fig. 3.43). However, the upper pond was soon filled with sediment, and by 1960 most of it was characterized by low scrub and grasses. However, during spring floods, the much of the upper pond returned to open water. Throughout the year, the upper pond



is currently marsh with small areas of open water along the stream course, and is characterized by increasing woody vegetation that is blocking the historic open spatial character of the landscape (fig. 3.44).

To maintain the ecological health of the Fall Kill and meet state and federal wetlands laws, restoration of the full extent of the Val-Kill pond as it existed in the late 1930s and 1940s is not feasible. However, the lower pond and portion of the upper pond adjoining the historic core (the original ellipse) should be maintained in its historic open water condition to preserve the setting and outward views from the historic core (see fig. 3.43). Maintain the ellipse through cutting of wetland vegetation along the shore, and through periodic dredging to remove accumulated sediment. The logistics of dredging were evaluated in a 2007 study commissioned by the park.<sup>51</sup> Preserve the upper pond as marsh, but maintain its open spatial character through cutting down woody vegetation, particularly trees such as red maple, according to best wetland management practices. The trees growing along the north bank of the upper pond should be cleared back to the historic limits of the pond, leaving a margin along the former shoreline adjoining the white pine plantation. These trees should be managed to retain the visibility of the plantation from the historic core, but also to retain screening of the house on Carlyle Road (see tasks ER-3).



Figure 3.43 (left). Aerial photograph of Val-Kill Pond showing the later upper pond and the original ellipse or lower pond, 2009. The blue outline indicates recommended area of open water, and the yellow dashed area is recommended as open-space wetlands. (US Department of Agriculture orthoimagery, annotated by Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

Figure 3.44 (right). Looking north across upper Val-Kill Pond from the historic core showing trees and other woody vegetation growing within the former pond, 2012. (SUNY ESF)





Figure 3.45. Looking west from the pool terrace showing unobstructed view toward the south field, ca. 1945. This same view existed in the 1950s. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)

#### HC-10. Remove Willows on West Bank of Pond

During the 1940s and 1950s, there was an open view of the south field from the front lawn of Stone Cottage and the pool terrace, looking across the pond (fig. 3.45). In ca. 1984, the park planted two willows between the entry road and the west bank of the pond that have obscured this view.<sup>52</sup> Remove these two trees and keep down woody vegetation to maintain the open view of the south field from the Stone Cottage lawn and pool terrace.

#### HC-11. Screen East Parking Lot

The east (staff) parking lot was constructed in ca. 1984 in the woods east of the stable-garage. While necessary for park operations, it is an intrusion in the historic landscape. A wooded island separates the parking lot from the road, but the understory is open and does little to screen the view of parked cars from the

stable-garage, rear entrance road, and road to Top Cottage.

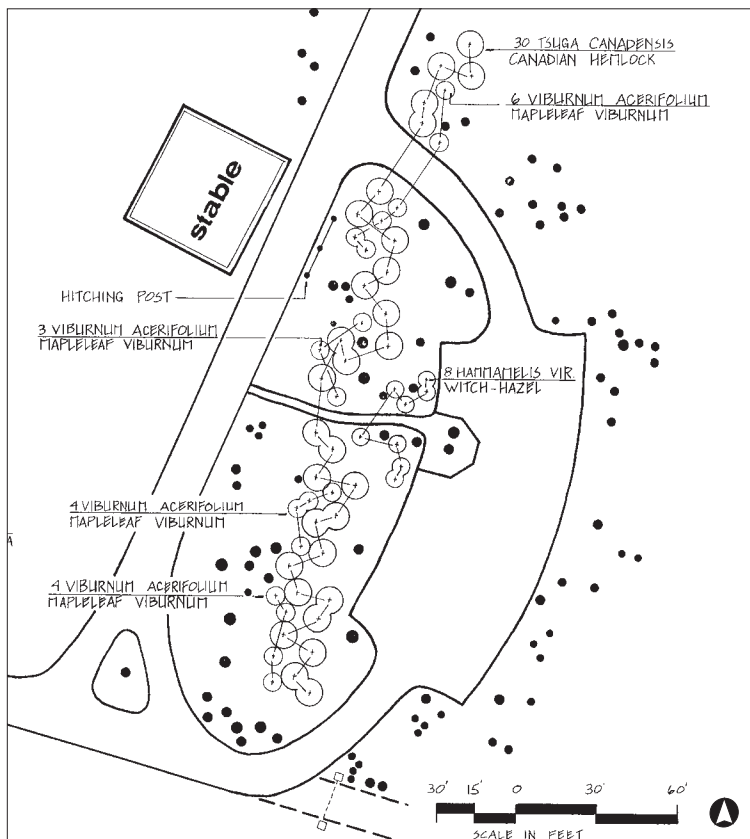


Figure 3.46. Planting plan for understory to screen the east parking lot. The black dots are trees. (National Park Service, "Historic Core Planting Plan, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site," 1984)

To enhance screening of the parking lot, promote natural growth in the understory by limbing up the trees bordering the parking lot to increase light levels. Supplement natural vegetation by planting a variety of native understory shrubs throughout the island, using mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), witch-hazel (*Hammamelis virginiana*), and hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) as indicated on a park planting plan from 1984 (fig. 3.46). The hemlocks may require treatment against hemlock woolly adelgid when they are mature. Other suitable plants include mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), a broad-leafed evergreen that would provide screening during the winter months, and shadbush (*Amelanchier canadensis*). Keep the vegetation back from the walk from the

parking lot by approximately 5' to maintain visibility along this corridor for safety purposes.

If at some point the east parking lot is no longer needed, it would be appropriate to remove it and return the site to its historic forested condition.

#### **HC-12. Redesign Site Lighting**

Free-standing light standards were not historically used at Val-Kill with the exception of a single lamppost located along the path west of Val-Kill Cottage. As noted under General Treatment Recommendations, the contemporary park light standards are incompatible with the historic domestic character of the landscape due to their placement and institutional design (see fig. 2.11).

Undertake a comprehensive site lighting plan to re-evaluate where lighting is essential within the historic core for contemporary needs. In general, light standards should be avoided in favor of less conspicuous fixtures, such as simple floodlights mounted under building eaves or on trees. Care should be taken to avoid lighting that is diffuse and contributes to light pollution, or is mounted on fixtures that are institutional in appearance. Concrete footings should be at or below grade to reduce visibility of the light standards.

Due to its prominent location, remove the single light standard in the middle of the Stone Cottage circle and do not replace it. The other light standards are in less conspicuous locations and may be appropriate locations for redesigned fixtures. Avoid installation of fixtures within the orchard parking lot to maintain the rural character of the west region.

### **STONE COTTAGE GROUNDS**

#### **HC-13. Uncover the Swimming Pool**

The swimming pool at Stone Cottage was a character-defining part of the Val-Kill domestic landscape. FDR and Mrs. Roosevelt both swam frequently during their summer visits, and it was well used by their extended family and guests. It also served as the central feature of the surrounding terrace with its herbaceous beds and flagstone patio. The pool was constructed in 1935 to replace an earlier pool built in 1926 closer to the pond. Built of concrete, the new variable-depth pool was designed by M. K. Hasbrouck, a leading swimming pool engineer who had designed the pool at the White House.<sup>53</sup> The Val-Kill pool featured a perimeter terra-cotta tile scupper, a water spurt at the shallow (north) end with a removable figural sculpture on top, gray flagstone coping, and a narrow flagstone deck with wide grass joints (see fig. 3.45). At the deep (south) end was a low wooden diving board mounted on concrete footings and a ladder with two bronze posts topped by ball finials (fig. 3.47). A movable metal slide was often placed at the southeast



**Figure 3.47.** Early view of the swimming pool looking southeast from the pool patio, ca. 1940. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)

corner of the pool. The pump and filter equipment was housed in a small flat-roofed shed built into the slope off the southwest side of the pool, with its roof at the level of the pool terrace. A patio table with an umbrella and chairs was sometimes set out on the shed roof. By the 1950s, the terracotta tile surface of the scupper was surfaced in concrete (see fig. 3.37).<sup>54</sup> After the historic period, the figural sculpture was removed and in 1984, Irene Boyd Roosevelt erected a small granite and bronze

memorial plaque in memory of her husband, John A. Roosevelt (died 1981), near the pool water spurt. The park stabilized the pool in the early 1980s, and added a wood deck cover to address safety and maintenance concerns following public opening of the site in 1984. While this unpainted wood deck reduces maintenance and safety hazards, it greatly detracts from the historic character of the landscape by obscuring the pool and conveying a sense of inactivity and abandonment (fig. 3.48).

In New York, state law requires that private and commercial swimming pools be surrounded by a barrier (fence) at least 4' high and be outfitted with a pool alarm.<sup>55</sup> As a federally-owned and operated property, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site is not bound by these regulations, but the same safety concerns apply. An unattended pool, as with any water body over 24" deep, poses the risk of drowning. Maintenance of an open historic swimming pool in the National

**Figure 3.48.** The existing character of the swimming pool showing permanent wood deck cover, looking south, 2011. (SUNY ESF)



Park System, however, is not unprecedented. At Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, Vermont, the park has maintained its historic swimming pool in working order for over a decade without any safety incidents. The pool is not fenced and is accessible to the public without guided tours.<sup>56</sup>

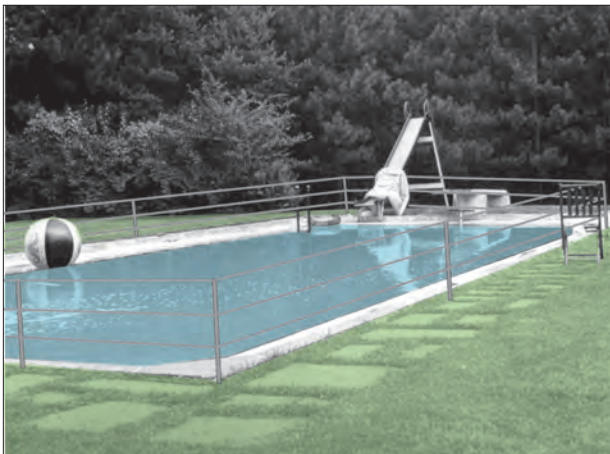
The preferred treatment for the Val-Kill swimming pool is to remove the wood deck cover and supports, repair and repaint the



structure, and seasonally refill with water to return the pool to working order, including operation of the scuppers and water spurt.<sup>57</sup> Mount a replica of the historic diving board, which was 13'-10" long, 1'-7" wide, 2" thick and covered with white laminate, on the existing concrete supports. The figural sculpture or a replica should be returned atop the water spurt. The historic pump and filtration equipment does not meet current standards, and should be documented, retained in place if possible, and retrofitted with a new system.<sup>58</sup> Reset the flagstones in the pool deck where they have subsided, particularly near the pool equipment room and pool ladder where a new crushed stone base may be required. Keep the grass joints trimmed. This proposed treatment will reestablish the historic character of the pool and return a sense of active use to the landscape. There would be additional annual costs involved in maintaining the pool in working order, including repair and upkeep of the pump and filters, daily removal of accumulated litter, seasonal draining and repairs, and daily surveillance.<sup>59</sup> A number of treatments could be undertaken to reduce safety risks associated with a fully watered pool, to demonstrate that the park is making a good faith effort at addressing safety and the intent of the state code:

- Install a pool alarm that would alert park staff if someone falls into the pool; install a video camera that allows for constant surveillance of the pool
- Train park staff in life-saving procedures
- Keep ring buoys and other safety devices nearby or in the pool
- Install a safety net that provides protection if a person falls in, but is below the surface and preserves the reflective character of open water (see Water Warden, [www.inyopools.com/Products/](http://www.inyopools.com/Products/))
- Install a safety pool cover that can be closed when the park is not staffed or when the pool is emptied for winter (see Swimming Pool Safety Cover, [www.clearwaterpoolcovers.com/](http://www.clearwaterpoolcovers.com/)).
- Install discrete signage instructing visitors to keep off the diving board and out of the water.

**Figure 3.49. Simulation of possible safety cable railing around the pool edge, on a ca. 1949 photograph. (Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, simulation by SUNY ESF)**



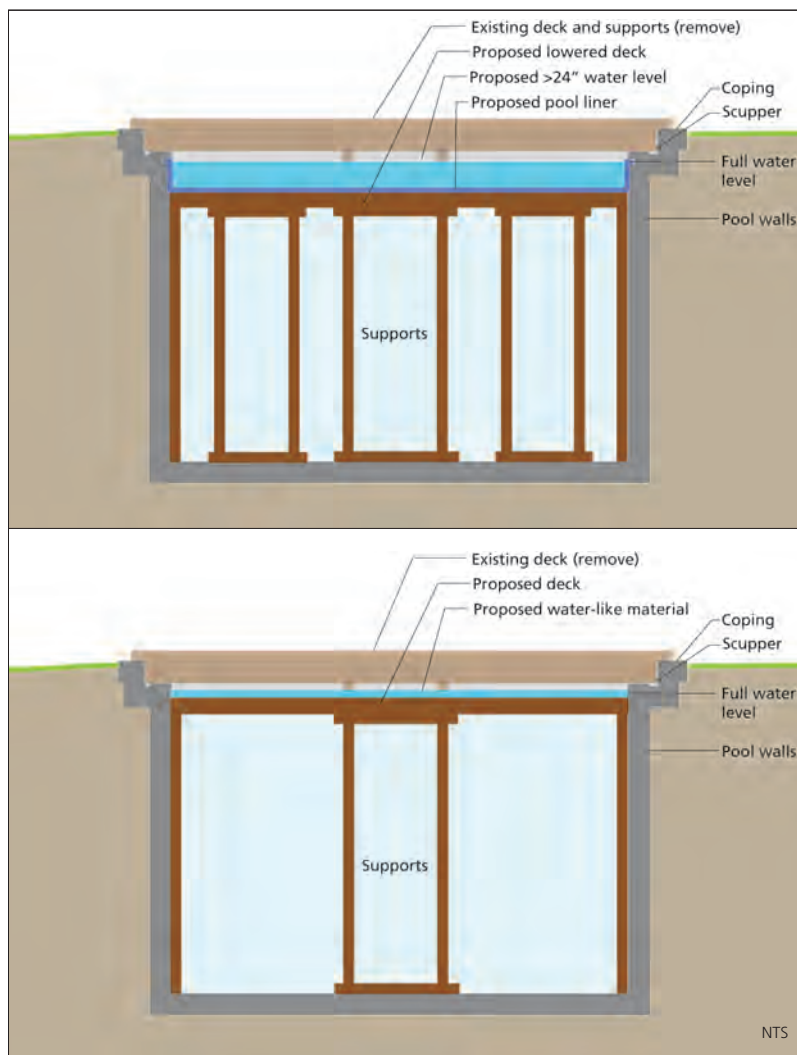
Installation of a standard perimeter fence is not a recommended safety measure in the context of preserving landscape character. A perimeter fence could be hidden within in the trees and shrubs around the pool terrace, but the section along the north side near Stone Cottage would be in the open. Although not a preferred treatment, an inconspicuous pool-edge post and cable railing would keep people away from the open water (fig. 3.49). Such a



railing could be an appropriate treatment if it allows for reintroduction of water. This railing would be a reversible treatment.

If the park feels the safety, operational, and cost factors of a fully watered pool outweigh the benefits, consider the following alternative:

- Reduce the depth of the pool to 24" or less to make it compatible with the historic watered character and allow for possible future removal and full-depth restoration (fig. 3.50). This would involve reconstruction of the existing deck at a lower level (the deck current rests on top of the outer pool coping), and installation of liner



**Figure 3.50.** Sections of the pool showing alternative concepts for shallow water (top) and a water-like surface (bottom), in relation to existing wood deck cover. (SUNY ESF)

pool coping), and installation of liner that matches the historic color of the pool. The liner may require alterations to the scupper, and would require a water-tight access hatch to allow for inspection of the pool structure. As with treatment for full-depth, the water spurt, diving board, and sculpture should be returned, and the mechanical systems upgraded.

If the park also feels operation and maintenance issues associated with a partially watered pool outweigh the benefits to historic character, consider the following alternative:

- Redesign the existing wooden deck to make it compatible with the historic watered character of the pool and allow for possible future removal and full-depth restoration (see fig. 3.50). Rebuild the deck at the full water level of the pool, just below the scupper (the deck current rests on top of the outer pool coping), and cover in a material that has the color and reflective qualities of the watered pool. The material will require

drain holes if it is not permeable. An access hatch should be retained, preferably in an inconspicuous location such as below the diving board. Return the diving board and sculpture.

Move the non-historic memorial to John Roosevelt, which apparently has no specific connection to the pool, from the front of the pool to a less prominent location such as at the edge of a shrub or garden bed on the pool terrace or

around Stone Cottage. Due to its small size, it would also be appropriate to leave the memorial in its existing location as part of the later history of the site.

#### **HC-14. Repair Pool Equipment Room**

Related Task: HC-13

The pool equipment room, built at the same time as the swimming pool in 1935, is a subsurface poured-concrete structure that conceals the mechanical equipment from view of the pool. Located at the southwest corner of the pool, the approximately 6'-high structure is tucked into an embankment so that the stone-surfaced roof forms an extension of the pool deck. The entrance door, built

of vertical boards with strap hinges, faces south toward the entrance road, and the approach is lined by dry-laid stone retaining walls. A rustic log railing historically protected the drop-off from the pool deck (fig. 3.51). The pool equipment room is presently in poor condition. The stone retaining walls have bowed in, the flagstone roof is moss covered and has deteriorated mortar joints, and soil has eroded along the edges and has uncovered part of the metal pipe connecting the equipment room to a pump the near the creek.



Figure 3.51. The rustic railing above the pool equipment room (left of center in background), looking southwest, 1938. (Photograph NPx 61 3212, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

Further assessment is needed to correct all structural conditions both interior and exterior. Needed repairs include rebuilding failed sections of the stone retaining walls, repairing and painting the door, and resetting and repointing the flagstone roof. Restore the grade at eroded areas along the roof and the pipe leading toward the pond, and reseed with grass. Keep the walk to the door free of debris. For current safety, reconstruct the log railing across the roof, aligned with the outer edge of the pool deck as shown in the 1938 photograph. The equipment in the shed may be preserved in place or removed to storage and replaced with new equipment as discussed under HC-13.

#### **HC-15. Repair and Refurnish Pool Terrace Patio**

Related Task: HC-2

The pool terrace patio on the south and west sides of Stone Cottage, containing rectangular gray flagstone of various sizes with wide grass joints, was built in ca. 1936 after the swimming pool was completed. Between ca. 1940 and 1955, the patio was partially covered by a yellow wood and then canvas and pipe-frame awning that extended from the south wall of Stone Cottage. Nancy Cook and



**Figure 3.52.** Furniture on the pool terrace patio and adjoining lawn, looking northeast, ca. 1958. (Photograph 04-24(2111), Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

white-painted wrought iron chairs and circular steel tables (fig. 3.52). For large gatherings, additional furnishings, including interior Val-Kill Industries chairs, wood picnic tables, and aluminum webbed lawn chairs were set out across the pool terrace. No planters were maintained on the patio during the 1950s.

Over the years, some of the patio stones have cracked and heaved, and the grass in the joints has built up and become weedy. These conditions detract from the historic character and create a potential tripping hazard. Since opening of the park in the 1980s, no furniture has been maintained on the patio, giving the area a disused and empty feeling (fig. 3.53).

**Figure 3.53.** The unfurnished pool terrace patio, looking northeast, 2012. (SUNY ESF)



Marion Dickerman maintained a border of annuals, vines, and lilacs around the perimeter of the patio. After their departure in 1947, the annual beds were no longer maintained, but lilac shrubs along the east side were kept. By the latter 1950s, the awning was removed from the patio. Furnishings on the patio during the Cook–Dickerman period included black wrought-iron tables and sling chairs, white Adirondack-style chairs, and terra-cotta planters. During the 1950s, furnishings included

The recommended treatment is to repair the patio and seasonally refurnish it with chairs and tables characteristic of those used during the late 1950s. The outdoor furnishings contributed greatly to the relaxed, social character of the landscape. Their reinstatement would also provide visitors with a place to sit and enjoy the landscape. It would also be appropriate to set out additional lawn furniture on the adjoining areas of the pool terrace for special events, as was done historically.

The extent of repairs to the patio depends on the level of deterioration, which will require further investigation. Repair of discrete sections should be favored over



complete reconstruction to maintain as much historic material and character as possible. If the patio is in overall poor condition and cannot be leveled, a new base may be required, which will necessitate removal of all stones. Document and number the existing stones, install a new crushed stone base, reset the original stones, and infill with soil and grass seed. In either case, remove all grass and weeds from the joints and reestablish grass that is flush with the surface of the stones to enhance historic character and accessibility. Keep the grass in the joints and edges of the patio to an overlap of 1" to 2" for a maintained but not manicured appearance. Resetting of the stones to reduce or eliminate the grass joints, as was done for the walk between the cottages, is not recommended for the patio because it would dramatically alter the character by creating a more uniform and seamless expanse of pavement.

