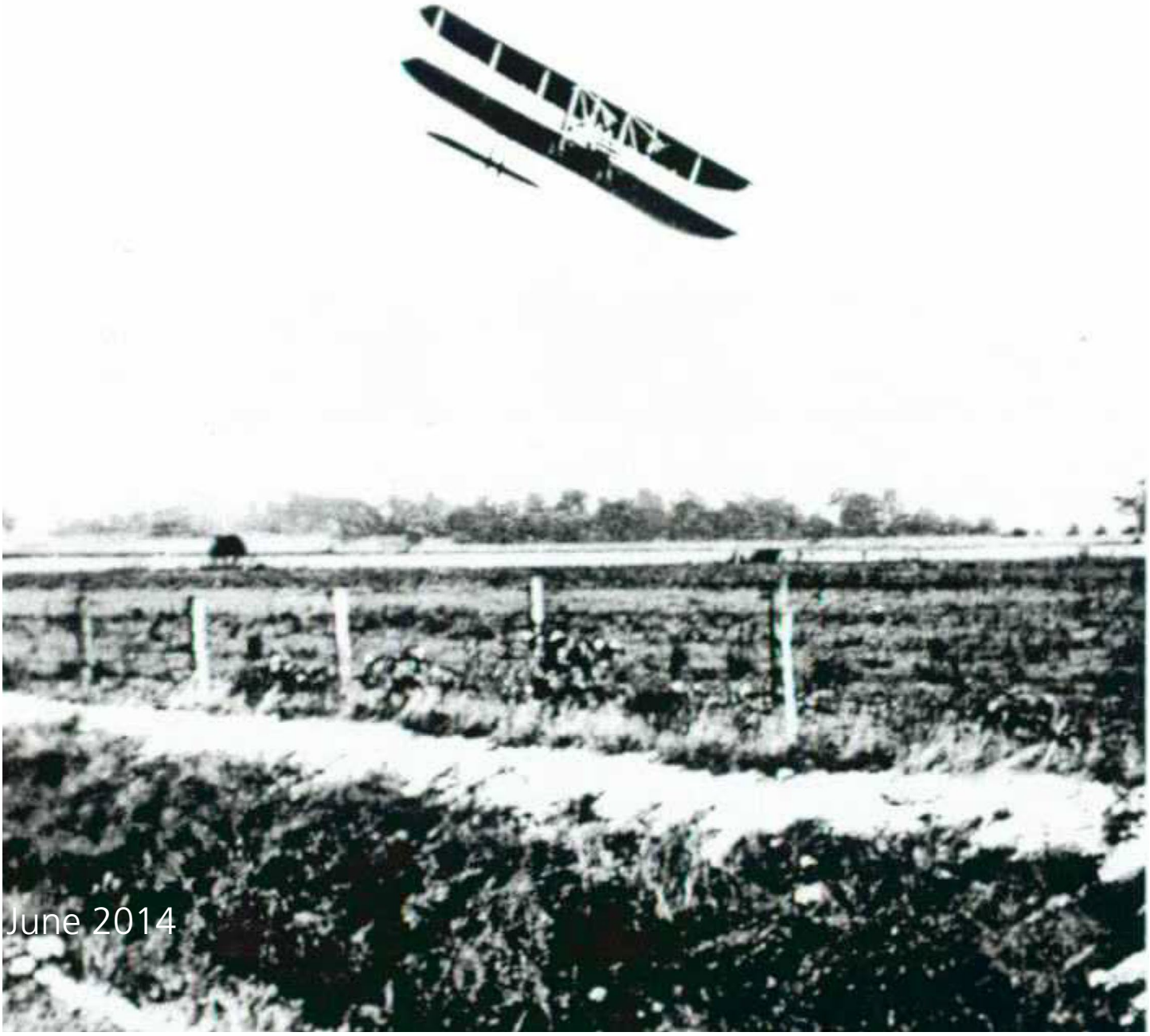
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historic Park
Ohio

Huffman Prairie Flying Field

Cultural Landscapes Inventory



June 2014

Table of Contents

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview 5 45

Chapter 1: Inventory Unit Summary 7

Chapter 2: Concurrence Status 9

Chapter 3: Geographic Information & Location Map 11

Chapter 4: Management Information 17

Chapter 5: National Register Information 19

Chapter 6: Chronology & Physical History 21

Chapter 7: Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity 29

Chapter 8: Condition 39

Chapter 9: Treatment 41

Bibliography 43

Supplemental Information 45

MWRO, Cultural Landscapes Program, 2013

Cover Image: Wright Model B at Huffman Prairie Flying Field. (Wright Brothers Historic Aeronautical Photographs)

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

CLI General Information

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is a database containing information on the historically significant landscapes within the National Park System. This evaluated inventory identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics as character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved inventory records when all required data fields are entered, the park superintendent concurs with the information, and the landscape is determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places through a consultation process or is otherwise managed as a cultural resource through a public planning process.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures (LCS), assists the National Park Service (NPS) in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2001), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that responds to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two goals are associated with the CLI: 1) increasing the number of certified cultural landscapes (1b2B) servicewide; and 2) bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (1a7). The CLI is maintained by the Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program, WASO, and is the official source of cultural landscape information servicewide.

Implementation of the CLI is coordinated and approved at the regional level. Each region annually updates a strategic plan that prioritizes work based on a variety of park and regional needs that include planning and construction projects or associated compliance requirements that lack cultural landscape documentation. When the inventory unit record is complete and concurrence with the findings is obtained from the superintendent and the State Historic Preservation Office, the regional CLI coordinator certifies the record and transmits it to the national CLI Coordinator for approval. Only records approved by the national CLI coordinator are included in the CLI for official reporting purposes.

Relationship between the CLI and a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR)

The CLI and the CLR are related efforts in the sense that both document the history, significance, and integrity of park cultural landscapes. However, the scope of the CLI is limited by the need to achieve concurrence with the park superintendent, and resolve eligibility questions when a National Register nomination does not exist, or when an existing nomination inadequately addresses the eligibility of landscape characteristics. Ideally, a park's CLI work (which many include multiple inventory units) precedes a CLR because the baseline information in the CLI not only assists with priority setting when more than one CLR is needed it also assists with determining more accurate scopes of work for the CLR effort.

The CLR is the primary treatment document for significant park landscapes. It therefore requires a more in depth level of research and documentation, both to evaluate the historic and the existing condition of the landscape and to recommend a preservation treatment strategy that meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the treatment of historic properties.

The scope of work for a CLR, when the CLI has not been done, should include production of the CLI record. Depending on its age and scope, existing CLR's are considered the primary source for the history, statement of significance, and descriptions of contributing resources that are necessary to complete a CLI record.

Chapter 1: Inventory Unit Summary

Inventory Unit Description

The Huffman Prairie Flying Field is the site used by the Wright Brothers from 1904 to 1905 to develop and test the world's first practical airplane, the Wright Flyer III. It was on this field that the Wright Brothers continued their quest to conquer the air after their return from Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in 1903.

During these years the Wright Brothers perfected the technique of flying and developed a powered airplane completely controllable by the pilot; able to bank, turn, circle, and make figure eights; withstand repeated takeoffs and landings; and remain airborne trouble-free for more than half an hour. (http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=1131&ResourceType=Site)

The period of significance for the flying field is 1904-1916. when Huffman Prairie Flying Field was used by the Wright brothers to perfect both the flying machine and flying techniques, and when they operated their School of Aviation. The Huffman Prairie Flying Field has evolved over time as aviation has changed and the filed has been incorporated as part of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The vernacular landscape maintains natural systems, spatial organization, land use, cultural traditions, circulation patterns, topography, vegetation, buildings, cluster arrangements and views.

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Huffman Prairie Flying Field
Property Level:	Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	501182
Parent Landscape:	Huffman Prairie Flying Field

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code:	Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historic Park DAAV
Park Organization Code:	Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historic Park
Park Administrative Unit:	

CLI Hierarchy Description

Huffman Prairie Flying Field is a distinct landscape with no components.

Chapter 2: Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Complete

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative

Original research conducted by seasonals Kathleen Fitzgerald and Richard Radford during FY99 determined that the number of landscapes for the park which are presented in the CLI are correct. Cultural Landscapes Program Leader Sherda Williams and Historical Landscape Architect Marla McEnaney reviewed the landscape hierarchy presented in the database.

This Cultural Landscape Inventory is entirely a CLR to CLI conversation, based on the recent and through work of the Cultural Landscape Report for Huffman Prairie Flying Field and recent site visits to confirm condition.

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: 9/13/2007

National Register Concurrence: Listed to the NHRP - 6/21/1990

National Register Concurrence Narrative:

Huffman Prairie Flying Field has been listed as a National Historic Landmark. This Cultural Landscape Inventory defines the setting of Huffman Prairie Flying Field. The period of significance, 1904-1916, and the boundary was established in National Register of Historic Places nomination form. Significance for the Huffman Prairie Flying Field is represented in Criteria A and B.

Chapter 3: Geographic Information & Location Map

State & County:

State: Ohio

County: Greene

Size (Acres): 84.00

Boundary Description:

The boundary of the 84-acre Huffman Prairie Flying Field historic site lies entirely within the NE ¼ of Section 1, Township 2, Range 8, Bath Township encompassing all the buildings, structures and the immediate setting historically associated with the Huffman Prairie Flying Field.

Boundary UTMs

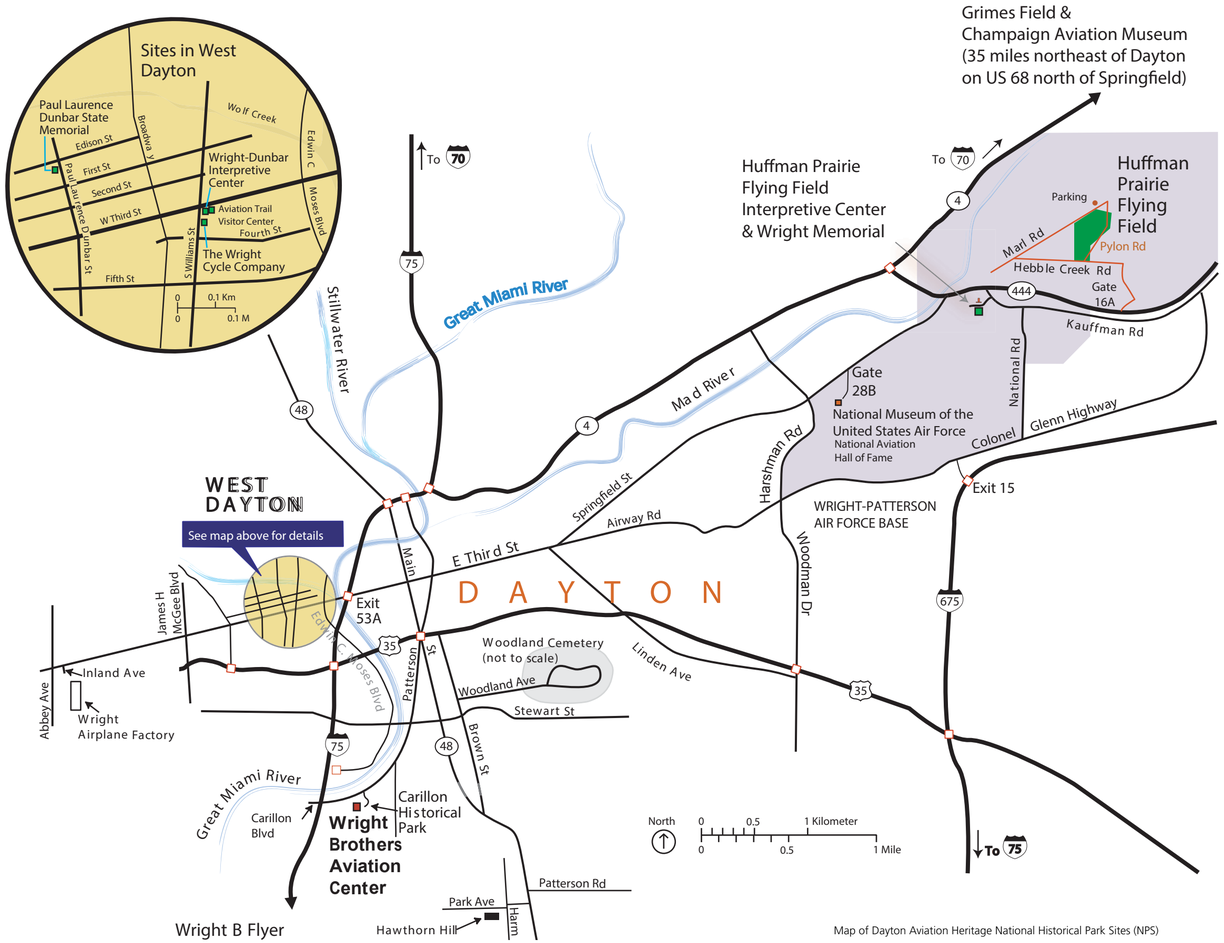
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Datum: NAD 83