**Figure 3.54.** Early plantings in the pool terrace garden. Top: looking southeast at the east border, ca. 1945; Bottom: looking northwest at the west border, ca. 1940. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)



Furnish the patio with two sets of patio chairs and tables on the south side of Stone Cottage, and several folding lawn chairs scattered elsewhere, including the west side facing the pond. The preferred treatment is to set out replicas of the historic furniture based on those shown in fig. 3.52, including metal patio sets

and webbed aluminum folding lawn chairs. The patio tables were round, very plain, and approximately 4' in diameter, while the chairs were more ornate, in wrought iron with a simple vine motif. If reproductions are not feasible, contemporary furnishings of a similar character would be appropriate. Set out the furniture on the flagstone patio on a seasonal basis. Since the awning was removed prior to the treatment period of the late 1950s, it is not appropriate to reconstruct it.

#### **HC-16. Reestablish Pool Terrace Garden**

Following construction of the new swimming pool in 1935, Nancy Cook laid out plantings that defined a rectangular terrace around the pool, visually separating it from the entry road and circle. An opening toward the west, adjoining Stone Cottage, preserved views toward Val-Kill Pond and the fields in the distance. As developed between ca. 1935 and 1947, the garden consisted of two borders





Figure 3.55. Plantings in the pool terrace garden, looking east with the east border in the background, ca. 1958. (Photograph 04-24 (2109), Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

Figure 3.56. Plantings in the east border of the pool terrace garden, looking east, ca. 1958. Mrs. Roosevelt is with her assigned government legal advisor, Mrs. Durward V. Sandifer. (Photograph 75 6 12, Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)



along the east and west sides of the terrace that paralleled the pool and curved inward toward the south end. The east side was set back farther from the pool, presumably to accommodate the preexisting sycamore tree. This bed wrapped around the north side of the terrace, bordering the entrance walk to Stone Cottage. The red pine along Val-Kill Lane (entry road) formed the southern enclosure to the terrace. The east and west borders featured a back of tall unclipped shrubs

and trees including lilac, red pine, and Eastern red-cedar; a lower back of clipped shrubs including lilac, northern white-cedar, and mock orange; flowerbeds in the middle with pink, white, and yellow azaleas, beauty bush, phlox, and marigolds; and a low front border hedge of clipped yew (fig. 3.54). The north border along the entrance walk featured a clipped low hedge in the back (along the walk) and azaleas in front. There was also a flower border along the pool patio, with lilacs at the southeast corner. When Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman left Val-Kill in 1947, the level of maintenance in the pool terrace gradually lessened and plantings were simplified, but the overall structure of the garden remained. The bed along the pool patio was removed, but the corner lilacs were retained. The border yew hedges in the east and west beds disappeared along with most of the azaleas, and the azaleas and hedge in the north bed were replaced with annuals and a low roll-out wood and wire picket fence (fig. 3.55).

During the 1950s, the herbaceous plantings changed from year to year. In general, the east bed featured more diverse and scattered plantings that included iris and peonies in addition to African and French marigolds, daylilies, and phlox, and a few azaleas (figs. 3.56). Lily of the valley was most likely established in the shady south end of the bed. The west bed was planted with rows of African marigolds and



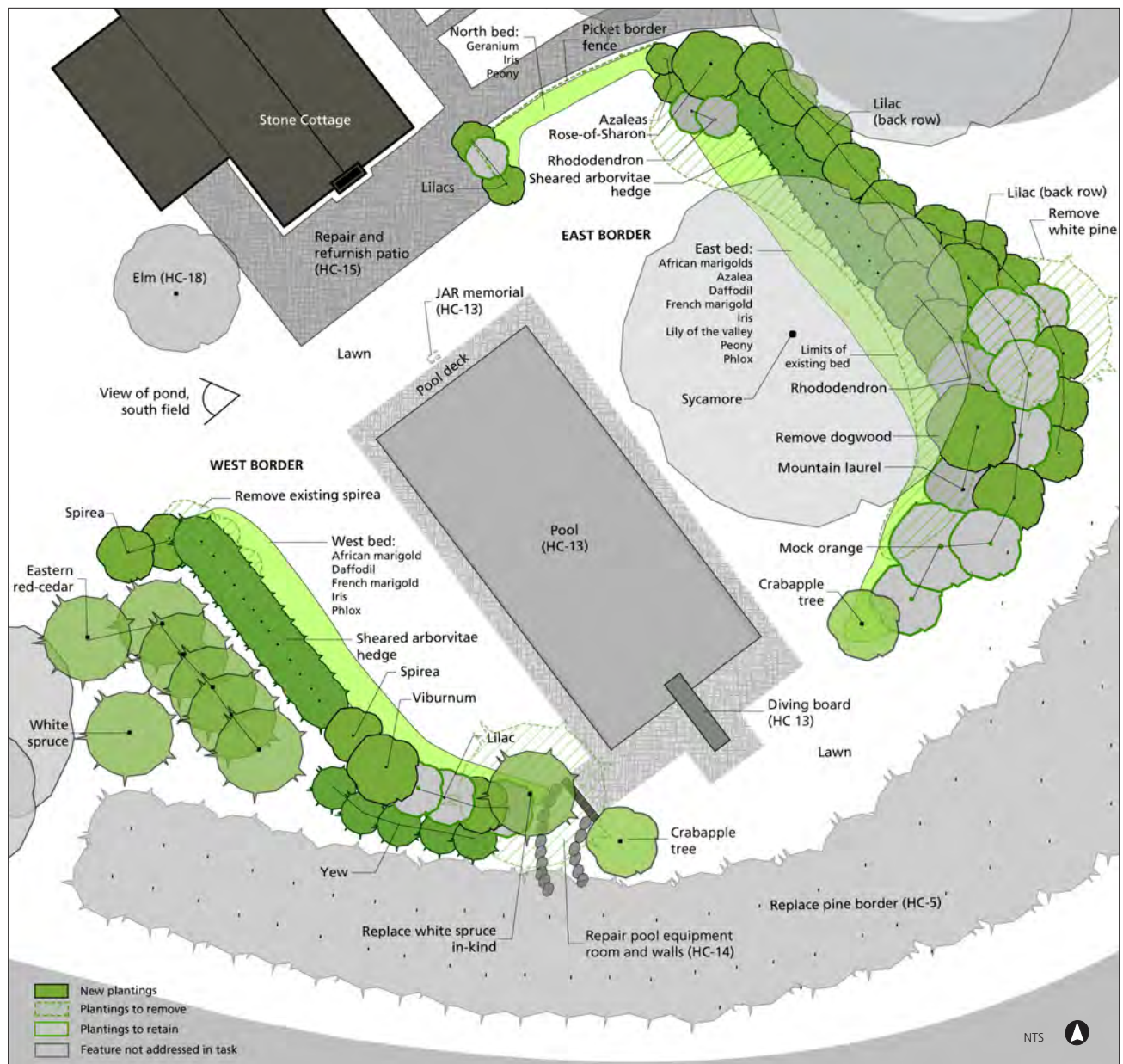
**Figure 3.57. Plantings in the west border of the pool terrace garden, looking east, ca. 1958. (Photograph 04-24 (2118), Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)**

French marigolds, interspersed with some daylilies (fig. 3.57). The north bed was planted with annual geraniums in front of the picket fence. Daffodils were also in the beds and in adjoining wooded areas.<sup>60</sup> As is evident in photographs from the 1950s, the pool garden plantings had a relaxed character and were not manicured or as lush as they had been during the Cook–Dickerman period, due to less maintenance as well as increased shade.

Charles Curnan continued to maintain the pool garden after Eleanor Roosevelt's death, and changed the plantings with the addition of dahlias and masses of impatiens, and probably some new shrubs including rose-of-Sharon.<sup>61</sup> Once John Roosevelt sold Val-Kill in 1970, the pool terrace garden was abandoned. The park did not restore the garden after it acquired the site in 1977, although it did replant the red pine border. Over time, shrubs and perennials were added, including peonies and iris (perhaps divided from historic plants) to the east bed, but the north bed disappeared as well as most of the west bed. Along with loss of the lower canopy of the red pine border, the spatial enclosure of the pool terrace was largely lost.

The recommended treatment for the pool terrace garden is to reestablish its structure, plant pallet, and informal character of the late 1950s treatment period (fig. 3.58). The planting plan is based on photographs in the Dickerman collection from ca. 1945 that clearly show the structure and plant palette of the garden, and photographs in the Dr. A. David Gurewitsch collection from the late 1950s during the treatment period that show in less detail the growth, removal, and replacement of shrubs, and changes in herbaceous plantings. Due to limited documentation and the fact that the garden was not static, the recommended plan is not a detailed restoration of the plantings, but rather a contemporary planting scheme that reestablishes the spatial character and plant species of the pool terrace. Specific plant varieties and colors are in most cases not known. Additional research may refine this plan, such as through archeology that could identify the historic edges of the planting beds. Implementation of this conceptual plan will require development of a detailed planting plan that determines varieties, size, and spacing of nursery stock and bedding plants.





**Figure 3.58. Conceptual planting plan for the pool terrace garden. (SUNY ESF)**

To reestablish the pool terrace garden with its defined spatial enclosure, the existing remnant beds will require realignment, expansion, and restocking as shown in the proposed planting plan. The south border of the garden formed by the red pines is recommended for replanting under task HC-5. The low white-painted picket roll-out fence that existed during the late 1950s should also be returned to the north side of the garden. Some existing plants are recommended for retention if they are species found historically in the garden, are in good condition, and in the approximate historic location. Given that colors of the flowering plants during the 1950s is not known, but based on species and photos from ca. 1945, should be primarily pink, coral, white, orange, and yellow. All shrubs should be unsheared, except where noted on figure 3.58.



### East Border

Recommended planting in the east border consists of a tall (approximately 8-10') back row of unsheared lilac and mock orange that extends continuously to the south end of the border and terminates at a crabapple tree. Rhododendron and mountain laurel are in the front of the row toward the south end. In front of the north half of the shrub row, where there is a continuous run of lilacs, establish a loosely sheared arborvitae hedge (approximately 5' tall). The north end of the border is a cluster of shrubs, including a large (approximately 10' tall) rose-of-Sharon (at current location of a large lilac, which may be retained), and low rhododendrons and azaleas that extend to the front of the border. The herbaceous bed forms the front of the border and should extend parallel to the pool and then taper as it curves inward south of the sycamore tree. The main part of the bed should be approximately 5' deep. Plant informally with tall African marigolds, peonies, and phlox in back; and shorter French marigolds, iris, azaleas, and lily of the valley in front. Plant the bed throughout with clumps of daffodils.

Remove the existing rose-of-Sharon hedge, and retain or move the peonies, iris, and lily of the valley, which are long-lived plants and may date to the historic period, to the reestablished bed. Retain the existing Catawba rhododendron if it can be pruned back, along with the mountain laurel and mock orange at the south end of the bed. Remove the dogwood and young white pine tree at the southeast end of the bed.

The north bed of the east border should be planted with two lilacs to supplement the existing lilac at the edge of the pool patio. Plant the approximately 3' wide bed with annual geraniums, iris, and peonies, backed by the roll-out white picket fence.

### West Border

Recommended plantings in the west border consist of a grove of red-cedar and spruce trees behind a back row of shrubs. This row includes a loosely sheared arborvitae hedge (approximately 5' tall) at the north end that should mirror the arborvitae hedge in the east border. To the north, plant spirea that curves toward the pond. The south end of the row consists of lilac, viburnum, and spirea that curve inward toward the existing spruce and pool equipment room. The herbaceous bed forms the front of the border and should extend parallel to the pool and then taper as it curves inward. This bed should be approximately 3' deep. Plant with a back row of tall African marigolds and a row of short French marigolds in front, interspersed with iris and phlox. Plant the bed throughout with clumps of daffodils.

The existing lilacs are most likely remnants of the historic shrub border and should be incorporated into the new plantings. Move the spirea to the north to form the westward extension of the shrub row. The existing historic white spruce tree is in decline and should be replaced in-kind.

#### Preliminary Plant List for the Pool Terrace Garden

Use varieties that existed historically, native varieties, or varieties that were available commercially between the 1930s and 1950s. If a historic variety is not available or is prone to disease, or if a longer bloom period is desired, then it is appropriate to use a modern cultivar with a similar appearance.

##### Trees

Eastern red-cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)

Crabapple (*Malus* ‘*Katherine*’ or similar short, white or pink)

White spruce (*Picea glauca*)

##### Shrubs

American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*)

Catawba rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*)

Doublefile viburnum (*Viburnum plicatum*)

Japanese azalea / Korean rhododendron (*Rhododendron mucronulatum*, ‘*Hino Crimson*’ or similar)

Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*, such as ‘*Charm*’)

Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*),

Rose-of-Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*)

Sweet mock orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*)

Vanhoutte spirea (*Spirea x. vanhouttei*)

##### Herbaceous Plants

African marigolds (*Tagetes erecta*)

Daffodils (*Narcissus spp.*)

French marigolds (*Tagetes patula*, or similar short variety)

Garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*)

Common peony (*Paeonia officinalis*)

Lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*)

Wall iris (*Iris tectorum*)

#### HC-17. Enhance Historic Character of Stone Cottage Plantings <sup>62</sup>

Related Task: HC-22

Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman maintained ornamental plantings around all of Stone Cottage prior to 1947, in addition to the walled and fenced gardens at the rear and part of the south side of the building. By the 1940s, the front of the house facing the pond featured lilacs, arborvitae, spirea, and other shrubs; flowerbeds with marigolds, phlox, and poppies; and clematis vines on the porch



**Figure 3.59 (top).** Early plantings along the front (west) side of Stone Cottage, looking east, ca. 1945. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)

**Figure 3.60.** Early plantings at the south entry to Stone Cottage, looking north, ca. 1945. (Photograph 1135, Dickerman Collection, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)



awnings (fig. 3.59). There was most likely also a profusion of spring bulbs. At the swimming pool patio on the south side of the house, there was Boston ivy growing on the walls and climbing hydrangea and lilacs at the southeast corner. The south entry plantings lined the house and entry walk from the circle drive with Boston ivy and climbing hydrangea, lilacs, mugo pine, yew, and barberry (fig. 3.60). The north side of the house was also planted with shrubs similar to the other sides. Along the

rear wing, there was wintercreeper groundcover to either side of a cellar hatch and extending along the north side of the loggia beneath a hemlock tree.<sup>63</sup>

Following Nancy and Marion's departure in 1947, many of the shrubs around the house remained and others were added, but the flowerbeds along the front of the house disappeared, along with the fenced garden at the rear. Based on very limited photographic documentation, plantings during the 1950s treatment period included large lilacs along the west porch and south side of the house, and climbing roses, Boston ivy, climbing hydrangea, and pansies along the patio.<sup>64</sup> To the east of the south entrance, the area where the fenced garden had been (south of the walled garden) was still heavily planted with shrubs including yew, beauty bush, and arborvitae (fig. 3.61). On the north side, there were no remaining foundation plantings at the time of the laundry addition in ca. 1961, although they had probably been recently removed, perhaps due to the construction.<sup>65</sup> At the south entry, a 1978 pre-restoration photograph shows shrubs that most likely

existed in the late 1950s, including lilacs, mountain laurel, Japanese yew, beauty bush, Boston ivy, and climbing hydrangea (fig. 3.62). A small area of grass existed between the shrubs and stone walk to the east of the door.

The park did not reestablish plantings around Stone Cottage as part of its restoration of the building in the early 1980s, although it did develop a planting plan for the south entry that was not implemented. Over time, the park and ERVK





**Figure 3.61.** Plantings along the south side of Stone Cottage, following removal of the fenced garden area, ca. 1950. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)

(former tenants of Stone Cottage) presumably added some plantings around the building, including hosta and ferns. The remnant shrubs along the west side were all removed, as well as most of those where the fenced garden once stood.

The recommended treatment for the plantings around Stone Cottage are to reestablish the overall shrub massings and vines that existed during the late 1950s, using plants that are documented from the historic period (fig. 3.63). As with the pool terrace

garden, a detailed restoration of the plantings from the 1950s is not possible due to lack of documentation. The proposed plan is therefore a contemporary design that is compatible with the historic character of the landscape. Existing shrubs that may date to the historic period should be retained and rejuvenated if possible. Plantings should also retain and expand spring bulbs (see task HC-6).

#### South and East Sides

**Figure 3.62.** Plantings along the south entry of Stone Cottage, 1978. These plantings may date in part from the late 1950s. (Denver Service Center collection, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)



Recommended plantings for the south entry will retain and enhance shrub masses and understory plantings that frame the walk to the south entrance of Stone Cottage from the circle drive. Retain or replace in-kind the existing lilac, mountain laurel, yew, and beautybush. Keep the shrubs in a loose, natural form and trimmed below the height of the second floor and away from windows. Plant mountain laurel along the west side of the walk. Plant a low mugo pine to the east side of the entrance door,

and fragrant sumac or spreading yew in place of invasive Japanese barberry used historically as a border and underplanting beneath the lilac and mountain laurel. Remove non-historic hostas. Reinstall a grass border between the shrubs and the remnant stone walk east of entrance walk. Retain climbing hydrangea but restrain it to the east corner of the two-story wing, and allow to grow up the second story stone wall. Use a cable trellis system to support the vine and keep it off the building.

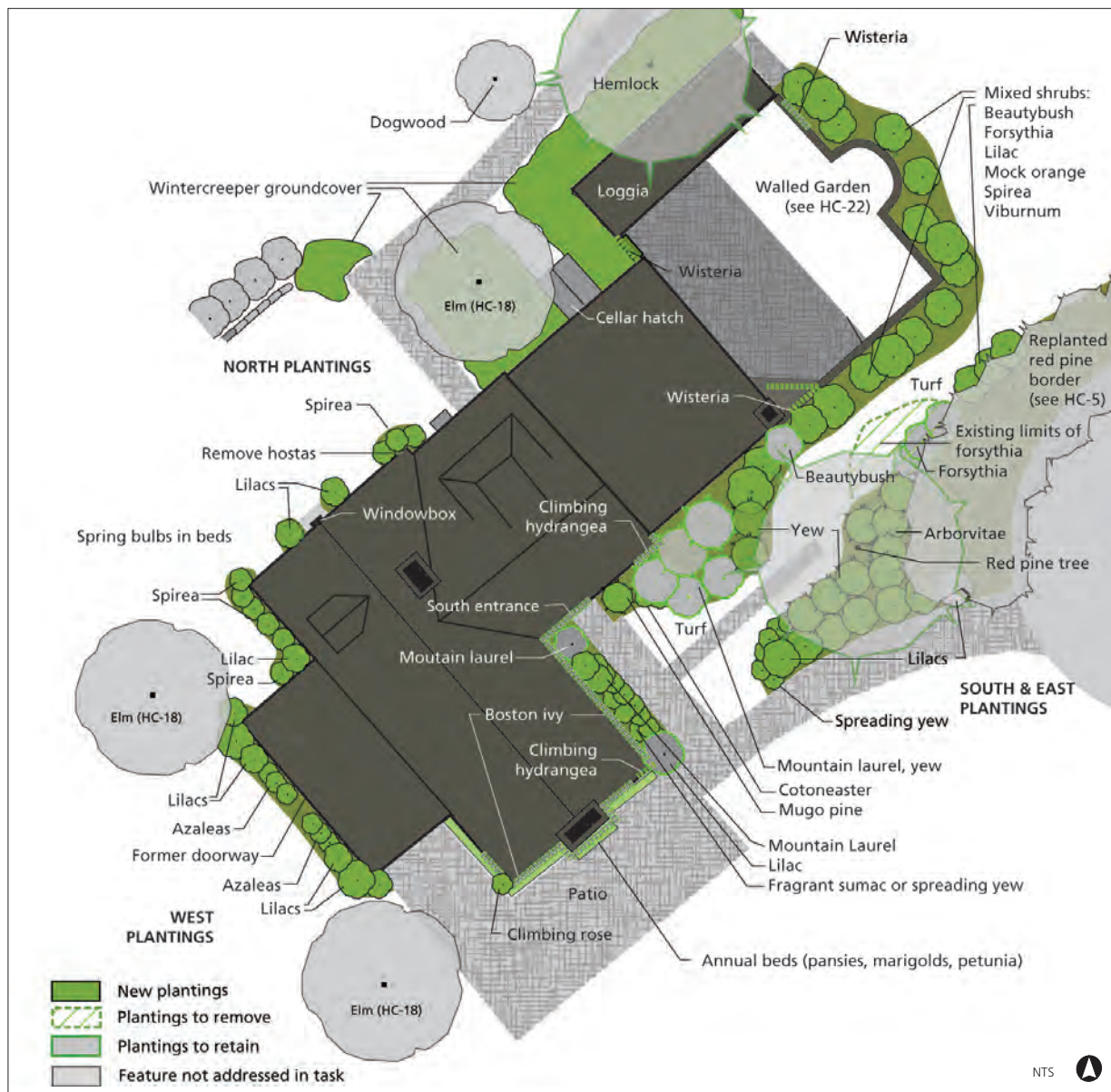


Figure 3.63. Conceptual planting plan for Stone Cottage. (SUNY ESF)

Retain Boston ivy and allow to grow on the east side of the house and around the entrance door, but keep off painted surfaces. Prune back the vines severely each fall away from painted trim and clapboards to limit the amount of pruning necessary during the growing season.