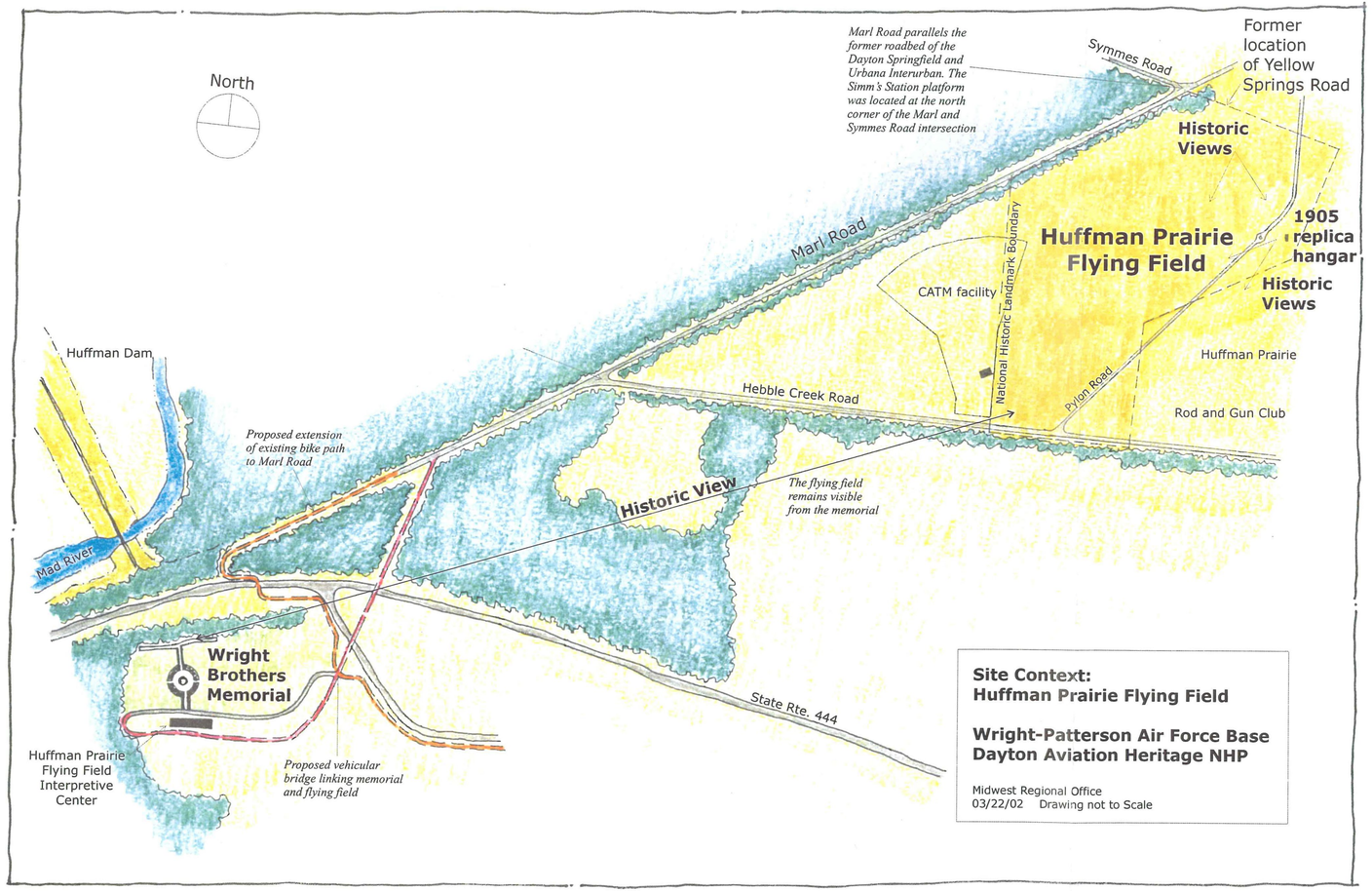
Map Point	UTM	Easting	Northing	Long/Lat
1	17	237755	4410851	-84.063370, 39.807215
2	17	238092	4410705	-84.059381, 39.806006
3	17	237997	4410516	-84.060413, 39.804276
4	17	237492	4410202	-84.066179, 39.801295
5	17	237469	4410040	-84.066067, 39.799839
6	17	237303	4410064	-84.068328, 39.799995
7	17	237381	4410669	-84.067660, 39.805463

Following Page: Map of Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park Sites (NPS)



Map of Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park Sites (NPS)

Following Page: Huffman Prairie Flying Field, Site Context (NPS 2002)



Cultural Context: Regional Context

The first improvement the Wrights made to the field was to build a hangar. Constructed in 1904, the structure was a low wooden gable roofed shed. One of the short walls under a gable end opened the full width of the building to form a large awning door that could be propped open to admit a flying machine pushed in wing tips first. This first hangar was converted into a livestock shelter in the winter of 1904 and was torn down sometime thereafter.

Also during 1904, the Wrights developed a derrick and weight launching system and positioned it on Huffman Field. Dropping a 1600 pound weight from the top of a thirty foot derrick sent the plane, attached by ropes run through pulleys, rolling down a short launching rail. The derrick and weight launching system was used at Huffman Field until 1910 when the Wrights replaced the system with the use of airplane wheels.

In 1905, the Wrights constructed another hangar on Huffman Field, similar in design to the 1904 structure, but larger in size. This hangar remained until ca. 1910 when the Wrights built a new one. The wooden hangar was used both for the Wright School of Aviation and for testing company planes. The 1910 hangar was razed by the Miami Conservancy District in 1938.

No buildings dating to the Wright experiments remain on the site.

Physiographic Context: Regional Context

When the Wright brothers began their flying experiments at Huffman prairie in 1904, it was a farm meadow used to pasture livestock. Covered with prairie vegetation, the field was open and flat with an uneven surface. The 72 acre site was damp and subject to occasional flooding until the nearby Huffman Dam was built in 1922 for flood control.

Overall, the terrain has changed little since the Wright brothers used Huffman Prairie. Today, a portion of Huffman Field and a large adjoining land area remain undisturbed prairie remnants and are designated as an Ohio Natural Landmark. (National Historic Landmark nomination, 1990)

Political Context: Regional Context

The Huffman Prairie Flying Field District is located in Wright-Patterson Air Force Base within the legislated boundary of Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park about 7 miles from Dayton, Ohio, Seventh Congressional District. Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park was authorized in October 16, 1992. The flying field is owned and managed by Wright-Patterson Air Force Base with National Park Service technical assistance, and a cooperative agreement. On June 21, 1990, the Huffman Prairie Flying Field was designated a National Historic Landmark, a program designed to protect examples of the different ecosystems of the world and to encourage research.

Chapter 4: Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Explanatory Narrative:

The Huffman Prairie Flying Field is nationally significant as defined by National Historic Landmark criteria and is related to the park's legislated significance, and therefore falls under Management Category A: Must be Preserved and Maintained.

Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

Management Agreement:

Type of Agreement: Memorandum of Agreement

Management Category Agreement Narrative:

The MOA is "authorized IAW P.L. 102-419, 16 Oct 92, Dayton Aviation Heritage Preservation Act of 1992, 106 Stat. 2141-2143, 16 U.S.C. Sec. 1535 which establishes the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park and establishes Huffman Prairie Flying Field, located within Wright-Patterson Air Force Base boundaries, as a unit of the park, and authorizes NPS to enter into cooperative agreements with federal agencies for use and management of properties within the boundaries of the park." (MOA-508, 2005: 1)

NPS Legal Interest:

Type of Interest: None- Other Federal Agency Owned

Other Agency or Organization: Wright-Patterson Air Force Base

Explanatory Narrative:

Huffman Prairie Flying Field is one of four sites that comprise the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park. The site is owned and administered by Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in consultation with the National Park Service.

Public Access

Type of Access: Unrestricted

Explanatory Narrative:

The Huffman Prairie Flying Field was open to the public in the spring of 1991 for the first time since it had been closed in 1917 by the United States Army. Currently, the site is open six days a week and closed on Wednesdays.

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? No

Adjacent Lands Description:

There are no adjacent lands (lands outside the boundaries of the park, as defined by the CLI procedures guide).

Huffman Prairie Flying Field is surrounded by Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, which in partnership with the National Park Service, has managed the field as a historic landscape and the prairie as a naturalistic landscape preserving the open views of the field.

Chapter 5: National Register Information

Existing National Register Status

National Register Landscape Documentation:

Entered Documented

National Register Explanatory Narrative:

Huffman Prairie Flying Field has been listed as a National Historic Landmark.

National Register Eligibility

National Register Concurrence:	6/21/1990
Contributing/Individual:	Individual
National Register Classification:	Site
Significance Level:	National
Significance Criteria:	A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history B - Associated with lives of persons significant in our past
Period of Significance:	1904-1916
Historic Context Theme:	Expanding Science and Technology
Subtheme:	Technology (Engineering and Invention)
Facet:	Transportation
Period of Significance:	1904-1916
Historic Context Theme:	Developing the American Economy
Subtheme:	Transportation by Land and Air
Facet:	Air Travel (Airplanes/Airports)
Area of Significance:	Transportation Engineering Invention Military

National Register Information (cont.)

Existing NRIS Information:

Name in National Register:	Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park
NRIS Number	01000227
Primary Certification:	Entered on the National Register
Primary Certification Date:	6/21/1990

Statement of Significance:

Huffman Prairie Flying Field's significance is described in the 1990 National Historic Landmark (NHL) Nomination:

Huffman Prairie Flying Field is significant because of its outstanding role in the development and testing of the world's first practical airplane, the Wright Flyer III. Moreover, Huffman Field, touted by some historians as the cradle of aviation and the world's first aerodrome, is the flying field where Wilbur and Orville Wright obtained the necessary practice and experience to master the principles of flight. The Wright brothers themselves always said they really learned to fly on Huffman Field.

Although the initial powered, controlled and sustained flights were made by the Wrights at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in 1903, it was at Huffman Field in 1904 and 1905 that the Wrights continued their quest to conquer the air and developed the world's first practical airplane. At Huffman Field, the Wrights perfected the technique of flying and developed a powered airplane completely controllable by the pilot; able to bank, turn, circle, and make figure eights; withstand repeated takeoffs and landings; and remain airborne trouble-free for more than half an hour. Huffman Field is significant as the location of both the Wright Company's School of Aviation and Exhibition Company. Huffman Field was made famous by the Wright brothers' School of Aviation, which operated there from 1910 through 1916 and trained many pilots for World War I. The field also served as the testing grounds for the Wright Company; every model of plane designed and manufactured by the Wright Company was test flown at Huffman Prairie. The world's first air cargo shipment was made from Huffman Field in 1910, thus adding to the site's historical significance. Huffman Prairie Flying Field has made a significant contribution to America's history of aviation.

Chapter 6: Chronology and Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape type:	Historic Vernacular Landscape

Current and Historic Use/Function:

Primary Historic Function:	Air-Related Other
Primary Current Use:	Air Force Facility

Current and Historic Names:

Name:	Type of Name:
Huffman Prairie Flying Field	Current
Huffman Prairie	Both Current and Historic
Wilbur Wright Field	Historic
Wright Field	Historic
Patterson Field	Historic
Simms	Historic
Simms Station	Historic

Chronology

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1795	Land Transfer	The Treaty of Greenville placed Ohio under U.S. control.
CE 1802	Platted	The first land survey was completed by Israel Ludlow in 1802.
CE 1803	Established	Greene County was established in 1803.
CE 1807	Established	Bath Township was formed in 1807.
CE 1812	Land Transfer	William Huffman moved to Ohio in 1812 and acquired land, including the future "Huffman Prairie."
CE 1830	Explored	Circa 1830, John Whitten Van Cleve, amateur naturalist, classified over 200 plants at Huffman Prairie.
CE 1840	Built	Circa 1840, the indigenous trail system was formalized by Euro-American settlers in Greene County.
CE 1847	Land Transfer	William P. Huffman took over a tract of land that included the current flying field from his father, William Huffman, in 1847.
CE 1850	Built	Circa 1850, the first streetcar line was established between Dayton and Springfield.
CE 1870	Land Transfer	Circa 1870, Torrence Huffman inherited a land parcel from his father that later became known as "Huffman Prairie."
CE 1874	Farmed/Harvested	Corn, wheat, oats, potatoes, rye and barley were listed on a plat map from 1874 as major Bath Township crops. Farmers were also raising livestock, producing dairy and cultivating fruit orchards.
CE 1890	Built	Around circa 1890, a second streetcar line was built to provide transportation within Bath Township.

Chronology

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1900	Built	An interurban rail line ran between Dayton and Springfield, which later carried supplies to the Army and eventually Air Force military installations.
CE 1904	Built	In the spring of 1904, Orville and Wilbur Wright transported materials and tools to Huffman Prairie on the interurban line to build their hangar. They cut the field's long grasses with a scythe to prepare a take-off and landing area. By September, they had built their launching catapult.
CE 1905	Built	In 1905, the Wright brothers built a second hangar at the flying field after moving the first structure to an adjacent farm.
	Engineered	In October 1905, Orville completed their longest flight to date.
CE 1906	Abandoned	The flying field was abandoned while the Wrights attempted to patent and market their invention.
CE 1910	Built	Back at the field, the third hangar was built near the interurban to house their new School of Aviation. They leased the field from the Huffman's.
CE 1913	Altered	In 1913, a devastating flood damaged Dayton. The impacts of and response to the flood drastically changed the physical appearance of the area surrounding the flying field.
CE 1915	Land Transfered	In 1915, portions of the Huffman's property was purchased by the Miami Conservancy District. The District began building earthen dams along the Mad River in response to the 1913 flood. One of the dams would cross the river near the southwestern corner of the flying field.
CE 1916	Abandoned	The Wright's third hangar was abandoned after the School of Aviation was closed.

Chronology

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1917	Established	In 1917, approximately 2,100 acres surrounding the flying field, an area known as Wilbur Wright Field, were leased by the Army to establish the Signal Corps Aviation School to train pilots. The Army also founded the Fairfield Aviation General Supply Depot to provide logistical support for Wilbur Wright Field as well as other Midwestern field schools.
CE 1918-1923	Built	The Huffman Dam was under construction between 1918 and 1923.
CE 1919	Moved	In 1919, the Miami Conservancy District moved the interurban line to higher ground.
CE 1913	Military Operation	The War Department re-designated the portion of Wilbur Wright Field east of Huffman dam to Patterson Field in 1931.
CE 1936-1944	Demolished	The 1910 hangar was demolished between the late 1930s to early 1940s.
CE 1941	Built	In 1941, the shed-roofed Pylon building was constructed on the flying field to improve visibility of the flying field from the Wright Brothers Memorial. By this time, Pylon Road and Hebble Creek Road were in place, and the area was closed to the public.
CE 1944	Retained	Remnants of the Dayton-Springfield Pike were still evident along the northern boundary of the flying field.
CE 1946	Built	The transmitter building and VHF house were constructed on the flying field on 1946.
CE 1948	Military Operation	In 1948, Wright and Patterson Fields were merged to form Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.
CE 1950	Built	Circa 1950, building 916 and Theolodite Building were constructed on the flying field.
CE 1951	Maintained	Wright-Patterson Air Force Base began actively managing the Huffman Prairie area for hunting by mowing “access strips.”