Along the side of the rear one-story wing and walled garden, plant a border of mixed deciduous shrubs extending east from the existing beautybush to the loggia, and manage them in their natural form. Use lilac, mock orange, spirea, forsythia, and doublefile viburnum. Retain the wisteria vine along the east side of the walled garden, but train it to grow up the southeast corner of the loggia, preferably on a cable trellis system to allow for maintenance and painting. Prune nearby trees to increase light levels, if necessary.

Along the walk from the circle, beneath the existing red pine and adjoining the replanted red pine border (see HC-5), reestablish a shrub massing with arborvitae, cotoneaster, forsythia, lilac, and yew, extending off the existing forsythia and lilac. The forsythia has spread from its historic location and will need to be removed where it covers the historic grass path. Take care not to disturb the roots of the specimen red pine tree. This massing will also frame the walk into the former fenced garden area.

Along the pool patio, retain the Boston ivy and keep it to approximately 75% coverage of the south gable wall and a portion of the west wall; do not allow to grow on painted surfaces. Plant a climbing hydrangea at the east corner, and a climbing rose at the southwest corner (bed on west side of the house). In the narrow beds between the house and the patio, plant low flowering annuals, such as pansies, petunias, and French marigolds.<sup>66</sup>

#### West Side

Recommended plantings for the west (front) side of Stone Cottage, aside from the climbing rose along the patio (see south side), include groups of lilacs at either side of the screened porch, with low azaleas between, to either side of where a doorway was removed in ca. 1950.<sup>67</sup> To the north of the porch, plant lilacs and spirea, with the taller lilacs at the corners.

#### North Side

Recommended plantings for the north side of Stone Cottage include continuation of the spirea and lilacs from the west side along the north gable wall of the house. Plant lilacs at the corners and framing the north entrance. Remove the existing hostas, which most likely post-date the historic period. Plant a wisteria vine at the corner of the walled garden and the house, on the brick connecting wall (to be reconstructed, see HC-22). Plant a native dogwood along the north side of the walk to Val-Kill Cottage, across from the loggia.

Along the rear wing, plant wintercreeper as a groundcover between the house and the walk to Val-Kill Cottage, leaving an opening for access to the cellar hatch and extending along the north side of the loggia, beneath the existing hemlock. Take care not to disturb the hemlock roots. Plant another bed of wintercreeper on the north side of the walk extending to the stone wall and lilac hedge, to close off the lawn to the west. Wintercreeper is identified as an invasive plant by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. It can smother native understory in wooded areas. However, wintercreeper spreads primarily



by trailing stems. Since the proposed planting is surrounded by managed landscape and buildings, the likelihood that it will spread into wooded areas is minimal. If an alternative species is desired, periwinkle is a groundcover with a similar character. It is not native, but is not invasive.<sup>68</sup>

#### Preliminary Plant List for Stone Cottage

Use varieties that existed historically, native varieties, or varieties that were available commercially between the 1930s and 1950s. If a historic variety is not available or is prone to disease, or if a longer bloom period is desired, then it is appropriate to use a modern cultivar with a similar appearance.

##### Shrubs

American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*)  
Andromeda (*Pieris floribunda*)  
Beautybush (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*),  
Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*)  
Climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala petiolaris*),  
Climbing rose (*Rosa* spp., such as ‘Zephirine Drouhin’ or ‘Reine des Violettes’ or similar)  
Doublefile viburnum (*Viburnum plicatum*)  
Forsythia (*Forsythia x intermedia*)  
Fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica* ‘Gro Lo’) (alternative for barberry)  
Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*).  
Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*, such as ‘Charm’)  
Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*)  
Mugo pine (*Pinus mugo*)  
Spreading yew (*Taxus x media* ‘Densiflora’) (alternative for barberry)  
Sweet mock orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*)  
Vanhoutte spirea (*Spirea x. vanhouttei*)  
Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)  
Wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*)  
Spring bulbs

##### Annuals (pool patio border only)

French marigolds (*Tagetes patula* or similar short variety)  
Pansies (*Viola*)  
Wild petunia (*Petunia integrifolia*)

##### Groundcover

Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) (substitute for wintercreeper if necessary)



**Figure 3.64.** An early photograph of the elms at Stone Cottage (left and right background) and the dock, looking east, ca. 1940. (Photograph 747, Dickerman Collection, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)

Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*, not variegated)

Trees

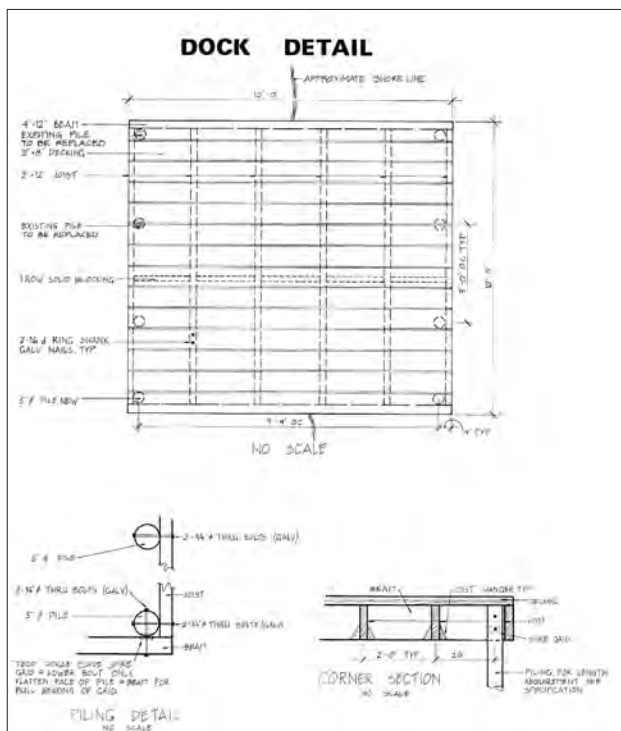
Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

#### HC-18. Plant Elms at Stone Cottage

Three American elms were planted in the early days of Val-Kill's development off the north, west, and south corners of Stone Cottage (fig. 3.64). These trees provided shade and structure to the relatively open lawn west of the cottage. One tree was removed by the time the laundry

wing was built in ca. 1961 and the others were removed around the same time, probably due to Dutch elm disease. Replant the elms (*Ulmus americana*) using a cultivar that is resistant to Dutch elm disease and elm yellows, such as "Valley Forge." Limb up the two replanted elms on the west lawn as soon as possible to preserve views to the pond.

**Figure 3.65.** National Park Service plans and specifications for reconstruction of the dock, 1984. (National Park Service, "Dock and Orchard Plans," Drawing 473)



#### HC-19. Reconstruct Dock

In addition to providing a beautiful backdrop for the landscape of the historic core, the pond was a center of recreational activity. In the early years, canoes and rowboats were often kept on the shore of the pond west of Stone Cottage, and in

ca. 1939, a fixed two-part wooden dock was constructed northwest of the bridge (see fig. 3.64). The dock was constructed of a log pilings supporting a plank deck with a skirt board, approximately 2' above the water level. The main section of the dock was approximately 10' by 10', and was connected by a wood pier head to a smaller section to the north, measuring approximately 4' by 4'. Both segments of the dock appear to have been stained a light gray. Lawn and wetlands vegetation bordered the dock; there was no path or other set approach. The dock was still used in the 1950s and was probably removed in the 1960s. By 1984, just two pilings remained.<sup>69</sup>

Reconstruct the dock as shown in figure 3.45 and a 1984 park plan, which does not show the smaller lower section (fig. 3.65). Given current park operations, the dock would serve only as an interpretive feature or place for visitors to look out over the pond and grounds.

It would also be appropriate to return active use to the dock, with one or two rowboats available for visitor use or secured in place. During the 1950s, there were at least two ribbed wooden rowboats used on the pond.<sup>70</sup>

#### **HC-20. Preserve Pool Pump Enclosure**

A small gable-roofed galvanized metal pump enclosure, located beneath trees off the northeast corner of the Fall Kill bridge, was built in ca. 1935 as part of a system that pumped water from the Fall Kill into the swimming pool. The pump equipment inside included an electric motor and pump.<sup>71</sup> The pump enclosure and equipment are currently abandoned, but intact. Undertake an assessment to identify work necessary to preserve this structure, which may include arresting rust, waterproofing, conserving the mechanical equipment, and pruning adjoining shrubs. Although not conspicuous in the landscape, this structure is part of the historic mechanical systems associated with the swimming pool.

#### **HC-21. Repair Stone Retaining Wall and Steps**

Related Tasks: WR-7, ER-9

The dry-laid stone retaining wall along the north side of the Stone Cottage lawn was built to take up grade as the lawn extended down toward the pond, and also served as a line between Stone Cottage grounds and the Val-Kill Cottage grounds and peninsula to the north. Ranging in height from 12” to 18” tall, it was built with a set of stone steps toward the center of its length with a flagstone landing. A hedge of lilacs was planted along the base of the wall. The wall and steps remain intact, but have deteriorated in condition, with fallen stones and heaved steps. Undertake an assessment to determine the extent of work needed to repair the wall and steps. This may range from isolated repairs to complete reconstruction, particularly if a new foundation or back drainage is needed. All repairs should retain and reuse the existing stones; replace in-kind any stones that are beyond repair; and maintain the historic dry-laid masonry construction. The lilac hedge in front of the wall may require temporary removal or renewal pruning to provide space needed to undertake the repairs.

#### **HC-22. Rehabilitate Walled Garden**

The walled garden was designed by Nancy Cook in ca. 1936 as an outdoor room for Stone Cottage. The east and south sides of the garden, and a small part of the northwest side, were enclosed by white-washed brick walls, and the west side by a frame loggia. The east side of the brick wall was designed with an oval alcove at its midpoint, and a brick fireplace in the south corner adjoining the house. Half of the garden space next to the house featured a brick patio, and the other half was lawn with a planted border along the east wall.





**Figure 3.66.** Marion Dickerman in front of the basin and shrub and flower border in the walled garden, looking southeast, ca. 1940. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)

This border as originally maintained was structured into three layers of plant material (fig. 3.66). Taller shrubs including lilac, viburnum, and arborvitae formed the back against the brick wall, which was whitewashed and covered in Boston ivy. The shrubs were loosely clipped and were kept at the height of the wall. In front of these were lower azaleas and spirea, and flowering annuals including marigolds. The bed was bordered by a loosely-clipped low yew hedge and edging of brick. The border curved inward

at the alcove around a small stone oval water-filled basin with a polished granite column in the center that was topped by a figural bronze sculpture. Five small duck figures were on or near the edge of the basin. At the south end of the lawn was a double-leader paper birch tree, and Boston ivy and wisteria vines grew along portions of the south brick wall and fireplace. Climbing roses were in front of the loggia columns, and wisteria grew up the corner pilasters. The patio and loggia were furnished with simple but elegant wrought-iron and canvas sling chairs and matching side tables with glass tops, and steel chairs with stylized Chippendale backs (fig. 3.67). Inside the loggia, there were also wicker chairs, a hammock, and wrought-iron flowerpot holders on the walls. A Val-Kill industries tin light sconce was on the wall of the house next to the fireplace.

**Figure 3.67.** Early furnishings and vine cover in the walled garden, looking southwest at the corner fireplace, ca. 1940. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)



not maintained as well as it had been prior to 1947, but the overall structure of the planted border most likely remained intact, along with the built structures including the loggia, wall, patio, and fireplace. There was probably still whitewash on the brick walls, and a more informal assortment of furniture.<sup>72</sup>

In the early 1960s, near or soon after Mrs. Roosevelt's death, the loggia was removed and replaced with a concrete wall along with the addition

of a tenant laundry wing on Stone Cottage.<sup>73</sup> The wall and laundry wing were retained as part of the park's initial repairs and restoration completed in the early 1980s, and the former shrub border and lawn were replaced with a single large flowerbed. The brick bed edging was removed. Most of the white-wash on the brick walls wore off over time. Between 2006 and 2008, the park reestablished the lawn, planting bed, and birch tree, and installed a statue and pedestal, similar to the historic pieces, in the oval basin. These new plantings were similar to those that existed in ca. 1945, but lacked the azaleas, and substituted red-twig dogwood for the viburnums. In 2010–11, the concrete block wall and laundry were removed, and in 2012, the loggia was reconstructed.

The recommended treatment for the walled garden is to reestablish its overall form from the late 1950s, with the reconstructed loggia and brick walls enclosing the garden (fig. 3.68). For the plantings and furnishings, there are two recommended alternatives:

#### Alternative 1

Treat the walled garden as an outward extension of the upcoming rehabilitation of the interior of Stone Cottage, which will retain architectural changes through the late 1950s, but use the space for exhibits that focus on the early years of Val-Kill prior to 1947, when Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook lived there. These exhibits will address the progressive social and political circles the women nurtured, and their work with Val-Kill Industries.<sup>74</sup> The walled garden, including the plantings and furnishings, will serve as an outdoor extension of these exhibits, to illustrate the Cook–Dickerman period. Under this alternative, the plantings and furnishings will be reestablished to reflect the character of the garden in ca. 1945. Because the garden is enclosed, reestablishment of these plantings and furnishings would not conflict with the character of the larger landscape.

#### Alternative 2

Treat the walled garden the same as the rest of the Val-Kill landscape to reestablish the character of the late 1950s, with more informal plantings and less rigorous maintenance. Due to lack of documentation, the plantings will be a contemporary design that reflects maturation of those that existed in ca. 1945. Furnishings will be contemporary pieces that reflect the mixed and informal styles, such as those found on the pool terrace patio (see HC-15).

#### Structures and Circulation (same for both alternatives)

##### Connecting Wall

The reconstruction of the loggia in 2012 included addition of a temporary board fence between the west end of the loggia and the



**Figure 3.68. Conceptual rehabilitation plan for the walled garden. Proposed furnishings are not shown. (SUNY ESF)**

northeast corner of the house. Replace this with a brick wall that matches the materials and dimension of the historic wall on the east side of the loggia.<sup>75</sup> Reconstruction of this wall will restore the historic enclosure of the garden.

#### Brick Walls, Fireplace, and Chimney

Repair the perimeter brick walls, fireplace and chimney as necessary (repoint, replace heavily deteriorated brick, and remove biological growth). Give the interior and exterior of the brick (excluding the firebox) a light whitewash and treat to provide a mottled character shown in historic photographs.



### Brick Bed Edging

Reconstruct the brick soldier-course edging along the front of the border with bricks and mortar that match those in the walls. The edging extended across the bed (which did not extend the full length of the garden) parallel to the wall, and then curved and stepped in toward the oval basin. The exact alignment of this border is not clear in the historic photographs; archeological testing may confirm this. The bricks appear to have been set half-way in the ground, or approximately 4" above grade, and were not whitewashed.

### Patio and Loggia Floor

Repair the brick patio by leveling heaved areas, replacing eroded and missing bricks, and repointing. Keep the joints free of grass. Do not whitewash. To make the garden accessible, continue to provide ramps at the small steps on the doorway to Stone Cottage and at the loggia. These should have edge guards 2" high, a slope no greater than 8.33%, and be painted in a color that matches the brick but still provide visitors with a visual cue to the grade change.

### Constructed Water Features (same for both alternatives)

#### Basin

Repair the oval basin if needed, and keep it filled with water seasonally. Since the basin holds standing water, use of a natural mosquito repellent may be necessary.

### Vegetation—Alternative 1

Development of a final planting plan will require field checking to determine appropriate size and spacing of shrubs to reestablish the massing evident in historic photographs. Use heritage varieties that were available prior to 1960 where possible.

#### Vines

Maintain the existing wisteria vine at the exterior northern end of the perimeter wall, and train it to grow up along the corner of the loggia. Plant wisteria on the exterior of the short connecting wall between the house and the loggia and allow it to climb up the northwest corner of the loggia. Plant wisteria on the exterior southwest end of the wall and allow it to grow above the fireplace, but not up the chimney.

Plant a climbing hydrangea at the south corner of the alcove brick wall. Plant Boston ivy along the remainder of the interior brick wall and allow it to cover approximately 75% of the wall surface. Keep the vine away from the fireplace, and trim to keep from growing over the shrubs. Do not allow Boston ivy to grow onto the painted clapboards of the house.

Plant climbing roses in front of the two loggia columns and second half-circle planting area in front of the connecting wall (to be rebuilt), using a rose with profuse blooms and minimal thorns. Use inconspicuous metal mesh or wires to support the roses, wisteria, and hydrangea vines

#### Shrubs

Reestablish the continuous line of shrubs along the east wall of the garden, using species that match or are close to the overall form and habit of those shown in the historic photograph. The border was historically overstocked, and may require thinning to allow for proper growth and to reduce maintenance. Remove the existing boxwood hedge, red-twig dogwood, and Anthony Waterer spirea, and keep the lilacs. Add glossy-leaved viburnums to either side. Keep these back shrubs loosely pruned with a vertical edge to the height of the wall. Plant deciduous and evergreen azaleas and Vanhoutte spirea in front of the viburnum, and keep loosely pruned to maintain a largely vertical form. Plant an arborvitae in the southeast corner, and two low spreading yews along the south wall, behind the birch tree. Reestablish a narrow border hedge of yew along the brick bed edging and wrapping around the rear of the basin. Maintain at approximately 10"-12" high and 8"-12" wide, and keep loosely trimmed. Allow plants behind basin to fill in the lower shrub canopy. Crowding may require removal of the hedge along the annuals as the plantings mature.

#### Annuals

Plant an informal arrangement of mixed yellow and orange marigolds and small-flowered pink petunias in the bed between the shrubs and the yew hedge. Also maintain a mix of flowering spring bulbs in the bed, including daffodils.

#### Turf

Maintain the ground between the brick border and the patio as well-tended lawn without bare spots and minimal broadleaf weeds.

#### Trees

The existing gray birch is similar in appearance to the historic paper birch; replace with double-leader paper birch (disease resistant strain if available) when the existing tree declines. Maintain turf up to the trunk, without mulch.

### Vegetation—Alternative 2

Retain the same treatment for the plantings as proposed under Alternative I, but maintain the shrubs in a looser form and eliminate the border yew hedge, which most likely was not maintained in later

years. Remove the existing boxwood border, red-twigged dogwood, and Anthony Waterer spirea.

#### Small-Scale Features—Alternative 1

To reestablish the feeling of the Cook–Dickerman period, furnish the loggia and patio on a seasonal basis with pieces shown in the historic photographs, including the furniture, light sconce on the house, and hanging planters in the loggia. Install roll-up awnings on the loggia.

At least one of the historic sling chairs is currently held in the park collections. Commission replicas of this chair and the side tables. .

Remove the existing column and sculpture in the oval basin and have replicas made of the historic objects. Additional pieces of sculpture which should be replicated are the five ducklings (two south and three north of the oval basin). These figures lent a charming, humorous touch to the otherwise elegant garden.

#### Small-Scale Features—Alternative 2

Furnish the walled garden with pieces characteristics of the late 1950s. These may include a mix of wrought-iron sling chairs (including the one in park collections) with yellow and teal-blue canvas; steel and wrought-iron painted patio tables and chairs; and webbed aluminum lawn chairs; and terra-cotta pots with flowering annuals. Retain the existing column and sculpture in the oval basin, which are similar in form to the historic pieces.

#### Preliminary Plant List for the Walled Garden

Use varieties that existed historically, native varieties, or varieties that were available commercially between the 1930s and 1950s. If a historic variety is not available or is prone to disease, or if a longer bloom period is desired, then it is appropriate to use a modern cultivar with a similar appearance.

##### Shrubs

American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*)

Japanese azalea / Korean rhododendron (*Rhododendron mucronulatum*, ‘Hino Crimson’ or similar)

Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*)

Leatherleaf viburnum (*Viburnum matthewsii* or *Viburnum x rhytidophylloides Alleghany*)

Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*, such as ‘Charm’)

Vanhoutte spirea (*Spirea x. vanhouttei*)



## Vines

Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*)  
 Chinese wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*)  
 Climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala petiolaris*)  
 Climbing rose (*Rosa spp.*, ‘Zephirine Drouhin,’ ‘Cecile Brunner,’  
 or similar)

## Annuals

African marigolds (*Tagetes erecta*)  
 Daffodils (*Narcissus spp.*)  
 French margiolds (*Tagetes patula*, or similar short variety)  
 Petunias (*Petunia x hybrid*) pink

## Trees

Paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*)  
 Gray birch (*Betula populifolia*) if disease-resistant paper birch is  
 not available

**VAL-KILL COTTAGE GROUNDS****HC-23. Rehabilitate Caretakers Yard as Visitor Gathering Area**

By the late 1930s, the rear (east) side of the caretaker’s wing on Val-Kill Cottage (present visitor center) featured a small enclosed yard that was most likely used by Mrs. Roosevelt’s household staff. It contained a narrow flagstone patio along the building, and a walk connecting the doorway to the drive. Lawn extended east from the patio, bordering a stone wall along the south side, where there was a table and chairs with an umbrella. Trees and shrubs enclosed the garden on the east

Figure 3.69. The former caretakers’ yard, looking southwest, 2012. (SUNY ESF)



and south sides.<sup>76</sup> Although there is no documentation on the yard in the 1950s, it presumably retained a similar character. The stone patio was surfaced in concrete at an undetermined time, and the shrub enclosure dwindled in later years. Today, the yard is mown, but has an abandoned character due to lack of furnishings, cracks and weeds in the patio and walk, and missing or overgrown shrubs (fig. 3.69). The walkway does not currently extend all the way to the driveway.