Chronology

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1951-1954	Cultivated	Wright-Patterson Air Force Base began an agricultural leasing program.
CE 1960	Built	Circa 1960, CATM facility and Rod and Gun Club were constructed at the southern end of the flying field.
CE 1978	Memorialized	Concrete markers and flagpoles were installed at each corner of the flying field. Markers were also placed at the three hangar sites. All flags and markers were removed after a few years.
CE 1980	Altered	Circa 1980, mowing at the flying field ceased.
CE 1990	Memorialized	The flying field was designated a National Historic Landmark.
	Reconstructed	The 1905 hangar replica was placed on site in 1990.
CE 1991	Planted	In 1991, the Prairie Garden was created behind the replica hangar.
	Established	In 1991, the Huffman Prairie Flying Field was opened to the public.
CE 1992	Memorialized	In 1992, concrete boundary markers and flags were placed at each corner of the field.
CE 1995	Built	Bluebird boxes were installed at the flying field in 1995.
CE 1996	Built	In 1996, a turnaround circle was placed in the Pylon Road near the 1905 hangar replica.
CE 2002	Demolished	In 2002, the Pylon building was demolished.
CE 2003	Built	In 2003, fencing was installed.
	Built	In 2003, wayside exhibits were installed.
	Built	In 2003, an outline of the 1910 hangar was installed.

Cultural Landscape Physical History Narrative

Learning to Fly, Huffman Prairie Flying Field: 1903-1917

On December 17, 1903, the Wrights made the world's first powered and controlled airplane flights. These flights were a major breakthrough in the brother's conquest of the air; however, they represented only another stage in the evolution of developing a flying machine of practical utility. The longest flight at Kitty Hawk lasted less than a minute and covered a distance of only 852 feet. As Aviation historian Charles Gibbs-Smith contends:

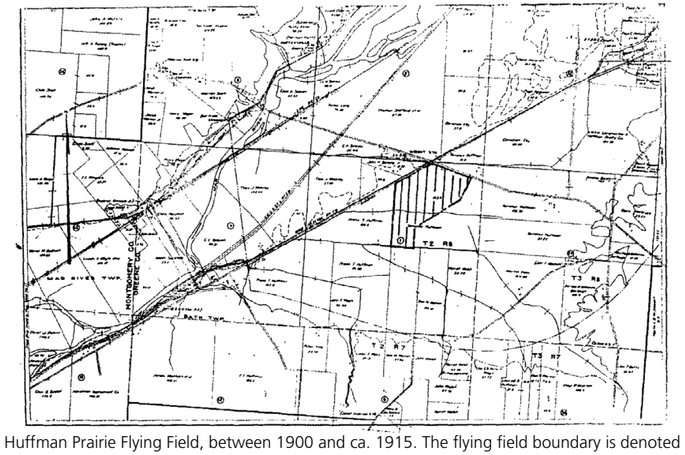
> They had made the first powered, sustained, and controlled flights, and possessed the first potentially practical flying machine.... The Wright's task now was to produce a properly practical machine, which they evolved successfully in 1904 and 1905.

In January 1904, the Wrights began work on an improved flying machine, the 1904 Wright Flyer II. Unlike the prior years, when the Wrights traveled to Kitty Hawk to conduct their aviation experiments, the extensive experiments planned for 1904 and. 1905 were conducted closer to Dayton to avoid the great expenses associated with trips to Kitty Hawk. As author Fred Kelly wrote:

> If the machine was to be practical, many improvements would be necessary, and they would need more experience in flying. Much practice would be required, and that would mean more expense in proportion to income, for they would have less time for building and repairing bicycles. But they decided to devote to aviation whatever amount of time seemed necessary.

Thus to evade costly and lengthy trips to experiment with their machines, the Wrights sought a suitable locale closer to home.

They selected Huffman Prairie for their flying field. The 100-acre cow pasture located about eight miles east of Dayton had two distinct advantages, it was conveniently located adjacent to a Simms Station on the Dayton, Springfield, and Urbana Interurban (locally known as the "Damned Slow and Uncertain" interurban), thus providing handy and economical transportation to the field; and it was relatively isolated, thus granting privacy to experiment. The owner of Huffman Prairie, Torence Huffman, a west side Dayton



Huffman Prairie Flying Field, between 1900 and ca. 1915. The flying field boundary is denoted by the line pattern.

Cultural Landscape Physical History Narrative, continued



Huffman Prairie Flying Field, 1904. (Wright Brothers Historic Aeronautical Photographs)

banker, agreed to let the Wrights use the field rent-free if they would drive his cows away to a safe place and not run over them.

Huffman Prairie, however, was far from an ideal flying field, especially in comparison to the grounds at Kitty Hawk. Wilbur noted the conditions to fellow aviation pioneer Octave Chanute:

> Our Kitty Hawk grounds possess advantages not to be found at our present location, but we must learn to accommodate ourselves to circumstances. At Kitty Hawk we had unlimited space and wind enough to make starting easy with a short track. If the wind was very light we could utilize the hills if necessary in getting the initial velocity. Here we must depend on a long track, and light winds or even dead calms. We are in a very large meadow of about 100 acres. It is skirted on the west and north by trees. This not only shuts off the wind somewhat but also probably gives a slight downtrend. However, this matter we do not consider anything serious. The greater troubles are the facts that in addition to cattle there have been a dozen or more horses in pasture and as it is surrounded by barbwire fencing we have been at much trouble to get them safely away before making trials. Also the ground is an old swamp and is filled with grassy hummocks some six inches high so that it resembles a prairie-dog town.

Chanute acknowledged the situation by replying, "Meantime I hope that you will use great caution in your experiments, and will not run into a cow. I shall be glad to know how you are progressing."
Despite less than perfect conditions, the Wrights made progress with the flying machine at Huffman Field. By mid-April 1904, the brothers erected a wooden hangar on the pasture, thus establishing what aviation historian Gibbs-Smith called the world's first airport. On May 26, Orville made the first of more than one hundred starts of the 1904 flying season. On September 7, the brothers used a catapult starting device for the first time. Consisting of a 1600-pound weight attached to the airplane by ropes and pulleys and hung from inside a thirty-foot derrick positioned at the end of the launching monorail, the device allowed the Wrights to overcome conditions at Huffman Prairie and further increased the practicality of their invention by reducing the dependency on weather conditions. The catapult allowed a machine to "be put into the air after a run of only fifty feet, even in a dead calm." The plane could now be launched almost anytime, no matter what the weather conditions. The Wrights used this catapult launching technique until 1910 when they began using skids.