To enhance the historic character of the yard, repair the flagstone patio and walk by removing the concrete surface, and by resetting or replacing flagstones. Extend the flagstone walk to the drive. Repair the stone wall. Prune back the existing mock orange shrubs to regain the extent of the lawn area. Plant additional mock oranges to continue the line north of the walk, and plant mock oranges above the stone wall to reestablish the historic enclosure.

To reestablish the active use of the caretakers yard and provide a visitor amenity, set out furniture on the patio and lawn seasonally. The location of this area next to the visitor center, at the beginning of the route of the orientation video in the Playhouse and the Val-Kill Cottage guided tour but screened from the larger landscape, would make it a good location for a visitor gathering area. Furnish the yard with contemporary but compatible benches, chairs, and tables, such as wood slated-style furniture. Access to this yard would be through the rear door of the visitor center (not universally accessible), or from the drive following the historic walk (accessible). Addition of a new walk from the entrance walk to the visitor center would provide a more direct route and serve as a beginning point for the guided tours. The new walk should be constructed of a flagstone that is visually different to, but compatible with, the historic walk. This walk may be made universally accessible by sloping it down toward the caretakers yard (approximate 18" drop over 20' length, 1% slope), which would require removing part of the historic stone wall and possibly adding a course of stone retaining wall along the new walk as it nears the stone wall.

**Figure 3.70.** Eleanor Roosevelt with Henry S. Hooker, lifelong friend and former law partner of FDR, and an unidentified guest seated in the lawn outside the west porch of Val-Kill Cottage, looking northwest, ca. 1955. The tree in the background is the Colorado blue spruce near the center of the lawn. (Private collection of Susan Curnan)



#### **HC-24. Furnish West Porch Lawn**

Mrs. Roosevelt used the lawn adjacent to the screened porch on the west side of her cottage as an outdoor seating area where people gathered to talk and have drinks. The lawn was bordered along its west side by a spirea hedge. During the

1950s, outdoor furnishings in this area included folding wood chairs and wicker chairs with arched backs (fig. 3.70). A matching wicker settee, wrought-iron sling chair, plastic-caned aluminum folding chairs, and small round steel tables were also set out for larger gatherings during this time.<sup>77</sup>

To reestablish the relaxed, social character of the grounds around Val-Kill Cottage and provide places for visitors to sit and enjoy the site, set out several chairs on the

porch lawn inside the spirea hedge. Use wicker furniture, such as two chairs and a settee that are similar in character to those in the historic photograph, with an arched back and arm rests. Folding chairs are not recommended due to lack of stability on the lawn surface. Set out the furniture seasonally. For durability, it may be appropriate to use resin wicker for the new furniture, if it has the character of natural wicker.

#### HC-25. Rehabilitate Spirea Hedge

At some point after 1938, a hedge of spirea was established along a crescent-like alignment west of Val-Kill Cottage. This hedge defined a lawn outside the west porch of Val-Kill Cottage, where Mrs. Roosevelt often entertained. During the 1950s, the hedge formed a dense vase-shaped screen, approximately 5' tall and bordering the service road to the north, the tennis court backstop to the west, and



Figure 3.71. Edna Gurewitsch standing in front of the spirea hedge around the lawn outside the Val-Kill Cottage west porch, looking east, ca. 1960 (printed 1963). This photograph shows a continuous hedge. (Photograph NPx 75-6 1, Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

extending south and east to near the walk in front of the cottage (fig. 3.71). The hedge had several breaks, primarily around two specimen trees. Today, the hedge has lost plants and those remaining are thin due in part to increased shade, leading to loss of the lawn as a defined space.

Rehabilitate the spirea hedge to enhance its density and reestablish the spatial enclosure around the porch lawn. Increase light levels by pruning the adjoining hickory and red maple; remove the non-historic young red oak between the hickory and maple. Plant new spirea (*Spirea Vanhouttei*) to reestablish the missing section extending east from the red maple, and to fill in the section between the two mature trees. The hedge should retain small gaps around the trees. Maintain the hedge in its natural habit, but trim branches approximately 2' above the ground to foster a vase shape.

#### HC-26. Plant Trees around Val-Kill Cottage

A variety of native and introduced specimen trees and groves historically surrounded Val-Kill Cottage, including arborvitae, hemlock, shagbark hickory, red maple, sugar maple, white oak, red-cedar, Colorado blue spruce, Norway spruce, and sycamore. Many of the red-cedars, which predated the development of Val-Kill, disappeared during the historic period (fig. 3.72).





**Figure 3.72.** Early red-cedar trees and other plantings around Val-Kill Cottage, looking northeast toward the west porch, 1938. (Photograph NPx 61 32 7, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

Although most of the specimen trees have grown considerably larger since the historic period, such growth is appropriate to the historic character of the landscape, since none of the trees were intended to remain small. Where trees are shading out other historic plant material or posing threat to the building, they should be trimmed. In particular, the shagbark hickory and red maple west of the porch should be trimmed to reduce light on the young Colorado blue spruce and the spirea hedge. The windbreak of Norway spruce is in good condition, but the volunteer trees that have grown up along the pond (north) side should be removed to reduce competition and enhance the historic character of the trees. If a majority of the trees in the row is lost, such as due to a major storm, it would be appropriate to replant the entire windbreak to maintain the even-age character of the stand.

Plant the following trees to replace specimens that have been lost since the treatment period of the late 1950s:

Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*): Plant one specimen in the lawn west of the factory wing.

Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*): Plant one on the east side of the garage (rest rooms). As it matures, the tree may require treatment against hemlock woolly adelgid.

Northern white-cedar/arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*, native variety): Plant a grove of approximately ten trees to supplement the existing grove of four mature trees and two young trees at the rear of the cottage, across from the Playhouse. Replace the two young trees if they are not the same variety as the mature trees.

American elm (*Ulmus americana*, disease-resistant variety such as Valley Forge): Plant one specimen in the island on the rear driveway (see HC-1).<sup>78</sup>

#### **HC-27. Enhance Historic Character of Val-Kill Cottage Plantings**

By the late 1930s, after Mrs. Roosevelt constructed a large addition to make the Val-Kill factory her home, the multi-winged building was bordered by a variety of shrubs, vines, and flowering plants. The primary plantings were along the front sides of the building, facing the pond. In 1938, the two-story porch (sleeping porch) was lined by deciduous shrubs including spirea and deutzia, and flowering annuals and perennials (see fig. 3.72). Lily of the valley probably grew here, as



**Figure 3.73.** Later plantings around Val-Kill Cottage, looking northeast toward the two-story porch and factory wing porch, 1954. (Photograph NPx 62 172, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

porch and side of the west wing was planted in a dense assortment of clipped and natural-form yews, spirea, and other deciduous shrubs, with herbaceous plants, possibly phlox, along the east wing porch (fig. 3.73).<sup>80</sup> Tulips, daffodils, anemones, crocus, snowdrops, and grape hyacinth were beneath shrubs, along the building foundation, and in the adjoining lawn in the late 1950s. In 1962 around the time of Mrs. Roosevelt's death, George Browne photographed Val-Kill Cottage and captured the character of some of its perimeter plantings, which had been significantly thinned since the 1950s, perhaps the result of a recent renovation. Several large shrubs were along the south side of the west wing, but none remained along the front of the two-story porch (fig. 3.74). A border of herbaceous plants was along the porches, and Boston ivy grew along the rear walls and south wall of the west wing. At the rear entrance along the driveway, there was a trellis at the end of the porch with a honeysuckle vine (fig. 3.75). Shrubs, including hemlock and probably enkianthus, were along the wing to the north, bordered by a low two-rail fence (see fig. 3.30).<sup>81</sup>

**Figure 3.74.** Val-Kill Cottage looking east showing lack of plantings along the two-story porch, 1962. At right is the fenced garden added in 1960. Also visible is a shorted spirea hedge. (George I. Browne, photograph NPx 65 590 267, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)



Mrs. Roosevelt described smelling the flowers from her sleeping porch in the springtime. The plantings extended east to the factory wing, which was lined by spirea, deutzia, a wisteria vine on the trellis, and a red-cedar along the southern end of the building. The caretakers wing (present visitor center) was bordered by dense plantings of deciduous shrubs that were enclosed by a short stockade fence, which was removed by the 1950s.<sup>79</sup> In 1954, the two-story

As part of the park's rehabilitation of the site in the early 1980s, a planting plan was developed for Val-Kill Cottage, but it was apparently never implemented. This plan was not a restoration, but rather a rehabilitation that used some contemporary species and placement. It showed preexisting plants that may have dated to the historic period, including the smoketree, winged euonymus, five-leafed aralia, mock orange, enkianthus, and deutzia that still



**Figure 3.75. Eleanor Roosevelt speaking with Walter Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers union, at the east entrance to Val-Kill Cottage showing trellis and honeysuckle vine on the north side of the porch, ca. 1958. (Photograph 04-24 (2079), Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)**

exist, along with hosta along the two-story porch that no longer remains. Plantings added since 1984 include hosta along the factory porch and wisteria at the corners of the two-story porch.

The recommended treatment for the plantings around Val-Kill Cottage is to reestablish the massing that existed during the late 1950s, using species that existed between the 1930s and the 1950s (fig. 3.76). Due to lack of documentation, detailed restoration of the plantings of the late 1950s is not possible; the spare character visible in the 1962 photographs was not characteristic of most of the historic period. The recommended planting plan is a contemporary design that is compatible with the historic character of the landscape. The plan calls for retention of existing

mature shrubs that may date to the historic period or in character with the landscape, and planting new shrubs and herbaceous plants based on species used historically. Spring bulbs should also be established beneath shrubs, along the foundation, and in the adjoining lawn (see task HC-6). Specific heirloom varieties that were available prior to 1960 should be used whenever possible.

Val-Kill Cottage is currently in partial shade, much as it was during the 1950s. Many of the recommended plantings, such as the deutzia, mock orange, and annual plantings, may not thrive or bloom profusely, but this is appropriate since this was most likely their character during the historic period.

This task is organized according to the west (front), east (rear) and south (visitor center) elevations of the multi-winged building. Due to the heavy shade and lack of documentation on the north side, no new plantings are recommended there.

#### Front (West) Plantings (Residence and Factory Wings)

Recommended plantings for the border extending from the entrance to the two-story porch to the garage on the south will reestablish the largely continuous border along the edge of the building. Near the two-story porch door, plant yew, lily of the valley, and rhododendron. Along the front of the porch, plant mid-sized deutzia. Along the south side of wing extending to the north end of the factory porch, plant azalea and deutzia to fill in around the existing shrubs. The existing winged euonymus historically had a tall central leader, but today has a more typical multi-leader form. If possible, it should be pruned to encourage a tall central leader. Although a state-classified invasive species, the relatively sheltered location and lack of historic spread into the adjoining natural woodlands



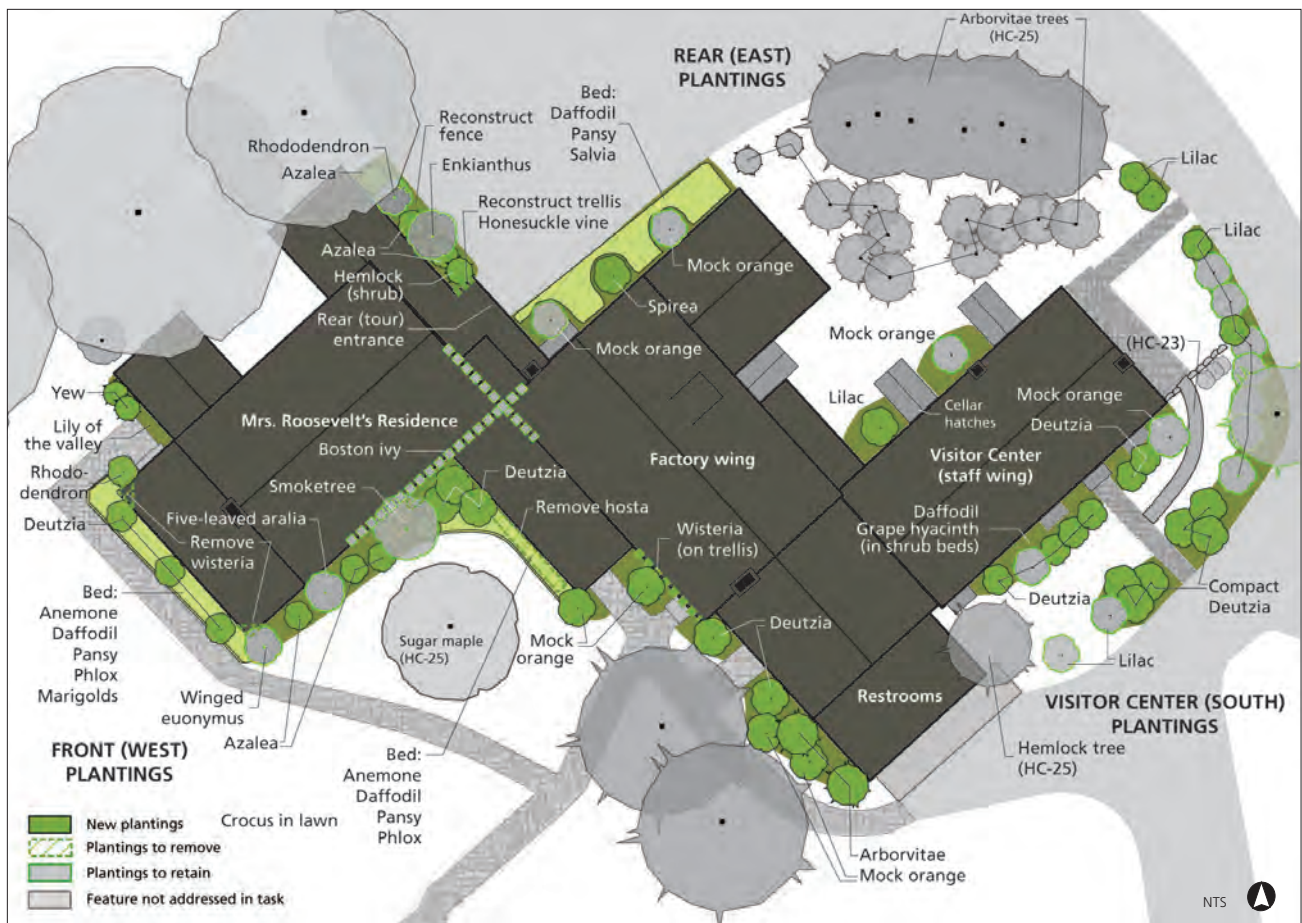


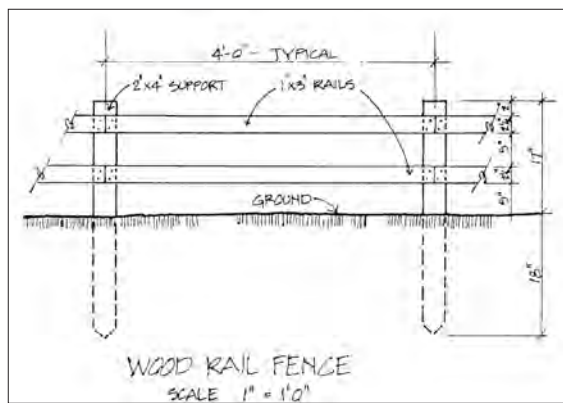
Figure 3.76. Conceptual planting plan for Val-Kill Cottage. (SUNY ESF)

suggest there is relatively low threat from this one plant. Aside from the euonymus, these shrubs should be maintained in a loose, natural form, and generally below the height of the second floor level and clear of window openings.

Maintain Boston ivy on the south side of the building, but remove the wisteria on the corners of the two-story porch, since no vines are visible here in historic photographs. Maintain beds of spring bulbs, anemones, pansies, phlox, and marigolds along the two-story porch and the factory porch. Shady conditions may require substitution of these plants. Remove the line of hostas along the factory porch, unless the bed proves too shady for blooming flowers. South of the factory porch, plant mock orange, deutzia, and arborvitae, and plant a wisteria on the existing trellis.<sup>82</sup> Allow the arborvitae to grow naturally.

#### Rear (East) Plantings (Residence and Factory Wings)

At the rear entrance, which served as Mrs. Roosevelt's front door, retain the large enkianthus and rhododendron to the north of the door, plant a Canadian hemlock at the end of the bed next to the porch, and maintain



**Figure 3.77. Plan for reconstruction of two-plank fence along the shrub bed north of the east entrance to Val-Kill Cottage. (National Park Service, 1984 rehabilitation plan for the Val-Kill Cottage grounds)**

as a small shrub beneath the existing enkianthus, which should be retained for its aged character. As it matures, the hemlock may require treatment for hemlock woolly adelgid. Fill in the remainder of the bed with torch azaleas.<sup>83</sup> Reconstruct the low two-plank painted fence along the bed (fig. 3.77). Reconstruct the wood trellis on the north end of the entry porch and plant a non-invasive honeysuckle vine. The trellis consisted of white-painted wood slats, approximately 1/2" x 2," in a rectangular grid (see fig. 3.75). Along the south side of the drive, retain the two mock-orange and plant a spirea between them. Establish a bed of daffodils, pansies, and salvia along the drive, around the shrubs (the edge of the drive requires realignment, see HC-1). Mrs. Roosevelt's chauffeur Tubby Curnan, recalled pansies growing in this bed.<sup>84</sup>

In the space between the two rear wings, plant groves of arborvitae trees (see task HC-25). Retain the mock orange between the cellar hatches on the north side of the visitor center wing, and plant a lilac to the right of the south cellar hatch where there is a lilac stump.<sup>85</sup> Maintain the rest of the area up to the edge of the building as turf. Along the drive bordering the caretakers yard, plant lilac to fill in gaps within the existing border and extend it north of the walk.

#### Visitor Center (South) Plantings

Plant a hemlock tree along the east side of the garage (see HC-25). Along the south (front) side of the caretakers wing (visitor center), retain the existing deutzia and mock orange, and plant deutzia in the open areas along the façade. At the beginning of the walk to the visitor center, plant clumps of deutzia to either side; if a lower plant is desirable here, use compact deutzia. Retain the existing lilac to either side. As springs bulbs were widespread in the area around the cottage in the later years, plant daffodils and grape hyacinth in the shrub beds, and crocus in the lawn in front of the building.

#### Preliminary Plant List for Val-Kill Cottage

Use varieties that existed historically, native varieties, or varieties that were available commercially between the 1930s and 1950s. If a historic variety is not available or is prone to disease, or if a longer bloom period is desired, then it is appropriate to use a modern cultivar with a similar appearance.

#### Shrubs

American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*)

Beadle mock orange (*Philadelphus floridus*)

Canadian hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)  
 Common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)  
 Deutzia (*Deutzia x lemoinei*)  
 Deutzia, compact (*Deutzia x lemoinei* 'Compacta' or *D. gracilis* 'Nikko')  
 Five-leaved aralia (*Eleutherococcus sieboldianus*, formerly *Acanthopanax sieboldianus*)  
 Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*)  
 Redvein enkianthus (*Enkianthus campanulatus*) Also in place of  
 invasive winged euonymus  
 Rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*)  
 Smoke tree (*Cotinus obovatus*)  
 Sweet mock orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*)  
 Torch azalea (*Rhododendron kaempferi*)  
 Winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*) (existing shrub only)

#### Vines

Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*)  
 Trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) Substitute for  
 invasive Japanese honeysuckle  
 Japanese wisteria (*Wisteria floribunda*)

#### Herbaceous Plants

Anemone (*Anemone blanda*)  
 Aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* 'Purple Dome,' *S. novi-belgii* 'Alert')  
 Daffodil (*Narcissus spp.*)  
 Grape hyacinth (*Muscari armeniacum*)  
 French marigold (*Tagetes patula*, or similar short variety)  
 Japanese anemone (*Anemone hupehensis*)  
 Lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*)  
 Meadow anemone (*Anemone canadensis*)  
 Pansies (*Viola cornuta* 'Jumping Jack' or 'Etain')  
 Phlox (*Phlox paniculata*)  
 Tulip (*Tulipa spp.*)

#### HC-28. Reconstruct Historic Light Standard

By the 1950s, a rustic light standard was located along the walk leading to the two-story porch on Val-Kill Cottage (see fig. 2.10). The post was an unmilled cedar or locust log stripped of its bark and approximately 5' high, with a Colonial Revival-style metal lantern, which is in the park collections. No remnant of the fixture remains on site, and the exact location is not clear from the historic photograph. Reconstruct the light standard along the walk, north of the Norway spruce. Obtain



a new cedar log pole, and reinstall the historic metal lantern with updated wiring. Provide power through underground electric lines. Although energy efficiency is a concern, use of an incandescent bulb would best replicate the historic light quality. Use a timer or sensor to limit energy usage.