Cultural Landscape Physical History Narrative, continued

On September 15, 1904, the Wrights again made aviation history, making the first airborne turn in a flying machine. Five days later, Wilbur flew the world's first complete and controlled circle in an airplane. By December 9, 1904, the Wrights had made a total of 105 starts for a total flight time of about fifty minutes.

The 1904 season at Huffman Field was quite successful. Although the flights of the year remained short and accidents were frequent, the year was very beneficial in the experience gained by the brothers. However, the machine had not yet been proven to be a machine of practical utility.

In spring 1905, the Wrights returned to Huffman Field to capitalize on and continue with their experiments of the previous season. They erected a new enlarged hangar to replace the 1904 structure which had been turned into a livestock shelter, and by May, they were assembling the new Wright Flyer III. On June 23, 1905, Orville Wright made the first flight of the season. During the first month of testing, the Flyer III showed no improvement in performance over the 1904 aircraft. The longest flight of the period was only 19.5 seconds and damages and accidents were daily occurrences. It was only after some rebuilding and redesigning that the Flyer III emerged as the world's first practical airplane. At Huffman Field with the 1905 machine the Wrights finally learned the secrets of powered flight and solved its basic problems. At Huffman Field, the brothers learned to successfully bank, turn, circle, and make figure eights with ease and under the complete control of the pilot. On October 5, Wilbur made the longest flight of year, flying for more than thirty-nine minutes and making twenty-nine rounds of the field, thus proving the reliability and endurance of the machine. That same day, the Dayton Daily News published an article declaring that the Wrights were making sensational flights every day at Huffman Prairie.

By the end of the 1905 flying season, the Wrights knew they had their "baby." However, until they could secure a patent and until a contract for the purchase of the Wrights' knowledge and invention could be completed, the brothers would not fly. The number of spectators and newspapermen gathering at Huffman Field was increasing, thus forcing the brothers to discontinue their experiments if secrecy was to be maintained. After two years and 155 flight starts at Huffman Field, the Wright brothers, having finally achieved their goal of developing a flying machine of practical utility, packed up their equipment and abandoned Huffman prairie Flying Field.

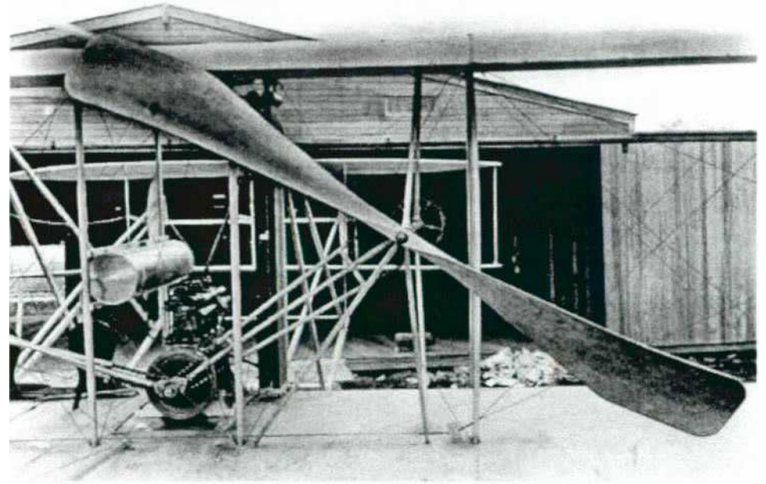


Flight of October 4, 1905. On the following day, Orville completed the longest flight to date. (Wright Brothers Historic Aeronautical Photographs)

The skies over Huffman Field, however, did not remain quiet for long. In 1910, after the Wrights successfully secured a patent for their flying machine and arranged for Wright designed and licensed planes to be sold abroad in Germany, France, and Great Britain, they incorporated the Wright Company of America and opened a factory in Dayton. Not only did this company intend to manufacture and sell airplanes, it also planned to train pilots and operate an exhibition flying team. Consequently, they opened both a Wright Exhibition Company and Wright School of Aviation at Huffman Prairie, and conducted flight tests daily at the field.

The exhibition company, started in March of 1910, was organized to increase the prestige and acceptance

Cultural Landscape Physical History Narrative, continued



Detail of Wright Flyer and south wall of 1910 hangar. (Wright Brothers Historic Aeronautical Photographs)

of aviation and to create a market for the airplane; however, it also served as a profitable sideline for the Wright Company. The exhibition team, which was managed by Roy Knabenshue operated out of a new hangar erected on Huffman Field, and flew at airshows, carnivals, county fairs, and other large public gatherings throughout the country. The team's first exhibition was in Indianapolis, Indiana, on June 13, 1910.

The Wright School of Aviation also opened at Huffman Field in the spring of 1910. Although previously operating a winter flying school in Montgomery, Alabama, Orville Wright, the principal instructor of the school, moved the permanent operations to Huffman Field in Dayton in May 1910. Here at Huffman Field, from 1910 to 1916, Orville and his staff of instructors operated a school billed as "superior to any in this country, if not in the world." The flight school produced "competent pilots eight or ten days after their first trip in an aeroplane." Overall, one hundred and nineteen students were trained at Huffman Field between May 1910 and February 1916. Among the more notable students trained at Huffman Prairie were Lt. Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, Commander of the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II; Griffith Brewer, the first Englishman to fly an airplane; Cal P. Rodgers, the first person to fly across the U.S.A.; Roy Brown, the pilot who shot down the Red Baron during World War I; and three daring women: Rose Dugan, Mrs. Richberg Hornsby, and Marjorie Stinson.

Besides giving flight instruction to the students at the Wright School of Aviation, Wilbur and Orville Wright continued to test new and experimental Wright company aircraft at Huffman Prairie. Almost all of the airplane models manufactured by the Wright Company between 1910 and 1916 were test flown at Huffman Prairie. Wilbur made his last flight as a pilot in America at Huffman Field on May 21, 1910; he was test flying the Wright Model B. Among the Wright Company aircraft Orville test flew at Huffman Prairie were the Model B, Model R, Model EX, Model C, and Model E. Orville also tested many automatic flying and safety devices at Huffman Prairie. On February 5, 1914, Orville received the Aero Club of America Trophy for 1913 for the invention of his automatic stabilizer which was tested and developed at Huffman Field.

Cultural Landscape Physical History Narrative, continued

Orville made his last flight as a pilot on May 13, 1918, flying a Wright 1911 model flyer alongside a new Dayton-Wright Company DeHavilland-4.

On November 7, 1910, Huffman prairie was also the starting point of America's first commercial air-freight flight. Witnessed by Orville and Katharine Wright, Wright Company pilot Phil Parmalee began a sixty-two mile flight to Columbus Ohio, to deliver ten bolts of silk to a local department store. Although the flight was designed as a promotion for the department store, it represented the future possibilities of air freight.