#### HC-29. Plant Vines on Utility Pole Guywires

The existing overhead electrical-telephone lines that come into the historic core from the north and terminate off the west side of Val-Kill Cottage are a historic feature (the wood poles may have been replaced since the historic period). The terminal pole has steel cable guy wires that cross the walk between the cottages. The park has covered the lower sections of these in yellow plastic sheathing to increase their visibility for safety purposes. Due to the color, these covers are incompatible with the historic character of the landscape. Remove them and plant a twining vine, such as honeysuckle used historically on the tennis court backstops, as a contemporary addition to retain the visibility of the guy wires. Use a native variety of honeysuckle, such as Trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*). Keep the vine trimmed and do not let them climb more than approximately 8' from the anchor.

Figure 3.78. Boys from the Wiltwyck School on the swing-set, looking southwest with the pond in the background, ca. 1958. Visible in the background is the rail fence along Val-Kill Lane (see task WR-6). (Box 3, Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)



### PENINSULA

#### HC-30. Restore Play Equipment

A collection of playground equipment was historically located near the picnic area between the tennis court and Val-Kill Pond, in the shade of oak and hickory trees. The swing-set was installed 1937, and featured a pipe frame with green-

painted wood seats hung from chains, and a rope ladder between (fig. 3.78).<sup>86</sup> North of the swing-set was a seesaw on a galvanized pipe frame that was probably installed around the same time. In the 1950s, a movable metal slide, possibly the one used at the swimming pool, was often placed nearby, and a raised wooden sandbox was installed west of the swing-set.<sup>87</sup> Currently only the frames for the swing-set and see-saw remain on site, along with fragments of the swing chains. Both are rusted, and one of the legs of the swing-set frame is bent. The recommended treatment for the play equipment as a set is to restore its historic character and feeling of active use. This will require repair and fabrication of missing parts.

### Swing-set

Repair the bent frame and arrest the rust. Repair or replace in-kind any deteriorated parts. Undertake a finish analysis to determine the historic paint color, if any. Remove rust and apply the appropriate finish. Reconstruct the two missing swings by installing chains that match the fragments, and wood seats that are approximately 8" wide, 20" long, 1" thick, and painted in a dark green. These should be made of two boards with two battens underneath, as shown in figure 3.78. Install a rope ladder. If the park does not wish visitors to use the swing-set, then omit the rope ladder and secure each swing with cable stays or pipe attached to the frame, to limit or prevent movement.

### Seesaw

Conserve the galvanized pipe frame as necessary. Due to lack of documentation, the design of the missing board is not known. Fabricate a compatible board approximately 7" wide, 9' 8" long, and 1"-2" thick, with beveled corners and leg indents at the seat. Paint it dark green to match the swing seats, and add simple unpainted metal handles about 18" from each end of the board. Secure the board to the frame with strap hinges. If the park does not wish visitors to use the swings, make the board immovable by anchoring one end to the ground, or in a horizontal position secured with inconspicuous pipe supports at both ends.

### Sandbox

Construct a wooden sandbox approximately 5' square, with walls approximately 18" high. Provide for adequate drainage. Horizontal boards approximately 8" wide should be mounted along the top edge of the box to serve as seating. While the color of the historic sandbox is uncertain, a dark green to match the swings and teeter-totter would be appropriate. Fill the box approximately half full with sand.

### Slide

There is currently insufficient documentation to accurately reconstruct the movable slide.

## **HC-31. Restore Flagpole**

A flagpole was installed in ca. 1940 at the south end of the peninsula near the banks of the Val-Kill pond, consisting of four galvanized or silver-painted iron pipe segments approximately 20' tall and set in a concrete footing (fig. 3.79). At an undetermined date, the upper section of the pole was removed. Today, the shortened three-section flagpole is rusted and leans towards the pond. An American flag is routinely flown.



**Figure 3.79.** Early view of the flagpole, looking north along the east bank of Val-Kill Pond, ca. 1940. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)

young red oak on the shoreline of the pond, which will eventually grow over the flagpole.<sup>88</sup> Fly an American flag daily from sunrise to sunset in keeping with U.S. flag code (U.S.C. Title 4, Ch. 1).

Reset the base of the flagpole to correct its lean, and restore the flagpole to its full height (replace missing forth section). Repair or replace the halyard as necessary. Remove rust. Perform a paint analysis to confirm if silver was the color of the pole during the 1950s. Apply a finish to prevent rust. Keep limbs pruned well back from the flagpole to permit the flag to be seen from the entry road, Fall Kill bridge, and lawn in front of Stone Cottage. For this reason, remove the nearby

#### **HC-32. Restore Tennis Court**

The tennis court was built in ca. 1950 as part of increasing active recreation at Val-Kill following the departure of Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman. The court, located in the open area south of the barbecue, was surfaced in asphalt and painted a light green with white lines for tennis and yellow lines for badminton (fig. 3.80). The net was stretched between two steel poles. Ten-foot high backstops at either side of the court were built of pipe frame with ball finials on the posts and welded 1" x 2" mesh wire fencing, covered by Japanese honeysuckle. The court may have been resurfaced in black asphalt at a later date (probably post-1960). Currently, there is no net, the honeysuckle has been removed, the backstop is

rusty, and the court surface is in very poor condition with crumbling top layer of asphalt, numerous weedy cracks, and worn line markings.

Restore or reconstruct the surface of the tennis court as detailed in the 2004 Field Preservation Guidelines.<sup>89</sup> Undertake a paint analysis to determine the original paint color of the court, and reapply the line markings. Set out a black net with a white headband on a seasonal basis to maintain a feeling of active



**Figure 3.80.** The Val-Kill tennis court, looking east, ca. 1955. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)



use. For the backstops, repaint the pipe frame with aluminum paint. For the welded-wire fencing, there are two alternative treatments:

1. Apply a rust arrestor and paint with aluminum paint. For damaged sections of fencing, make repairs by patching.
2. If the fencing is beyond repair due to rust, then replace all of the fencing with new galvanized fencing to match.

The Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) which historically grew on the tennis court backstops is not recommended for replanting because it is classified as an invasive in New York State and poses a particular threat to the bordering native woodlands. Trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) is a native climbing honeysuckle that would be an appropriate replacement. Train vines in the early years of growth to evenly distribute coverage across the fencing.



**Figure 3.81.** The bench along the tennis court, looking south during a picnic for the Wiltwyck School, ca. 1955. The tree behind the bench is a sugar maple, and a birch is at the edge of the court to the east. (Private collection of Susan Curnan)

During the 1950s, a rustic log-frame settee with a slatted back was maintained along the south side of the tennis court, against a sugar maple, now gone (fig. 3.81). Fabricate a replica of this bench, or acquire one similar in appearance, and install along the edge of the west half of the tennis court. The maple is recommended for replanting (see task HC-35).

### **HC-33. Enhance Historic Character of the Barbecue**

Picnicking was an activity with a long tradition at Val-Kill, from the days before Stone Cottage was built. The rustic landscape north of Stone Cottage, bordered by the lower and upper shorelines of Val-Kill Pond, served as a favorite place for picnics and other informal outdoor gatherings. In the middle of this area, a stone barbecue (fireplace) was built in 1933 according to the design of architect Henry Toombs. It served as both an ornamental fireplace and a functioning grill. The structure was often partly covered in Boston ivy, and a screen of arborvitae was planted at the back. These trees were removed by the 1950s, except for one or two at the east side. At some point after 1934, a relief figure depicting a boy eating a hot dog was mounted on the mantle (fig. 3.82). The figure was removed to the FDR Library at some point after 1962, where it remains. In 1980, the barbecue was repaired by the park, and there are presently no vines on the structure.



**Figure 3.82.** The barbecue with the boy figure and Boston ivy, looking north during a Wiltwyck School picnic, ca. 1955. (Photograph NPx 54 426 6, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

**Figure 3.83.** Mrs. Roosevelt and guests from UNESCO (United National Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) seated on the log bench in the picnic area, looking southwest with the pond in the background, ca. 1950. (United National photograph, NPx 64-96, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)



The barbecue is presently in good structural condition. Enhance its historic character by reinstalling the relief figure of the boy in the Library collections on a seasonal basis (if it can be protected from weathering and secured), or install an accurate replica. Replace the missing cast-iron grate over the firebox. Plant Boston ivy along the back and sides of the fireplace, and keep it trimmed off the front mantle and side tables. An electrical outlet, serviced by an underground line, was mounted on the nearby arborvitae tree that was recently removed. This outlet

reflected the historic use of the picnic area and should be retained when the tree is replanted (see HC-35). It would be appropriate to use the barbecue for special events as part of the overall treatment to perpetuate historic uses in the landscape.

#### **HC-34. Furnish the Picnic Area**

The picnic area surrounding the barbecue historically contained a variety of furniture, both temporary and permanent. There was a long log bench south and west of the barbecue that was a favorite place for Mrs. Roosevelt to sit and talk with people (fig. 3.83). Picnic tables with movable benches, folding wooden chairs, and lawn chairs of various sorts were set out for picnic and other gatherings (see fig. 3.82).

These outdoor furnishings contributed greatly to the relaxed, social character of the historic core landscape. Returning them to the picnic area would both help reestablish this character and provide additional opportunities for visitors to relax and enjoy Val-Kill. Recreate the log bench using a rot-resistant hardwood log hewn that measures approximately 24" in diameter and 15' long (to seat approximately eight people), with a seating height of approximately 18". Plane the top surface, but not the

sides. The wooden picnic tables which were historically used at Val-Kill appear to have been approximately 5' long and 3' wide, with matching detached benches and stained brown. If there are historic picnic table sets in the park collections, make reproductions, or use a similar commercially available product. Set out the picnic tables on the southeast side of the barbecue on a seasonal basis.

#### **HC-35. Replant Missing Trees**

The peninsula area was the least developed part of the historic core and retained a natural assortment of trees, primarily oak, hickory, gray birch, arborvitae, red-cedar, and maple. Over time, the number of red-cedar declined and some new species were introduced, including dogwood and white pine. While there is no accurate record of the trees on the peninsula in the late 1950s, it is known that several character-defining specimens were subsequently lost and are therefore recommended for replanting:

American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*, native variety) off the northeast side of the barbecue (retain electrical outlet that was mounted on or near the tree to service the picnic area).

Eastern red-cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) east of the fenced garden

Grey birch (*Betula populifolia*) along the south side of the tennis court, east half (see fig. 3.81)

Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) along the south side of the tennis court, west half (see fig. 3.81)

The sugar maple and birch along the tennis court have not been replanted to date because they would conflict with a tent that ERVK erects on the tennis court for its annual awards ceremony. Use of a smaller tent, or shifting of the tent to the north to be partly off the tennis court, should be considered to allow the trees to be replanted. Consideration should also be given to holding the ceremony in a different location, or perhaps not using a tent. If the tent cannot be redesigned, then delay replanting of the trees until the tent is no longer needed.

The group of Alberta spruce northwest of the barbecue were purportedly planted by John Roosevelt in the late 1960s.<sup>90</sup> Their dwarf form and species are not in keeping with the historic character of the landscape. Remove the trees and replace with an Eastern red-cedar.

#### **HC-36. Replace Tatarian Honeysuckle in Lilac Hedge and at Doll House**

Two Tatarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*) in the lilac hedge along the south side of the peninsula and one in front of the doll house are classified as invasive species in New York State. Remove these and replant with a non-invasive shrub of a similar ornamental character, such as Winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*) or sweet mock orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*). The honeysuckle



in the lilac hedge may likely be volunteers, so removal and replacement with lilac would also be appropriate.

### HC-37. Rehabilitate Fenced Garden

The fenced garden (also called the rose garden), was built south of the tennis court in 1960 under the direction of John Roosevelt at the request of his mother. It is known that the garden had a central path and perimeter fence constructed of welded wire mesh and cedar posts and top rails (see fig. 3.74). However, there is conflicting documentation on how it was planted during the last few years of Mrs. Roosevelt's life (growing seasons of 1960, 61, and 62). Caretaker Charles Curnan recalled that John Roosevelt built the garden so that his mother could view flowers from her sleeping porch in Val-Kill Cottage, and remembered roses, dahlias, and peonies being grown there.<sup>91</sup> In contrast, John Roosevelt told historian

Louis Torres that he built it as a vegetable garden, and Roosevelt friend Joseph Lash also referred to it a vegetable garden.<sup>92</sup> Curnan recalled that after Mrs. Roosevelt's death, the garden was taken over by John Roosevelt's wife, who grew zinnias and gladiolus there.<sup>93</sup> The park replaced the fence and replanted the garden in time for the park's 1984 opening, using primarily tall marigolds with some zinnias. Over the past three decades, the adjoining white oak has grown and now casts shade over the southern three-quarters of the garden. The park has varied annual plantings over time, but the peony border along the central walk has remained largely consistent.

Although a late addition to the Val-Kill landscape, the fenced garden should be

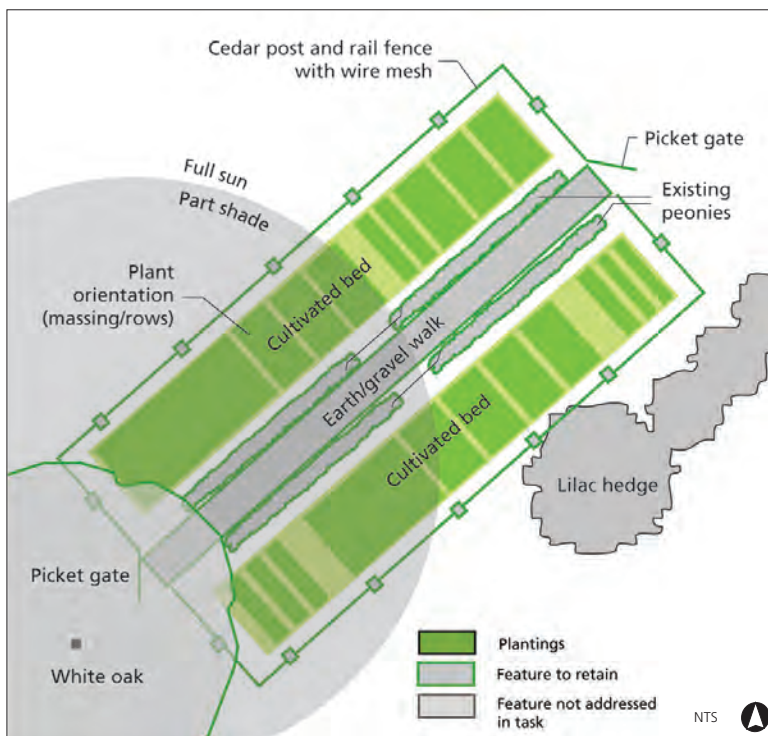


Figure 3.84. Conceptual rehabilitation plan for the fenced garden. (SUNY ESF)

retained to reflect the full evolution of the landscape during Mrs. Roosevelt's lifetime, and the close relationship she had with her son. The recommended overall treatment is to maintain the cedar post and rail fence with wire mesh, picket gates, central lengthwise walk, and planting beds (fig. 3.84). Due to changed growing conditions and lack of documentation during Mrs. Roosevelt's lifetime, plantings within the garden can be more flexible than elsewhere in terms of species (both vegetables and flowers) and location.

Maintain the central walk with an earthen/gravel surface. The existing board edging along the walk is compatible with the overall character of the garden, but should be cedar rather than pressure-treated or clear pine lumber so that it

weathers naturally. Keep grass and weeds trimmed along the edge of the fence. Within the cultivated beds, plantings should be in rows or groups perpendicular to the length of the garden, rather than running the full length of the garden due to the distribution of sun and shade. Maintain the existing peonies along the central walk and a mix of annuals, perennials, and vegetables in the cultivated beds depending on the light levels. The flowering plants should have the character of cut flowers with tall blooms. Presently, there is insufficient sunlight anywhere in the garden to grow roses successfully.<sup>94</sup>

#### Preliminary Plant List for the Fenced Garden

Use varieties that were commercially available in the early 1960s where possible. If an heirloom variety is not available or is prone to disease, or if a longer bloom period is desired, then it is appropriate to use a modern cultivar with a similar appearance.

##### Flowers

African marigolds (*Tagetes erecta*)  
 Aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* 'Purple Dome,' *S. novi-belgii* 'Alert')  
 Astilbe (*Astilbe x arendsii* or similar tall variety)  
 Bee balm (*Monarda spp.*)  
 Black-Eyed-Susan (*Rudbeckia spp.*)  
 Common peony (*Paeonia officinalis*)  
 Coneflower (*Echinacea spp.*)  
 Dahlia (*Dahlia spp.*)  
 Flowering tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*)  
 Iris (*Iris germanica*, *albicans*, *versicolor*, or similar)  
 Japanese anemone (*Anemone hupehensis*)  
 Lily (*Lilium*, Asiatic, Oriental or trumpet types)  
 Garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*)  
 Poppy anemone (*Anemone coronaria*)  
 Zinnia (*Zinnia spp.*)

##### Vegetables

Carrots, peppers, potatoes, peas, radishes, tomatoes, beans

## UTILITY AREA

### HC-38. Reroute Rear Entrance Path

Related Task: HC-2, HC-39

The gravel pathway from the Stable-Garage through the cutting garden, constructed in 2007, presently serves as the pedestrian entry to the site for visitors arriving by park shuttle or those who park in the accessible spaces and

staff parking lot. This route creates an awkward entry experience because it takes visitors through the cutting garden before they have received any orientation on this important part of the landscape.

Reroute the path around the southwest corner of the cutting garden to provide a more direct route to the visitor center and avoid crossing through the garden. Construct the new alignment with a minimum 36" width, and surface in a with compacted earth and gravel that is compatible with the rural character of the landscape and provides a firm and stable surface. An obsolete well cap south of the cutting garden should be cut down to ground level to avoid a tripping hazard. A low rock outcropping may require removal to accommodate the path. Cut back the edge of the woods (also recommended to reduce shade on the cutting garden, see HC-39).

Retain the northern part of the existing path, which historically connected the Stable-Garage with the cutting garden. Remove the gravel surface and maintain as a narrow dirt path, approximately 24" wide. Install a sign at the intersection of the new alignment directing visitors to the visitor center at Val-Kill Cottage.

#### **HC-39. Rehabilitate the Cutting Garden**

The cutting garden, also known as the "big garden," was constructed in ca. 1937 in an open area east of the playhouse.<sup>95</sup> Surrounded by a neatly-sheared arborvitae hedge, the garden initially consisted of earthen walks and wooden raised beds in an east-west orientation that were planted in rows or groups of single varieties (figs. 3.85, 3.86). These initially included flowers intended primarily for cutting, such as tea roses, peonies, asters, iris, zinnias, marigolds, and phlox, with hay mulch and some with wire supports. The garden was outfitted with an irrigation system, and there was a shed at the west entrance to the garden, and another

was added east of the garden after 1938. North of the garden was a small lean-to greenhouse and an open area that may have been planted in vegetables. There is little documentation on changes to the garden through the 1950s. In the 1940s, berries and vegetables were incorporated into the planting scheme, and eventually Mrs. Roosevelt converted a large part of the garden to vegetables that she planned to freeze or can. The garden purportedly declined as Mrs. Roosevelt was less able to use

**Figure 3.85. Early plantings in the cutting garden, looking northeast with the post-1938 garden shed in the background, ca. 1942. (Photograph NPx 59 181a, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)**





it in the last years her life. A 1960 aerial photograph documents that the perimeter hedge remained and what appear to be beds in the same east-west orientation. The two sheds and most likely the greenhouse remained at this time as well.<sup>96</sup> After his mother's death, John Roosevelt abandoned the garden and built a road through it to provide easier vehicular access for his tenants. The greenhouse was probably removed at this time. Prior to the park's public opening in 1984, the garden was reconstructed with a layout and planting palette based on its appearance in historic photographs from the 1930s and 1940s, but using only flowers. The arborvitae hedge was replanted in 2010, and plantings have recently been changed to incorporate vegetables that characterized the later history of the garden. In 2012, the raised beds were rebuilt and reconfigured based on the historic pattern and need for accessibility and a group meeting area.



**Figure 3.86.** Early annual plantings (zinnias) in the cutting garden, ca. 1945. (Dickerman Collection slides, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites)

The 1980 General Management Plan called for the cutting garden to serve as the designated memorial to Eleanor Roosevelt on the site, per the 1977 park enabling legislation that called for creation of “an appropriate monument or memorial to Eleanor Roosevelt within the boundaries of the site.”<sup>97</sup> The park instead has managed the entire site as a memorial, and therefore the cutting garden has not been redesigned to convey any special commemorative intent. In accordance with this, the 2010 General Management Plan established that the cutting garden be managed to “reflect its historic layout, while allowing for flexibility to enhance public use,” including programming to enhance its commemorative use.<sup>98</sup>

The recommended treatment for the cutting garden is to preserve and enhance its historic character from the 1950s, when it was at the height of its use by Mrs. Roosevelt and was planted with flowers, fruits, and vegetables in raised beds of varying sizes (fig. 3.87).