In 1916, about one year after Orville Wright sold the Wright Company, the flight school at Huffman Field closed. In 1917, Huffman Prairie became part of Wilbur Wright Field which was established to train Army pilots, armorers, and aircraft mechanics for World War I. Huffman prairie is still associated with the field of aviation, being a part of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

(The preceding text is taken directly from the National Historic Landmark Nomination prepared by Jill York O'Bright, David G. Richardson and William S. Harlow, January 1990, Section 8, pages 2-8.)

Chapter 7: Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity

Summary:

Overall, Huffman Prairie Flying Field has good physical condition and a high to medium level of integrity. This assessment has strong implications for future management, as it is critical that the intrinsic significance of the flying field be respected: the parcel of land with its historic open meadow character is the cultural resource to be protected. The treatment objective is, first, to minimize or remove intrusions and, second, avoid further intrusion on historic views by maintaining a visual buffer outside of the historic boundaries that prohibits future construction. Prohibiting any further buildings or structures within or near its boundaries can protect the broad views and open character of the field.

In addition to maintaining the open field, treatment guidelines will strive to protect landscape character by preserving all remaining historic features that contribute to the field's significance and removing intrusive features. It is essential that any new features, such as interpretive media, are unobtrusive; this can be accomplished by respecting the historic scale and utilizing appropriate construction methods and materials.

Aspects of Integrity:

Integrity is the ability of a landscape to convey its historic significance. National Register criteria for evaluating landscape integrity uses the seven aspects of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Due to the loss of original historic structures such as the hangars and fences, and the subsequent accumulation of incompatible contemporary features, the overall integrity of the flying field is medium.

Location (High)
The flying field has not been relocated from its historic boundaries and can be distinguished from its contemporary surroundings.

Design (Medium)
Because historic features have been lost and contemporary amenities such as the Rod and Gun Club and Pylon Road have been added, the vernacular character of the flying field has been altered. It retains the open meadow character, but it is no longer evident that the site was once used as a pasture.

Setting (Medium-High)
The physical environment of the flying field has been altered by both internal and external developments, such as the Rod and Gun Club and Pylon Road. While these developments have specifically intruded into the historic views and altered historic circulation patterns, the open meadow character remains.

Materials (Medium)
Although the general vegetative character of the flying field remains, a number of contemporary materials and construction methods not associated with the period of significance have been added to the site. This includes the commemorative markers and the corner walls.

Workmanship (Low)
Physical evidence from the historic period is limited. The site is dominated by reconstructed features which are non-historic, and therefore more interpretive in nature.

Aspects of Integrity, continued:

Feeling (Medium-High)
Despite the loss of historic buildings and structures, such as the hangars and boundary fence, and the addition of contemporary intrusions, the landscape expresses the aesthetic or historic sense of the period of significance. This is mostly due to the enduring historic views of the remaining open meadow character, and the texture created by grassy vegetation.

Association (High)
There is a direct link between the historic events and persons with which the flying field is associated, especially between the Wrights' experiments and the aviation technology evident at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. (CLR, 2002, 82)

Landscape Characteristics:

Buildings and Structures
Circulation
Cultural Traditions
Land Use
Natural Systems and Features
Vegetation
Views and Vistas
Spatial Organization
Topography

Buildings and Structures: Landscape Characteristics

During the flying field's period of significance, the site featured several buildings and structures used by the Wright brothers. During the 1904-05 experimental period, the Wrights built two consecutive hangars and a launching catapult. They built a third hangar and at least one small shed during the 1910-16 flight school era. None of these structural features survived past the 1940s. Adjacent structures associated with the Wrights' activities included the interurban line and the Simm's Station platform. Neither of these features is evident today, though Marl Road has reflects the linear quality of the historic interurban corridor.
A portion of the interurban railbed remains adjacent to Marl Road.

The contemporary structures at the flying field are intended to facilitate interpretation of the historic period. Although they should not be considered historic, they do contribute to understanding the significance of the field and represent the added commemorative nature of the site. The replica 1905 hangar is the sole building; the structures include the replica catapult, the 1905 and 1910 hangar markers and the NHL marker, and the seven flags set in low stone walls marking the corners of the field. The buildings and structures (except the corner markers) are clustered near the center of the field, where most of the Wright brothers' activities were focused. Except for the replica hangar, the structures do not represent historic features and add contemporary character to what could be an essentially accurate scene. The stone markers, however, are useful in that they define the historic boundary of the field. Although the replica catapult represents a historic structure, the replica is not full-scale and is therefore somewhat misleading.



Corner wall and flagpole adjacent to the 1905 replica hangar. (NPS 2002)

Circulation: Landscape Characteristics

The Wright brothers accessed the flying field using the interurban line that ran from Dayton. Once they left the interurban platform, it is not known how they accessed the 1904-1905 hangars, but it is likely that during the 1910-1916 period they followed Yellow Springs Road to an opening in the fence that was near the hangar. Visitors that came to the field to watch the Wrights' experiments probably rode the interurban or came via car on the Dayton-Springfield Pike, the primary vehicular route that ran parallel to the interurban along the northwest edge of the flying field. The Dayton-Springfield Pike is now known as Marl Road. The interurban corridor is extant, though the tracks and the Simm's Station platform have been gone for some time.

Contemporary access roads include Hebble Creek, Marl, and Pylon Roads. All vehicular traffic arrives on Hebble Creek; drivers can choose either Marl or Pylon Road to enter the field. The shaded hiking/biking trail along Marl Road provides enjoyable access to the flying field and prairie. Pylon Road, constructed in 1941, provides direct access to the cluster of buildings and structures near the center of the field. Visitors to this area use a small pull-off parking lot just north of the flying field boundary. Both Hebble Creek and Pylon Roads adversely impact landscape integrity as they traverse the historic field. Pylon Road is more intrusive, as its raised roadbed interrupts views across the field and cuts the field into two segments, making it hard for pedestrians to move freely throughout the field.

Beginning in 1991, Wright-Patterson maintenance crews mowed a walking trail to represent the historic oval flight path used by the Wrights. A brochure available at the field is keyed to specific stopping points along the trail. The trail moves visitors through the site, and symbolizes the early notion that historically, property rights extended vertically-the Wrights had to stay within the perimeter of the field while in flight.

There have been recent developments to improve visitor access to the flying field, and establish a stronger physical link between the flying field and other aviation sites. There have been improvements made to existing interpretive trails, and new ones constructed. A new parking lot has been constructed to better facilitate visitation to the Huffman Prairie Flying Field Interpretive Center.



Pylon Road bisects the flying field, interrupting historic views. (NPS 2002)

Cultural Traditions: Landscape Characteristics

The significance of the connection between the flying field and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base cannot be understated. The legacy that is evident whenever an aircraft departs or arrives at Wright-Patterson is a wonderful opportunity for interpreting the Wright brothers' contribution to aviation history. Huffman Prairie Flying Field's significance lies primarily in the early 1904-05 experiments, but it is also the place where aviation technology was born. It is the birthplace of the Air Force and the starting point of an aviation continuum that is evident with every take-off and landing that passes over the flying field.