Due to limited documentation from the late 1950s and the fact that plantings changed on an annual basis, the proposed treatment is a rehabilitation that will enhance overall historic character, but will not reestablish historic plantings in detail. The layout of the beds, as implemented in 2012, is modified from the historic layout to enhance programmatic uses and provide for universal accessibility. The garden will be kept well stocked and planted to reflect its historic use as a cutting and vegetable garden. Based on the direction in the General Management Plan and subsequent discussions with park staff, the cutting garden will also have a designated commemorative function, but this will be conveyed through programming and plant materials, rather than through the addition of contemporary built features within the garden such as statues, sculpture, or interpretive waysides.<sup>99</sup>



**Figure 3.87. Conceptual rehabilitation plan for the cutting garden. (SUNY ESF)**

### Spatial Organization

Maintain the historic limits of the garden defined by the perimeter hedge. The internal space will remain defined by the east-west (short-length) orientation of the beds, with a regular aisle width of 4', except at the entrance path that will be 5', and the aisles bordering the two larger beds at the south end, which will be 6' wide. In addition, the one north-south bed south of the potting shed has been removed and the 9'-wide space will be kept open as a gathering and/or seating area to accommodate planned programmatic uses of the garden, and to provide visitors with a place to rest and appreciate the garden.

The existing compost area northeast of the garden is a necessary part of a functioning garden. It is in the area north of the garden shed where a compost and storage area was located historically.

### Buildings and Structures

The two existing sheds, which were recently repaired and repainted, will remain and should be used in support of the garden. The greenhouse north of the garden is not recommended for reconstruction due to lack of documentation.

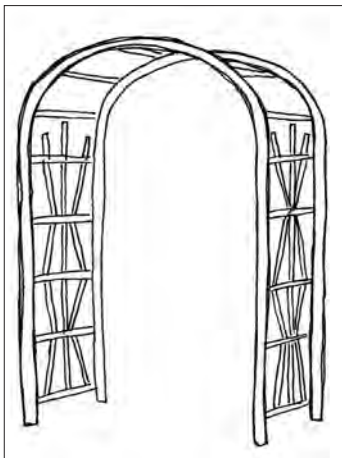
### Circulation

The primary visitor access into the cutting garden will be from the existing west entrance, which leads to Val-Kill Cottage and the visitor center. On the opposite side of the garden, the opening and path will remain, but will not serve as the visitor entrance from the east (shuttle drop-off, accessibility parking, and staff parking lot) as discussed under task HC-38. This entrance may provide visitors with access to the proposed trail through the Secret Woods (white pine plantation) (see ER-5). One leg of the trail is recommended to extend from the east entrance to the garden.

Paths within the garden must meet standards for universal accessibility, and the gates in the deer fence surrounding the garden should also be universally-accessible. The 4' spacing between the beds, which increases to 5' at the main entrance and 6' around the two large beds, and the approximate 5' aisle along the perimeter adjoining the hedge, is universally accessible (minimum 36" for single wheel chair to pass, 60" for two wheel chairs).

### Small-Scale Features

At the west entrance into the garden, erect a rose arbor, which employees of Mrs. Roosevelt recall existing during the historic period. Since details of its design are not known, construct a contemporary wooden arbor (fig. 3.88). Paint the arbor white to match the nearby potting shed (see Vegetation section for rose variety).



**Figure 3.88. Suggested design for the cutting garden rose arbor.** (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

Maintain the raised beds with wood plank frames as shown in the historic photograph. As implemented in 2012, these are boric acid-treated white oak to provide rot-resistance and allow the wood to weather naturally. The historic boards were most likely red-cedar or white-cedar. Use of modern pressure-treated lumber is not appropriate to the historic character of the garden.

As a contemporary addition, install benches in the cutting garden for use by individuals and small groups. The recommended location is the proposed gathering area at the southwest side of the garden where the north-south bed has been removed. The benches may be grouped at either end, or distributed evenly throughout the area. The benches should be a simple design, such as those with painted or natural slats (see fig. 2.8). Include several backless benches to allow



them to serve as staging areas for plants and tools (some benches should have backs to meet accessibility requirements). The benches should have adequate space next to them for wheelchairs.

Addition of small plant labels or other signs for interpretive and education purposes would be compatible with the historic character of the garden. The signs should be inconspicuous in the overall appearance of the garden.

Maintain the existing perimeter deer fence until a site-wide deer exclusion program is in place (see General Treatment Recommendations, Chapter 2). Removal of the fence would enhance the historic character of the landscape and remove the maintenance burden of trimming and mowing in the space between the fence and the garden hedge.

#### Vegetation

Plant the cutting garden with a variety of flowering annuals, perennials, small fruits, and vegetables. Where possible, use heirloom plants that are documented within the garden during the historic period, or those that were available commercially prior to 1960. Roses and peonies were two of Mrs. Roosevelt's favorite flowers and were well-represented in the historic garden. Spring bulbs, snapdragon, blanketflower, asters, tickseed, red salvia, phlox, zinnias, and marigolds were also planted here at one time or another along with a variety of vegetables, strawberries, and raspberries. Lay out most plantings in monoculture rows or masses typical of a cutting garden or vegetable garden, with one or two rows of mixed flowering annuals for cutting.

To reflect the commemorative nature of the garden, the garden should be shown in its best possible condition for Mrs. Roosevelt's birthday on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Given that the killing frost date is October 15<sup>th</sup> and many flowers are spent by the date or damaged by light frosts, a significant display is not likely. However, planting of asters and chrysanthemums would prolong the bloom period.

Keep the beds cultivated and minimize weeds. Do not use modern plastic or colored mulches. Salt hay was used historically and would be an appropriate mulch. Mulch the understory of the arborvitae hedge, and keep the grass inside of the perimeter deer fence mown. Keep the grass along the deer fence well trimmed to reduce the visibility of the fence and keep a well-tended character.

Plant the proposed arbor at the west entrance with old-fashioned yellow climbing roses, a color that was Mrs. Roosevelt's favorite.<sup>100</sup>

Manage the existing arborvitae hedge at a height of approximately 6', with loosely-sheared sides and top and a full, dense canopy.

### Preliminary Plant List for the Cutting Garden

Use varieties that existed historically, or varieties that were available commercially between the 1930s and 1950s. If a historic variety is not available or is prone to disease, or if a longer bloom period is desired, then it is appropriate to use a modern cultivar with a similar appearance.

#### Shrubs

American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*, native variety or heirloom cultivar)

#### Flowers

African marigold (*Tagetes erecta*)

Blanketflower (*Gaillardia aristata*)

Chinese aster (*Callistephus chinensis*)

Common peony (*Paeonia officinalis*)

Daffodils (*Narcissus spp.*)

Dahlia (*Dahlia spp.*)

Daisy (*Chrysanthemum maximum*)

Daylily (*Hemerocallis spp.*)

Feverfew (*Chrysanthemum parthenium*)

German iris (*Iris germanica*)

Lily (*Lilium*, Asiatic, Oriental or trumpet types)

Phlox (*Phlox paniculata*)

Poppy anemone (*Anemone coronaria*)

Rosa “Gold Badge” (repeat-blooming climbing yellow rose for arbor)

Rosa spp. (Hybrid tea, for cut flowers)

Salvia (*Salvia spp.*, red)

Siberian iris (*Iris sibirica*)

Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*)

Tickseed (*Coreopsis grandiflora*)

Zinnia (*Zinnia spp.*)

#### Fruits

Raspberries

Strawberries

#### Vegetables

Asparagus, beans, cabbage, cantaloupe, corn, eggplant, onions, peas, peppers, pumpkins, tomatoes, turnips, watermelon, winter squash<sup>101</sup>

**HC-40. Reestablish Conifers in Front of Playhouse**

Related Tasks: HC-1, 5

In ca. 1930, a staggered border of red pine trees was planted in front of the Playhouse (former forge), most likely at the same time as the red pine borders along Val-Kill Lane. By the 1950s, the red pines had a raised lower canopy that did not block the building (fig. 3.89). Most of the trees remained into the early 1980s, but they were subsequently removed and not replaced. The edge of the drive has encroached onto the former planted area by between 5' and 10'.

The preferred treatment for this feature is to replant using red pine (*Pinus resinosa*). As discussed under HC-5, red pine are susceptible to a number of pests and diseases, the most threatening of which is red pine scale. However, because of



**Figure 3.89.** Mrs. Roosevelt in her 1958 Fiat 1200 with Edna Gurewitsch, looking southeast showing border of red pines at the Playhouse, ca. 1958. (Photograph G-1, Dr. A. David Gurewitsch Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

the limited extent of this planting, it may be feasible to control scale and thereby retain the red pine as an example of the species that may well disappear from the Roosevelt estate landscape in the near future. If the park feels this approach is not feasible, consider using Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), a species commonly used during the 1930s on the Roosevelt estate that has a character similar to red pine and will reestablish the high canopy evident in figure 3.89. White pine (*Pinus strobus*) may also be an appropriate substitute, although its bark and needles are not as close in character as those of Scots pine, and it can grow to be a much larger tree.<sup>102</sup>

Prior to planting, narrow the drive to its historic width (as part of HC-1) to reestablish ground suitable for planting. Plant approximately 15 trees spaced a minimum of 6' apart as shown in figure 3.89. The trees will initially screen the Playhouse. As the trees reach approximately 10-15' in height, begin to remove the lower limbs, and maintain the lower canopy approximately at the roof line of the Playhouse.

**HC-41. Plant Gray Birch and Red-cedar near Cutting Garden**

Clumps of gray birch trees (*Betula populifolia*) were historically located north and east of the cutting garden (see fig. 3.85). Their light bark provided a contrasting backdrop to the arborvitae hedge and garden beds. The few birches that remained by the early 1980s were removed due to decline. Replant scattered clumps of grey



birch in the current open grassy area north of the cutting garden, to the north and east of the site of the greenhouse, and to the south and east of the shed. The exact location of the historic trees is not known. Leave sufficient space for the proposed new trail to the “Secret Woods.”

In addition to the gray birch, plant Eastern red-cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) on the south side of the shed, and between the entrance walk and Playhouse. These trees have been removed since they were inventoried on the 1994 Historic Plant Inventory.

**HC-42. Plant Boston Ivy on Stable-Garage**

The Stable-Garage, built in 1937, had Boston growing on its concrete-block walls in 1945.<sup>103</sup> It is presumed that the Boston ivy remained in the 1950s, given its existence on other buildings at Val-Kill. The building presently has no vines growing on it. Plant Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*) along the south and west walls, and allow it to cover approximately 75% of the surface. Keep trimmed off painted surfaces and windows. To reduce maintenance, do not allow to grow on the front of the building around the garaged doors. If possible, transplant Boston ivy that may date from the historic period from Stone Cottage or Val-Kill Cottage.

**CHAPTER 3 ENDNOTES**

- 1 Eleanor Roosevelt, “My Day” syndicated column, August 1, 1945, George Washington University, My Day Project, [www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/](http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/).
- 2 Lisa Nowak, *Cultural Landscape Report for Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Volume I* (Boston: National Park Service Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 2005), 1, 31, 114.
- 3 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Freshwater Wetlands Permit Program, <http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6279.html> (accessed June 22, 2012).
- 4 Dave Hayes, Integrated Resource Manager, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, telephone conversation with John Auwaerter, June 15, 2012. The NYS DEC will likely entertain approval of the recommended field clearing, which is similar to logging operations that the DEC often approves in or near wetlands. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers also protects wetlands, irrespective of size, under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act.
- 5 Nowak, CLR Volume I, 31.
- 6 Wikipedia, s.V. “Hay” (accessed June 19, 2012).
- 7 Charles Curnan oral history, 136, transcript 179.08, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites archives (hereafter, ROVA); Photograph of Mrs. Roosevelt and Dr. Gurewitsch’s mother on Val-Kill Lane, ca. 1955, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.
- 8 Dr. A. David Gurewitsch collection, box 3, “Wiltwyck School” folder, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (hereafter, “Gurewitsch collection”).
- 9 Further details on stone wall repair may be found in the Field Preservation Guidelines prepared by the Olmsted Center in 2004.
- 10 John Auwaerter and John F. Sears, *FDR and the Land: Roosevelt Estate Historic Resource Study* (Boston: National Park Service, 2011), 223.
- 11 George Curnan oral history.
- 12 Susan A. Dolan. *A Fruitful Legacy: A Historic Context of Orchards in the United States, With Technical Information for Registering Orchards in the National Register of Historic Places* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2009). There are no known ground-level photographs of the orchard as maintained during the treatment period of the late 1950s.
- 13 Federal Emergency Management Agency, Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), Dutchess County, May 2, 2012.
- 14 NPS, Directors Order #77-1: Wetland Protection (2002); NPS Management Policies, 2006; Dave Hayes, ROVA Integrated Resource Manager, e-mail to John Auwaerter, June 19, 2012.
- 15 “My Day,” November 27, 1961.
- 16 National Park Service, *Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, Draft General Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (Boston: National Park Service, 2009). The GMP did not recommend the park pursue acquisition of private property to reestablish the Road to Top Cottage.
- 17 Auwaerter and Sears, drawing 2.17.
- 18 This can be seen in various photographs taken by Eleanor Roosevelt’s private physician Dr. A. David Gurewitsch held in the FDR Library.
- 19 For more information on the forestry at the Roosevelt estate, see Auwaerter and Sears, *FDR and the Land: Roosevelt Estate Historic Resource Study*.
- 20 “My Day,” August 25, 1937.

21 Tubby Curnan Oral History, 22, transcript 78.04, ROVA.

22 This documentation is found in the Nelson Brown Collection and FDR personal papers at the FDR Library, and in the Hoverter Memorial Archives at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

23 *Draft General Management Plan* (2009), 80.

24 Nelson Brown to FDR, October 1, 1941: "... I am having some signs prepared so that you may more readily identify the planting sites with species, age, and spacing shown on the signs as you drive along the roads...." Nelson Brown Papers, Brown I/1938-1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

25 The other experimental plots established by the College and later by the USDA are in the Tamarack Swamp on the Tompkins Farm and on the Dumphy and Hughson Farms in the Harbours Hills development. Some of the Tamarack Swamp experimental plots remain, but none in Harbours Hills.

26 "My Day," June 12, 1945.

27 Nelson Brown, "Resume of Recommendations and Plans Made as a Result of Study of Forestry Conditions on the FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT ESTATE October 18 & 19, 1945," "Christmas Trees 1945," Nelson Brown Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

28 Nelson Brown, "Personal Reminiscences of F. D.R." (Unpublished manuscript, ca. 1947), 30, Brown II/Personal Reminiscences, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

29 "My Day," July 14 1947.

30 The light standard and bathhouse are not documented in Nowak, CLR volume I.

31 Nowak, CLR Volume I, 94; Louis Torres, *Historic Resource Study, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site* (National Park Service 1980), 86.

32 Photograph of Eleanor Roosevelt in car at Playhouse, ca. 1956, Gurewitsch collection; Photograph of Eleanor Roosevelt in front of Val Kill Cottage garage, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, ca. 1955; Aerial photograph, 1960, ROVA archives.

33 This triangular island was documented in 1983 as existing with a 14"-dbh tree in the center. National Park Service, "Staff Parking Area, Eleanor Roosevelt NHS," December 1983, ROVA.

34 The elm is visible in a series of aerial photographs of Val-Kill by Rex Hardy (FDR's Dream House), LIFE archives hosted by Google; and with a concrete-block wall around it in a 1959 photograph of Eleanor Roosevelt, personal collection of Margit Kohl.

35 Rex Hardy aerial photograph, September 1938. A border of shrubs along the east side of this island is visible in this photograph, along with more red-cedar trees than presently exist. While the border probably thinned by the 1950s, there were most likely still shrubs here. The group of forsythia at the northern end of the island was planted by the park after 1994.

36 Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, "DSA Information Bulletin," <http://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/Resources/dsa.html> (accessed July 27, 2012).

37 Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), section 4.6.2, <http://www.access-board.gov/adaag/html/adaag.htm#4.1> (accessed January 23, 2013).

38 Photograph of bridge with pipe or narrow post railings, NPx 81 90 4, 1953, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; Les Hyde photograph of bridge with rustic railings, October 1976, ROVA archives. This 1976 photo shows the railings in a deteriorated condition, suggesting they had been in place for some time, most likely prior to 1962.

39 National Park Service, Project PRA-ELRO 10(2), July 2012, PEPC 42238.



40 National Park Service, “Historic Core Planting Plan, Eleanor Roosevelt NHS” (September 1984), ROVA.

41 Dave Hayes, Integrated Resource Manager, e-mail to John Auwaerter, January 30, 2013; State of New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, “Red Pine Scale” (Undated information sheet, ca. 2012); Robert L. Heyd, “Red Pine Insect and Disease Problems: A Summary” (Michigan Department of Natural Resources, undated), [michigansaf.org/forestinfo/MSUElibrary/RedPinePests.PDF](http://michigansaf.org/forestinfo/MSUElibrary/RedPinePests.PDF) (accessed July 5, 2012). Other common diseases and pests include red-headed pine sawfly, Saratoga spittlebug, and fungal blight, canker, and rust. Scale on red pine may be controlled through use of insecticides, but the park does not have the resources to commit to such management for a new planting.

42 Seed-grown red-cedar often produce plants of differing character. US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, “Plant Fact Sheet, Eastern Redcedar” <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=JUWI> (accessed January 31, 2013).

43. *Ibid.*

44. Virginia Cooperative Extension, “Eastern Redcedar, *Juniperus virginiana*” <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/3010/3010-1477/3010-1477.html> (accessed January 31, 2013).

45 “My Day,” May 18, 1953.

46 “My Day,” April 9, 1958.

47 Kane & Carruth, PC, “Comprehensive Report on Historic and Cultural Landscape, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York” (Draft, 5/21/1980).

48 Photograph of Mrs. Roosevelt on the dock showing open area in middle of the woodland garden, 1956, image RZ001312, Corbis Images, [www.corbisimages.com](http://www.corbisimages.com) (accessed July 30, 2012).

49 Charles Curnan oral history, 57.

50 The open pond bank along the north side of the peninsula is evident in a ca. 1958 photograph looking north from barbecue, Gurewitsch collection, roll 229.

51 This information is in Henningson, Durham and Richardson Architecture and Engineering, Report on Dredging of the Val-Kill Pond (2007), ROVA.

52 Photograph taken from the pool looking west with the south field in the distance, 1956, photograph RZ001300, Corbis Images, [www.corbisimages.com](http://www.corbisimages.com) (accessed July 30, 2012); National Park Service, “General Landscape Plan and Removals, Eleanor Roosevelt NHS,” May 1984, ROVA. Photos from the 1930s or 1940s do show some younger willows in this area, but these were later removed.

53 Torres, *Historic Resource Study*, 61.

54 Photograph of the pool, ca. 1940, showing brick or tile surface to scupper, photo 31460075, Dickerman slides collection, ROVA; ca. 1958 photograph owned by Susan Curnan showing concrete surface to scupper and the boy sculpture remaining on top of the water spurt.

55 See New York State Department of State, Code Enforcement & Administration, “Swimming Pool Rules and Regulations,” <http://www.dos.ny.gov/DCEA/pools.htm> (accessed July 30, 2012).

56 John Gilbert, Facility Manager, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, e-mail to John Auwaerter, August 14, 2012.

57 This is presently not the park’s preferred treatment due to maintenance and operational concerns. Memorandum on draft treatment plan, Sarah Olson, Superintendent, ROVA, to Bob Page, Director, Olmsted Center, June 17, 2011.

58 Barbara E. Pearson, "Historic Structure Report: the Swimming Pool, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site" (NPS, 1981), 10.

59 John Gilbert at MABI has calculated the following tasks and costs for maintaining the park's historic swimming pool:

Maintenance requirements:

Yearly draining and filing

Daily cleaning

Weekly chemical adjustments

Annual maintenance costs (supplies only) \$1,200 (filters, chlorine, etc)

Preservation/restoration:

Yearly painting

Repaired pool cement, lights, and return lines - 2005 - \$24,040

Repaired swimming pool apron - 2012 - \$12,886

60 This documentation is based on photos in the Dickerman collection (ROVA) and the Dr. A. David Gurewitsch collection (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library), and Charles Curnan oral history. Details of the plantings in the pool terrace garden were not included in Nowak, CLR Volume I.

61 Photograph of Charles Curnan in west bed of pool terrace garden, ca. 1970, Susan Curnan photograph collection; examination of existing shrubs.-

62 In Nowak, CLR volume I, these plantings are inventoried only in part, as the "Stone Cottage Entry Garden."

63 Photographs of Stone Cottage, ca. 1940s, Dickerman photograph collection, ROVA; photograph of the loggia by Clifford Smith, 1938 (CLR Volume I, figure 3.37).

64 Large lilacs are pictured along the west porch in a photograph, "Eleanor Roosevelt with Her Dog," 1956, Corbis Images RZ001313, [www.corbisimages.com](http://www.corbisimages.com) (accessed July 30, 2012).

65 Photograph of the laundry, ca. 1961, NPx 60 235, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. Shrubs along the north side are visible in the Rex Hardy aerial photographs of Val-Kill, September 1938.

66 Pansies are shown in a ca. 1958 photo of Eleanor Roosevelt with Nina Roosevelt on the pool patio, box G-3, folder "Hyde Park," FDR Library. Marigolds would be appropriate because they were also planted in the pool terrace garden, and pansies were earlier used in pots on the pool terrace.

67 The large lilac are shown in a 1956 photograph of Mrs. Roosevelt on the lawn, Corbis image RZ001313; the low shrubs (azalea) are pictured in a ca. 1945 photograph, 1134, Dickerman collection, ROVA.

68 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 'Advisory Invasive Plant List,' <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/65408.html> (accessed August 13, 2012). Periwinkle is also sometimes considered an invasive, but has not been identified as such in New York State.

69 Photograph of Eleanor Roosevelt on the smaller section of the dock, 1956, "Eleanor Roosevelt Watching Grandchildren," Corbis image RZ001312, [www.corbisimages.com](http://www.corbisimages.com) (accessed July 30, 2012); photograph looking across the pond to Stone Cottage showing no dock, ca. 1970, Susan Curnan photograph collection; National Park Service, "Dock and Orchard Plans, Eleanor Roosevelt NHS," drawing 473, May 1984, ROVA.

70 Corbis photograph of dock, 1956.

71 This information is based on inspection of the existing equipment. The pump enclosure is not documented in Nowak, CLR volume I.

72 At least some of the furniture from the Cook–Dickerman period may have been used in the 1950s, since there is one of the sling chairs in the park’s collections.

73 Based on photograph of laundry wing dated 1961 in Nowak, CLR volume I, figure 4.14. The CLR incorrectly dates the laundry wing to the early 1950s.

74 Fran Macsali Urbin, ROVA Supervisory Park Ranger, e-mail to John Auwaerter, June 15, 2012.

75 This brick connecting wall is visible in the exterior photograph of the loggia with Shirley Temple in Nowak, CLR volume I, figure 3.37.

76 Rex Hardy aerial photograph, September 1938.

77 Photograph of John and Anna Roosevelt and others seated in front of the spirea hedge, ca. 1958, photograph ROOS 007a, Gurewitsch collection.

78 The 1984 NPS planting plan call for planting the sugar maple, which is visible in a 1962 photograph of the cottage, NPx 65 590 268, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; the hemlock along the west side of the garage wing is visible in a ca. 1958 photograph of Mrs. Roosevelt with her car, photograph 04-24 (1693), Gurewitsch collection; trees fill much of the space between the two rear wings in the 1938 Rex Hardy aerial photograph.

79 Photograph of Mrs. Roosevelt at the garage, showing no fence along the front of the caretakers wing, photograph 04-24 (1693), Gurewitsch collection.

80 Photograph NPx 61 32 7, 1938, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; Val-Kill shop yard ca. 1937, Dickerman collection, ROVA; staff wing plantings, ca. 1940, ELRO historic structures report; Val-Kill Cottage looking east, Dickerman collection, 31460013, ca. 1945; Photograph of west side plantings, 1954, NPx 62 172, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

81 George Browne photographs, NPx 65 590 268, NPx 65 590 270, NPx 65 590 269, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; ca. 1958 photograph (vine on trellis at rear entrance), 04-24(2083), Gurewitsch collection. The Browne photos are generally too dark to clearly show the plantings.

82 Wisteria on this trellis is mentioned in the Charles Curnan oral history, 41.

83 A hemlock is visible next to the porch in a 1954 photograph of Eleanor Roosevelt and Queen Elizabeth, photograph U1071771, Corbisimages.com (accessed July 30, 2012).

84 Tubby Curnan oral history, 33, transcript 1978.04, ROVA archives.

85 The 1984 planting plan showed two existing mock oranges between the cellar hatches; the existing is a large, multi-stemmed specimen.

86 Pearson, Historic Structures Report, 8.

87 The sand box is visible in a ca. 1955 photograph of Mrs. Roosevelt, looking toward the tennis court, LIFE magazine, Getty Images collection.

88 A willow was near the location of this tree during the 1940s, but by the 1950s, there was no tree here. Photograph NPx 77 25 (8), ca. 1955, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

89 National Park Service, “Field Preservation Guidelines for Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site” (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 2004), 50-59.



90 Dave Cerasaro, ROVA groundskeeper, e-mail to Dave Hayes, ROVA Integrated Resources Manager, August 20, 2012. Dave Cerasaro grew up on the Bennett/Smith farm across from ELRO.

91 Charles Curnan oral history, cited in Nowak, CLR Volume I, 113.

92 Torres, *Historic Resource Study*, 64; Louis Torres, *Historic Structure Report, Historical Data, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site* (National Park Service, 1980), 115.

93 Torres, *Historic Resource Study*, 64.

94 Anna deCordova, Horticulturalist, ROVA, e-mail to John Auwaerter, August 15, 2012.

95 Torres, *Historic Structure Report*, 101.

96 Torres, *Historic Structure Report*, 86.

97 Public law 95-32, Section 3.

98 *Draft General Management Plan* (2009), 72.

99 Memorandum on draft treatment plan, Sarah Olson, Superintendent, ROVA, to Bob Page, Director, Olmsted Center, June 17, 2011.

100 “My Day,” June 13, 1940.

101 Vegetable varieties are documented or referenced in the Dickerman photographs, “My Day” columns, and oral histories.

102 Scots pine, like many other pines, is vulnerable to pine wilt (a fungus) and pine wood nematode. White pine is less susceptible to the disease. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, “Sustainable Urban Landscapes: Pine Wilt: A fatal disease of exotic pines in the Midwest” [www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SUL9.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SUL9.pdf) (accessed February 12, 2013). Local occurrence near Val-Kill is not known.

103 Photograph of Stable-Garage (Barn), “Appraisal of the Estate of Franklin D. Roosevelt,” 1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

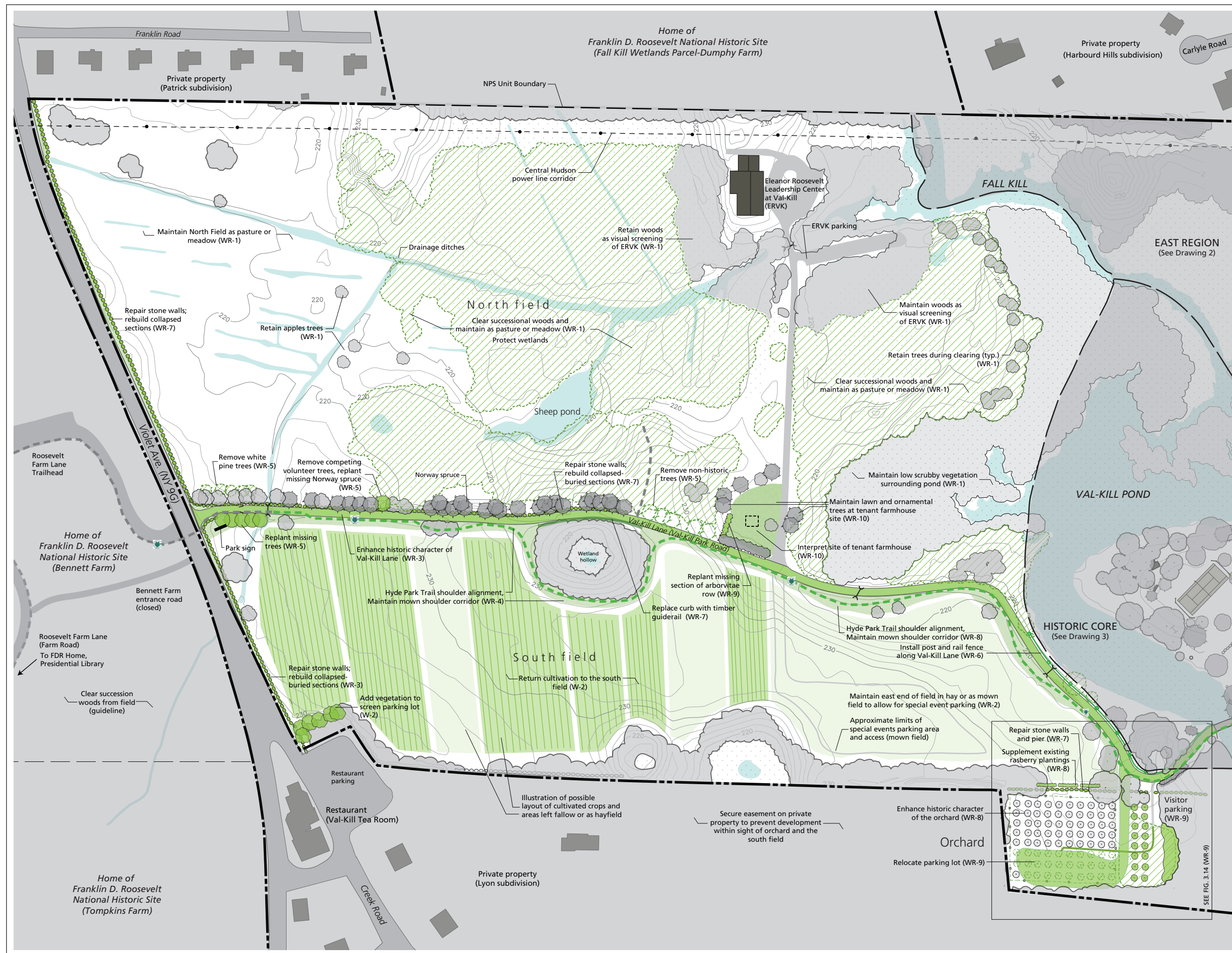


**TABLE 1. PRIORITIZED LIST OF LANDSCAPE TREATMENT TASKS  
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

<b>TASK ID</b>	<b>TASK NAME</b>	<b>PRIORITY 1/HIGH 2/MED. 3/LOW</b>	<b>RELATED TASK</b>
<b>WEST REGION (WR)</b>			
WR-1	Clear the North Field	1	
WR-2	Enhance Historic Character of the South Field	2	
WR-3	Enhance Historic Character of Val-Kill Lane	2	WR-4, 5, HC-1
WR-4	Maintain Mown Shoulder for Hyde Park Trail	2	WR-3, 5
WR-6	Reconstruct Fence along Val-Kill Lane	3	
WR-7	Repair Stone Walls	2	ER-9, HC-21
WR-8	Enhance Historic Character of the Orchard	2	WR-9
WR-9	Relocate Orchard Parking Lot	2	WR-8
WR-10	Interpret Site of Tenant Farmhouse	2	
<b>EAST REGION (ER)</b>			
ER-1	Enhance Historic Character of Trail Roads	1	HC-1
ER-2	Survey and Preserve War-Time Security Remnants	2	
ER-3	Preserve and Interpret Forest Plantations	1	ER-4
ER-4	Build Interpretive Trail to Plots 31, 32	2	ER-3
ER-5	Build Interpretive Trail to Plot D (Secret Woods)	2	ER-3
ER-6	Screen House on Carlyle Road	1	ER-3
ER-7	Improve View into Loop Road Pond	2	
ER-8	Remove Non-Historic Materials from Dump	3	
ER-9	Preserve and Interpret Stone Walls	3	WR-7, HC-21
<b>HISTORIC CORE (HC)</b>			
<b>Core-Wide Tasks</b>			
HC-1	Repair and Maintain Drives	1	WR-3, ER-1
HC-2	Improve Accessible Parking	2	HC-1, 38
HC-3	Repair and Maintain Walks	2	HC-3, 15
HC-4	Restore Rustic Railings on Fall Kill Bridge	3	
HC-5	Replace Val-Kill Lane Red Pines	1	HC-40
HC-6	Plant Flowering Spring Bulbs	2	HC-7, 16, 17, 27
HC-7	Reestablish Plantings on Southwest Bank	2	HC-6
HC-8	Mow Banks of Val-Kill Pond	1	HC-9

HC-9	Maintain Open Water on Val-Kill Pond	1	HC-8
HC-10	Remove Willows on West Bank of Pond	2	
HC-11	Screen Staff Parking Lot	2	
HC-12	Redesign Site Lighting	1	
<b>Stone Cottage Grounds</b>			
HC-13	Uncover the Swimming Pool	1	HC-14
HC-14	Repair Pool Equipment Room	2	HC-13
HC-15	Repair and Refurnish Pool Terrace Patio	1	HC-2
HC-16	Reestablish Pool Terrace Garden	1	
HC-17	Enhance Historic Character of Stone Cottage Plantings	1	HC-22
HC-18	Plant Elms at Stone Cottage	1	
HC-19	Reconstruct Dock	2	
HC-20	Preserve Pool Pump Enclosure	2	
HC-21	Repair Stone Retaining Wall and Steps	2	WR-7, ER-9
HC-22	Rehabilitate Walled Garden	1	HC-16
<b>Val-Kill Cottage Grounds</b>			
HC-23	Rehabilitate Caretakers Yard as Visitor Gathering Area	2	
HC-24	Furnish West Porch Lawn	2	
HC-25	Rehabilitate Spirea Hedge	2	
HC-26	Plant Trees around Val-Kill Cottage	2	HC-1
HC-27	Enhance Historic Character of Val-Kill Cottage Plantings	1	
HC-28	Reconstruct Historic Light Standard	2	
HC-29	Plant Vines on Utility Pole Guywires	2	
<b>Peninsula</b>			
HC-30	Restore Play Equipment	1	
HC-31	Restore Flagpole	1	
HC-32	Restore Tennis Court	1	
HC-33	Enhance Historic Character of the Barbecue	2	
HC-34	Furnish the Picnic Area	2	
HC-35	Replant Missing Trees	1	
HC-36	Replace Tatarian Honeysuckle in Lilac Hedge and at Doll House	2	
HC-37	Rehabilitate Fenced Garden	2	
<b>Utility Area</b>			
HC-38	Reroute Rear Entrance Path	2	HC-2
HC-39	Rehabilitate the Cutting Garden	1	
HC-40	Reestablish Conifers in front of Playhouse	1	HC-5
HC-41	Plant Gray Birch and Red-cedar near Cutting Garden	2	
HC-42	Plant Boston Ivy on Stable-Garage	2	





# Cultural Landscape Report

## Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site

Hyde Park, New York

### Treatment Plan

#### West Region



**National Park Service**  
**Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation**  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

**in partnership with**  
**Department of Landscape Architecture**  
**SUNY College of Environmental**  
**Science and Forestry, [www.esf.edu/la/](http://www.esf.edu/la/)**

#### SOURCES

1. Aerial photograph, 2009
2. NPS GIS data
3. NWI GIS data
4. Field inspections, 2010-12

#### DRAWN BY

Laura Roberts, John Auwaerter, Illustrator CS3, 2012  
Byrne Riley, AutoCAD 2008

#### LEGEND

- NPS property boundary
- Character area boundary
- Woods (deciduous and coniferous)
- Deciduous, coniferous specimen tree
- Pasture, meadow, or scrub
- Cultivated land
- Water
- Approximate wetlands area
- Building/structure
- Paved road
- Unpaved road
- Foot trail or road trace, Hyde Park Trail
- Stone wall
- Fence
- Culvert
- Feature requiring treatment (greenscale)
- Feature to remove
- 2' Contour interval

#### NOTES

1. Existing features not receiving treatment shown in grayscale.
2. All features shown at approximate scale and location.
3. Wetlands boundary based on most recent National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) data.
4. Plan does not show remnant pasture fences in north field.

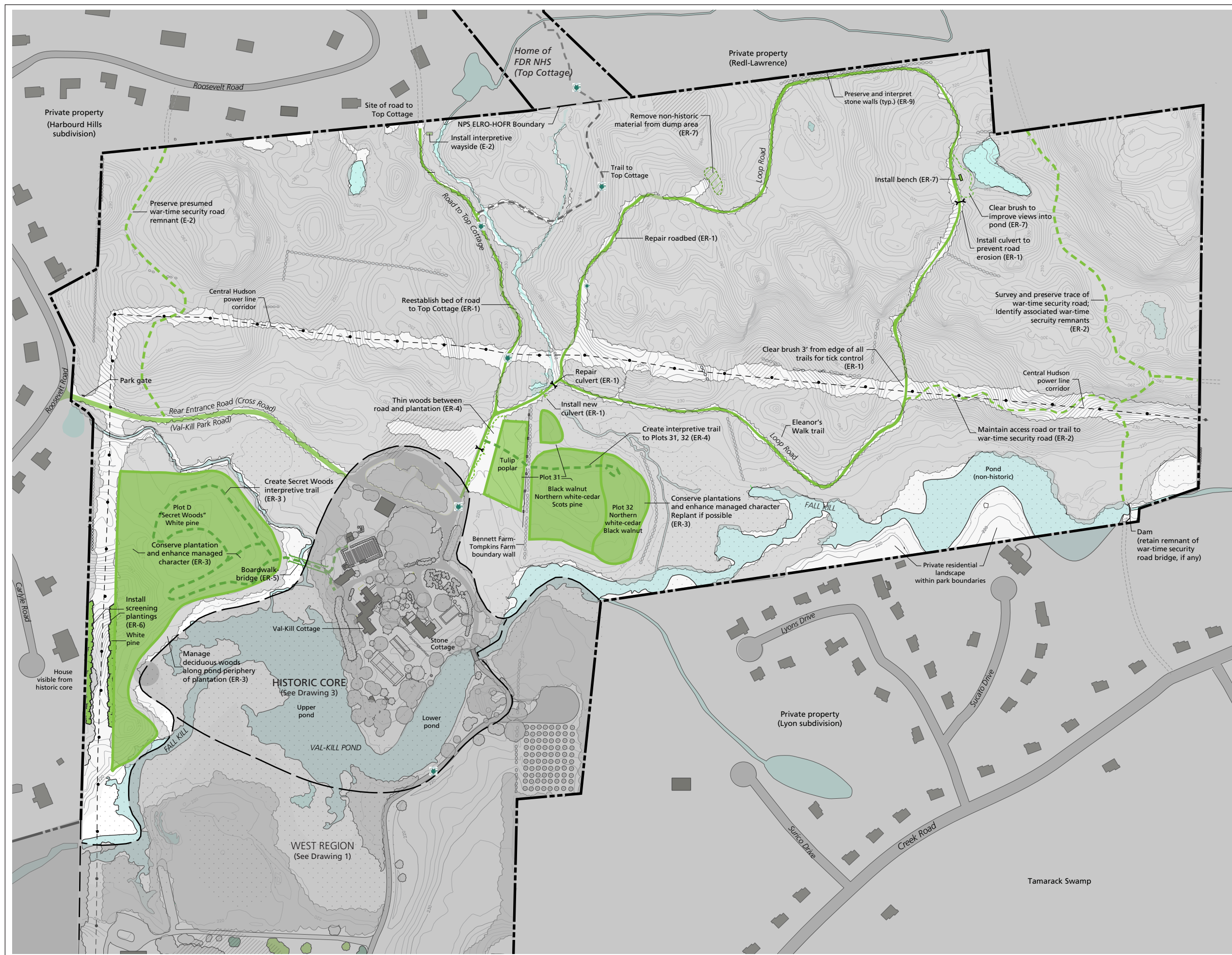


Drawing 1





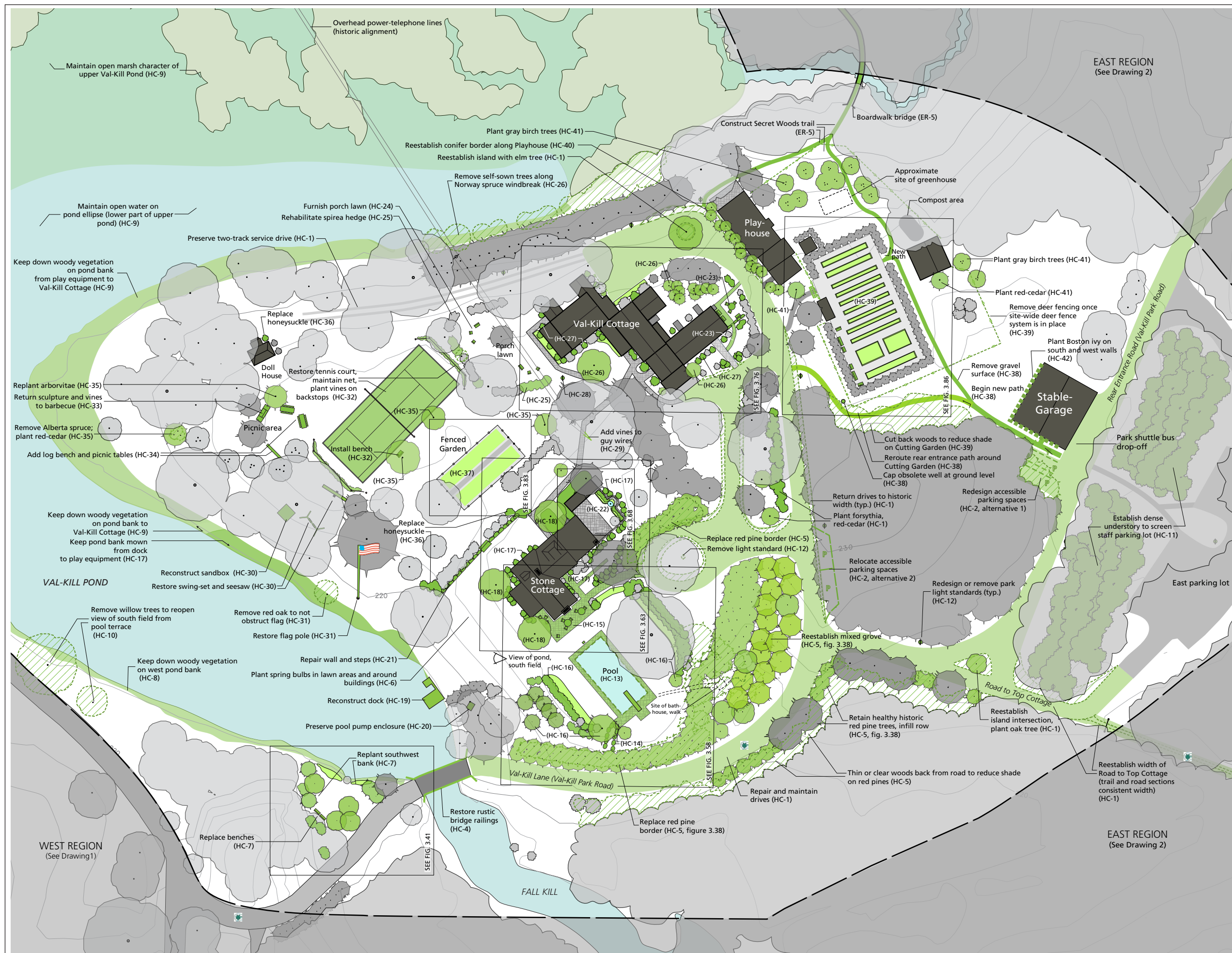
### Drawing 2







### Drawing 3





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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A. SUGGESTED "MY DAY" QUOTES FOR SECRET WOODS TRAIL

The following quotes from Mrs. Roosevelt's "My Day" syndicated newspaper column were selected to interpret her appreciation of the Val-Kill landscape.

*1. Nature is a good teacher and, though we cannot all be Thoreaus, we can accept her lessons when we have the opportunity and can gain some of the peace and contentment that comes with the development of an ability "to live deep instead of fast."*

January 7, 1948

*2. If beauty is good for the soul then I wish I could have taken the whole world to walk with me early Saturday morning in the woods at Hyde Park. These visions of sheer beauty make one wonder why we human beings make so much that is not beautiful in the world.* January 26, 1949

*3. The first real glimpses of spring could be seen in our swamps this morning—the red, curled-over heads of the jack-in-the-pulpits were well above the ground. Spring is an exciting time. Every time you go out you see some little new green blade pressing upwards to greet the sun.* March 28, 1949

*4. Spring is the time for dreams and renewed conviction that death in some mysterious way brings new life. I wish that with the coming of spring we could think of all the young lives that were lost in the last war and devote ourselves more earnestly than ever before to seeing that, out of those deaths, life comes to young people all over the world, instead of more suffering and devastation.* March 22, 1948

*5. We now have a family of cranes living in the marsh just across our brook in the swamp and today we saw the great white bird standing on the bank. Suddenly he took to wing and found his mate, which we could just glimpse coming out of the swamp on the far side.* August 5, 1948

*6. The heat continues, but the country is unbelievably lovely. Because of the rains we have had, everything is green. My purple loose-strife, which turns all the ground around my pond into one great blaze of color, is beginning to come out. I love the first faint tinge of purple and its gradual rise to a deeper tone.* July 30, 1940

*7. As I walked the dogs in the woods yesterday, one of the little six-year-old boys walked with me. And I began to tell him about the great pine woods which lay just*

*behind the birches and which grow right down to the water's edge, with a deep bed of pine needles under the dark green trees. In that wood it is always dark because the sun can't get through, so you can make-believe almost anything.* August 14, 1948

8. *...walking in the woods presents a real difficulty. I want to look up at the trees all the time, but I should also keep my eyes constantly on the ground, because there are still a considerable number of the little orange lizards ... I cannot help thinking that my foot must look like the most enormous mountain coming down near them.* May 23, 1947

9. *This is the time of year to rejoice in the smell of burning leaves, to regret the loss of the color which is now completely departed from the trees, but to admire the lacy silhouette that the bare branches make against the sky.* November 27, 1961



**APPENDIX B. GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR ACCESSIBLE ROUTES**

For further information, see National Center on Accessibility, [www.ncaonline.org/?q=node/659](http://www.ncaonline.org/?q=node/659).

	ACCESS ROUTE (ADAAG)	OUTDOOR ACCESS ROUTE	TRAIL
<b>Surface</b>	Stable, firm, Slip resistant	Firm and Stable	Firm and Stable <i>Exception*</i>
<b>Max Running Slope</b>	1: 12	1: 20 (for any distance) 1: 12 (for max 50 ft) 1: 10 (for max 30 ft)	1: 20 (for any distance) 1: 12 (for max 200 ft) 1: 10 (for max 30 ft) 1: 8 (for max 10 ft) <i>Exception- 1: 7 (for 5 ft max for open drainage structures)</i> <i>Exception*</i>
<b>Max Cross Slope</b>	1: 50	1: 33 <i>Exception- 1: 20 (for drainage purposes)</i>	1: 20 <i>Exception- 1: 10 (at the bottom of an open drain where clear tread width is a min of 42 inches)</i>
<b>Min Clear Tread Width</b>	36 inches 32 inches (for no more than 24 inches)	36 inches <i>Exception- 32 inches when * applies</i>	36 inches for any distance <i>Exception- 32 inches when * applies.</i>
<b>Edge Protection</b>	Where provided, min of 2 inches.	Where provided, min of 3 inches.	Where provided, 3 inches min.
<b>Tread Obstacles</b>	(Changes in Level) 1/4 inch (no beveled edge) 1/4 - 1/2 inch must have a beveled edge with a max slope of 1: 2. Over 1/2 inch= ramp.	1 inch high max <i>Exception- 2 inches high max (where beveled with a slope no greater than 1: 2 and where * applies.)</i>	2 inches high max <i>Exception- 3 inches max (where running and cross slopes are 1: 20 or less)</i> <i>Exception*</i>
<b>Passing Space</b>	Every 200 feet where clear tread width is less than 60 inches, a minimum 60 X 60 inch space, or a t-shaped intersection of two walks or corridors with arms and stem extending min of 48 inches.	Every 200 feet where clear tread width is less than 60 inches, a minimum 60 X 60 inch space, or a t-shaped intersection of two walking surfaces with arms and stem extending min of 48 inches. <i>Exception- every 300 feet where * applies.</i>	Every 1000 feet where clear tread width is less than 60 inches, a 60 X 60 inch min passing space or a t-shaped intersection of two walking surfaces with arms and stem extending min of 48 inches. <i>Exception*</i>
<b>Resting Intervals</b>	(Landings) 60 inch min length, min width as wide as the ramp run leading to it, if change in direction occurs, must have 60 X 60 inch space.	60 inches min length, width at least as wide as the widest portion of the trail segment leading to the resting interval and a max slope of 1: 33 <i>Exception- a max slope of 1: 20 is allowed for drainage purposes.</i>	60 inches min length, width at least as wide as the widest portion of the trail segment leading to the resting interval and a maximum slope of 1: 20. <i>Exception*</i>
* (16.1.1 Conditions for Departure) The provision may not apply if it cannot be provided because compliance would cause substantial harm to cultural, historic, religious or significant natural features or characteristics; substantially alter the nature of the setting or purpose of the facility; require construction methods or materials that are prohibited by Federal, state or local regulations or statutes; or would not be feasible due to terrain or the prevailing construction practices.			



**APPENDIX C. SURFACING ALTERNATIVES FOR ROADS AND WALKS**

The use of a stabilized surface may be warranted for roads and walkways in the historic core due to concerns of accessibility and maintenance. For example, the pathways within the memorial cutting garden should be accessible for wheel-chairs, and the driveways connecting the cottages serve as prime routes for pedestrian access and need to be maintained in a firm and stable condition to meet accessibility standards.

Well-constructed and maintained gravel surfaces can meet ADA standards for accessibility. See Penn State's Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies for information on Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA), which is a mixture of crushed stone developed specifically as a surface wearing course for unpaved roads, and may be suitable for walks as well. According to the Center, DSA has a unique particle size distribution designed to maximize packing density and produce a durable road surface that performs better than conventional aggregates (Center for Dirt and Gravel Road studies, DSA Informational Bulletin, [www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/Resources/dsa.html](http://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/Resources/dsa.html).)

Alternative pavement or stabilized surfaces that are close in visual character to the historic earth or gravel surface may also be an appropriate treatment. There are several potential alternative paving options. Beginning with the most appropriate in terms of historic character, these include:

- A soil solidifier: This is a binding system applied over earthen or gravel surfaces. Brands on the market include Klingstone 400 ([www.klingstone.com](http://www.klingstone.com)), PolyPavement ([www.polypavement.com](http://www.polypavement.com)), and Stabilizer ([www.stabilizersolutions.com](http://www.stabilizersolutions.com)). These pavements, which are clear, are designed to stabilize soils for foot traffic and light vehicular traffic, and are tested to be twice as strong as asphalt. These surfaces are designed to withstand freeze/thaw cycles, but should be plowed with a hand shovel, broom machine, or a rubber blade snowplow. Experimentation is required to determine the proper proportion of stabilizer to the specific soil or gravel used in order to create a surface which remains suitably firm in wet weather. Klingstone has been successfully installed on paths at Colonial Williamsburg and Booker T. Washington National Historic Site in Virginia, and Stabilizer is used at Minuteman National Historic Park in Massachusetts.
- A resin or epoxy binder with aggregate applied over a pavement substrate: Brands of this pavement type on the market include "StoneGrip" ([www.Integratedpaving.com](http://www.Integratedpaving.com)) and "StaLok Pathway Mix" ([www.kafkagranite.com/stalok\\_paving\\_material/indx.php](http://www.kafkagranite.com/stalok_paving_material/indx.php)). Despite the name, this is intended

for low-duty drives as well as paths. Aggregates and colors that are compatible with the historic character of the gravel and earthen roads in the historic core would need to be specified. As with soil solidifiers, these surfaces withstand the freeze/thaw cycle, but require snow removal using use a hand shovel, broom machine, or a rubber blade snowplow to avoid tearing up the surface.

- **Chipseal Asphalt:** This is traditional asphalt with larger and coarser aggregate top-coat that creates a more textured, varied surface that is similar to a loose gravel surface, but not earth. Chip seals can be top-dressed with a wide range of aggregates that reproduce the appearance of gravel or stone (see chip seal by United Paving, Inc., [www.unitedpavinginc.com/index.php](http://www.unitedpavinginc.com/index.php)).
- **Exposed-aggregate concrete:** This is a type of concrete where the cement is washed away from the top layer of the paving before it sets, leaving the aggregate used in the mixed exposed. This creates a rougher, more varied texture than standard concrete, and can look quite rustic with the properly selected aggregate. Exposed-aggregate concrete requires the least maintenance of the above options, but snow removal using use a hand shovel, broom machine, or a rubber blade snowplow is still recommended.

The most appropriate alternative paving is dependent on the application. The intimate scale of the historic core makes chipseal or exposed-aggregate concrete an inappropriate choice for relatively large surfaces such as the driveways. They would be more acceptable for the paths, although a fine aggregate treated with stabilizer or epoxy would be more compatible with the historic character of the landscape.



## **APPENDIX D. DEER CONTROL**

As discussed under General Treatment Recommendations, a perimeter deer fence around the historic core is the preferred treatment. The following are recommendations for fencing types and alternative means of controlling deer.

### **Exclusion Methods**

Fences are the primary method of exclusion, but can have a conspicuous impact on a landscape, especially when used to protect individual plants or garden spaces. Many available products are designed to be largely invisible. These are mostly black galvanized wire or plastic mesh attached to thin poles or trees. Bright orange or other highly visible fencing is not appropriate. Examples of deer fencing include products produced by Benner's Gardens ([www.BennersGardens.com](http://www.BennersGardens.com)), Nixalite ([www.nixalite.com/deerfencing](http://www.nixalite.com/deerfencing)), and Deer Busters ([www.deerbusters.com](http://www.deerbusters.com)).

Deer fencing for large enclosures should be a minimum of 7.5' to 8' high. Recent studies have suggested that two parallel fences, spaced 36" apart, are effective at excluding. This system would also allow for shorter fencing as low as 28".

There is anecdotal evidence that an alternative form of fencing known as "flat fencing" or "horizontal fencing" can be used to deter deer from entering landscape areas. In this method, a wide strip of metal fencing, at least 3' to 4' across, is laid flat on the ground around the perimeter of the area needing protection. The principle is similar to that behind cattle guards, which are used extensively on roads in parts of the western United States. Deer are naturally wary of getting their feet entangled, and this is said to deter them from walking across a mesh with relatively small openings such as chicken wire. People can walk across it with ease, it can be lifted up for maintenance purposes, and low grass can help to camouflage it. While no studies are known to have been performed on this method to verify its efficacy, it is worth considering on a trial or experimental basis. At Val-Kill it would be most suitable for an area like the orchard, where traditional deer fencing detracts from the historic character. The grass along the perimeter could be mown regularly to maintain the efficacy of the barrier.

### **Scare Devices and Repellents**

Scare devices, such as strobe lights, radios, and sprinklers, can be effective short-term deterrents, but would not be part of a permanent solution since deer will become accustomed to the devices over time. Repellents, such as cayenne pepper, inedible egg solids, ammonium soaps of fatty acids, bone tar oil, or putrefied meat scraps are used to repel deer in small areas. Such repellents would most likely serve as a secondary

deer control method, since hungry deer will ignore them and they are generally difficult to maintain. From a landscape character perspective, repellents are appropriate because they are reversible and can be placed inconspicuously, such as within hedges or wooded edges. However, humans find most of these substances noxious as well, and they would thus not be appropriate for the historic core where most of Val-Kill's vulnerable plant material is located.

#### **Cultural Methods**

While plantings can theoretically be protected on an individual basis through either fencing or repellents, the associated detriments to historic character and visitor enjoyment may be inappropriate for the historic core. An alternative strategy to reduce deer damage to plant material in this area may be to choose species which deer do not favor. Plant material selected should reasonably approximate the character and function in the landscape of the original species, and ideally have a history of use on the site. For example, daffodils may be substituted for tulips, as deer avoid them and they were a favorite flower of Mrs. Roosevelt. Eastern arborvitae is a deer favorite, but Eastern red-cedar, though not immune, is much less vulnerable. Both are native evergreens, and both were used historically around the cottages at Val-Kill.

Rutgers University has an online database of common northeastern landscape plants rated by deer resistance (<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/deerresistance/>) which can aid in identifying which plants from the historic Val-kill palette that may prove problematic to replant and which are comparatively safe from deer damage.

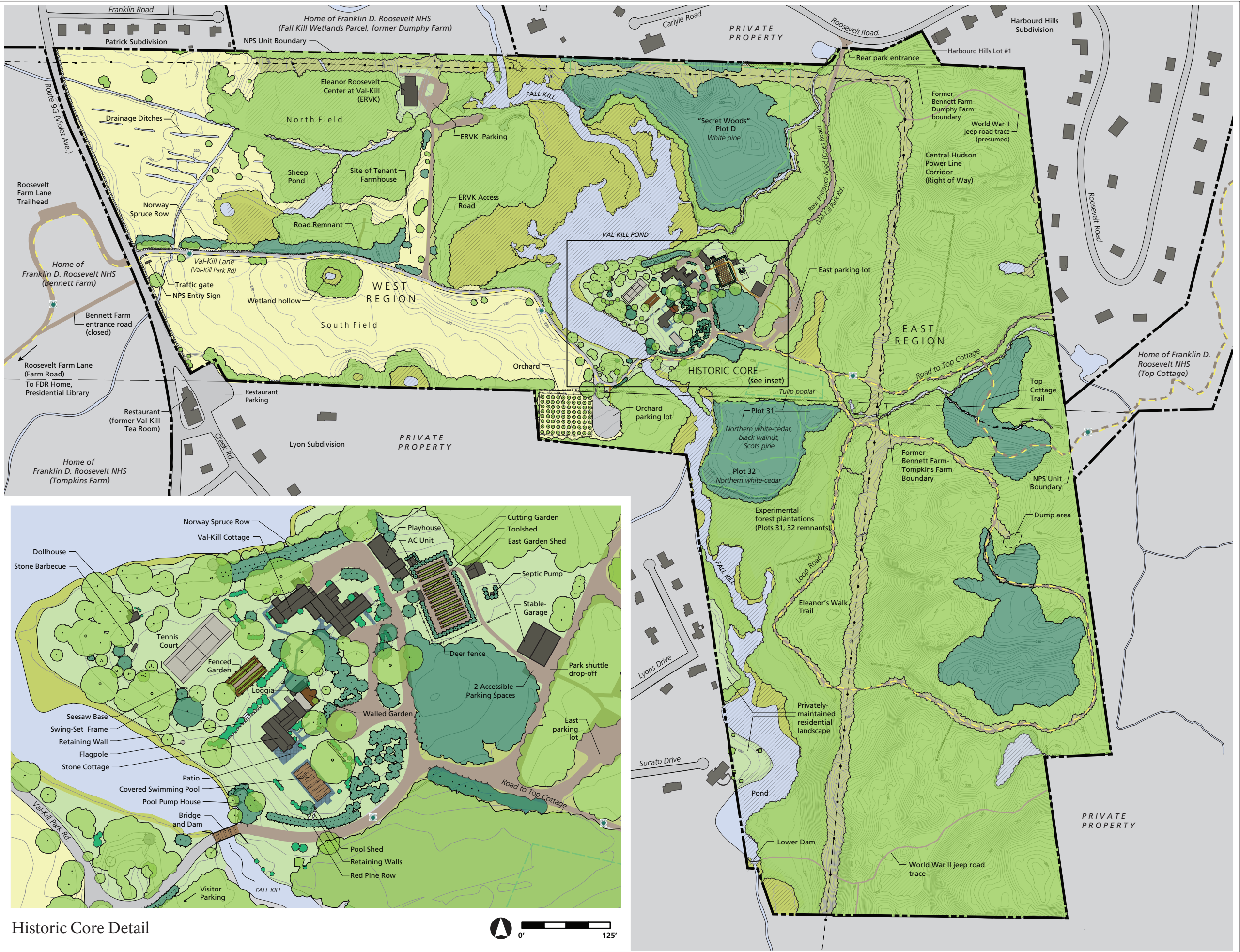
**APPENDIX E. EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN (DRAWING 4)**

As part of its initial work on the Val-Kill treatment plan, the SUNY ESF landscape architecture studio produced an updated existing conditions plan of the site. This updated plan was necessary due to the age and lack of detail on the existing conditions plan in CLR Volume I (2005). The plan was subsequently updated to 2012.

The plan is an 11" x 17" fold-out following this page.







Cultural Landscape Report  
Eleanor Roosevelt  
National Historic Site  
Hyde Park, New York

Existing Conditions 2012



National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
[www.nps.gov/oclp](http://www.nps.gov/oclp)

in partnership with  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
SUNY College of Environmental  
Science and Forestry, [www.esf.edu/la/](http://www.esf.edu/la/)

- SOURCES**
1. Aerial photograph, 2009
  2. NPS GIS data
  3. Field inspections
  4. National Wetlands Institute GIS data

**DRAWN BY**  
Laura Roberts, John Auwaerter, Illustrator CS3, 2012  
Byrne Riley, AutoCAD 2008

- LEGEND**
- NPS property boundary, historic boundary
  - Deciduous tree, dominant deciduous woods
  - Evergreen tree, dominant evergreen woods
  - Ornamental shrub
  - Brush
  - Wetland scrub or grasses
  - Turf grass
  - Managed field
  - Water
  - Approximate wetland boundary
  - Paved road
  - Unpaved road
  - Trail, Designated trail route (Hyde Park Trail)
  - Flagstone walk or patio
  - Building/structure above grade, at grade
  - Wooden planking
  - Garden bed
  - Stone wall
  - Fence
  - Power transmission line
  - 2' contour interval

- NOTES**
1. Plan shows landscape as of 2012.
  2. All features shown in approximate scale and location.
  3. See CLR Vol. I for additional existing conditions documentation.





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