The flying field possesses commemorative value for aviation enthusiasts and Dayton residents. When the Wright Brothers Memorial was constructed in the late 1930s through the efforts of Colonel Deeds and other community leaders, a physical link was established between the Memorial and the flying field. The Pylon building (demolished in 2002) was added to improve the visibility of the field from the Memorial overlook. The 1905 hangar replica and the three markers installed for the 1990 National Historic Landmark dedication ceremony have also left a contemporary layer of commemoration.

Land Use: Landscape Characteristics

The proximity of the flying field to both the Huffman Dam and runways has provided protection from extensive development. The historic agricultural use of the former Huffman property ended in 1917 when the Army leased the area upstream from the dam. Although the presence of the Army and later, the Air Force, continued to expand around Huffman Prairie Flying Field, limited agricultural activities persisted into the 1980's under a leasing program. Since the early 1990's, the Air Force, in partnership with the National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy, respectively, has been managing the flying field as a historic landscape, and the prairie as a naturalistic landscape.

The open character of the historic landscape and surrounding prairie still allows for diverse views of the flying field, and, in return, most of the adjacent land uses are visible from the field. The level topography, absence of shrub and tree vegetation, and limited development creates a broad viewshed that should be protected into the future. The viewshed should be maintained as a buffer zone within which no new construction should take place. The flying field and prairie have been protected for almost one hundred years, this legacy of preservation should be continued into the future.

Existing buildings and structures linked to the military operations that surround the flying field include the runways and hazardous cargo loading pads to the north, and the Rod and Gun Club to the south. The runways and pads are outside the buffer zone and do not detract from the historic views. Views to the western and eastern edges of the flying field currently reflect the historic character of the landscape as they feature a compatible recreational use including, respectively, bicycling/hiking trails along Marl Road and golf courses along Skeel Avenue and Hebble Creek Road.

The ranges are more problematic, for a number of reasons. Full development of the National Historical Park will bring increased visitation, and these facilities will have a major impact on how visitors experience the site. They represent a significant visual and auditory intrusion on the historic character of the flying field, a potentially severe impact on site accessibility, and pose a possible environmental issue for the flying field. The impact area extends beyond the structures and encompasses Marl Road, one of the primary access routes to the site. At present, it is not unusual for access to be limited while the CATM facility is in use, and visitors often hear gunshots while trying to enjoy and appreciate the flying field.

Natural Systems and Features: Landscape Characteristics

According to 1802 survey notes, the area that is now Huffman Prairie Flying Field was a wet, boggy prairie located near the Mad River. The flying field's location within the floodplain led to infrequent cultivation; the Huffman family used it for grazing their cows while the Wrights carried out their early experiments. Wilbur Wright described it as "an old swamp ... filled with grassy hummocks." In the aftermath of the 1913 flood the river was dammed. Because the Huffman property was within the defined retention area created by the dam, the threat that the field could be submerged increased, limiting future development of the site. It is primarily for this reason that the flying field is intact today.

The field remains fairly low-lying and can become quite wet according to the season. The soil is a combination of Linwood Muck and Westland soils. Linwood Muck "consists of level, poorly drained organic soil, 16 to 50 inches thick, grading into a loamy material." Westland is characterized by a surface layer of "silty clay loam about fourteen inches thick and is underlain by sand and gravel." Neither series is well suited to agriculture, though conditions can be improved through artificial drainage. Limited documentation exists that drainage tiles were installed at the flying field, although there is no evidence of their specific location.

Huffman Prairie, which lies to the north and east of the flying field, is a 109-acre parcel recognized as Ohio's largest remnant tallgrass prairie. The broad, open prairie provides the overall setting for the historic landscape of the flying field, though at times, the distinction between the two areas is blurred. The prairie had been drained and cultivated for hay or mowed until 1984. When left fallow, the remnant native grasses became apparent. Beginning in 1990 and continuing for a number of years, The Nature Conservancy restored and managed the Prairie in conjunction with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. A number of vegetation surveys have yielded information on remnant species. "The site [Huffman Prairie Flying Field] has at least three dozen prairie indicator species including the prairie grasses big bluestem (Andropogon gerardi), Indian grass (Sorghastrum nutans), prairie cordgrass (Spartina pectinata) and little bluestem (Schizachyrium scoparium); and prairie forbs such as ox-eye (Heliopsis helianthoides), black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia hirta), and gray-headed coneflower (Ratibida pinnata)." Upon close inspection, one can see that the flying field's vegetation is less diverse than the prairie. The prairie has more vividly flowering species, while the flying field is mostly grasses that are frequently seen in abandoned fields. At present, the flying field is mown as needed and the vegetation can get quite high, which directly contradicts its historic appearance. Historic period photographs show a landscape of closely grazed pasture with a shaggy, bumpy surface, and large trees scattered across the site. Because the photographer's location is not documented, it is not possible to pinpoint where the trees were on the site. Today, there are trees scattered across the southern portion of the flying field (see Vegetation).

Vegetation: Landscape Characteristics

Historically, extensive pasture and taller meadows surrounded the closely grazed Huffman property. The flying field was dotted with large trees and possessed a rather scruffy appearance. Biotic elements, including the tree row along Marl Road and remnants from the locust tree survive from the 1904-05 period. The tree row, though essentially intact, has a much fuller character than during the historic period, when it had a rather sparse, and somewhat open appearance. This change most likely results from the cessation of grazing and transition from interurban to secondary road.

Today, the flying field consists of mixed native and exotic grassland species with scattered large trees; while of the Prairie features a richer display of flowering species. The Prairie Garden planted by the Air Force as an interpretive tool intersects with the historic flying field near the 1905 replica hangar. At this time, it is difficult to distinguish the Prairie Garden from the prairie itself. The Prairie Garden is considered non-historic, as are the barberry, yew and cotoneaster shrubs at the 1905 hangar and NHL markers and Pylon building.



View of mown area around the replica hangar, meadow and tree row in the distance. (NPS 2002)

Views and Vistas: Landscape Characteristics

Photographs of the field taken during the historic period focus on the flying experiments; visual clues of the historic landscape are limited and usually quite blurry. Features that figure prominently in the historic views include the hangars, tree row, locust tree, grassy hummocks, and boundary fence. (See Land Use for discussion of contemporary impacts on the viewshed.)

The flying field is visible today from Skeel Avenue and Hebble Creek Road, with the help of the flags that have been placed at each of the seven corners. Because it is not grazed or regularly mown, the eastern boundary cannot be easily distinguished from the surrounding prairie. Modern utilities related to base operations are primarily limited to the Marl Road corridor, where they are hidden in the tree row. Overhead lines run along Hebble Creek, and a small utility-related structure near the middle of the field is hidden by shrub growth.

While the flying field retains the open character and one major physical element from the historic period, it has accumulated a number of features associated with commemorative activities or Air Force operations.



View of the open topography at the southern end of the flying field. The Rod and Gun Club is in the background. (NPS 2002)

Spatial Organization: Landscape Characteristics

The flying field sits in a broad open meadow that is bounded on the west and south sides by historic tree rows. At the northern and eastern edges the boundary of the field is less distinct as it blends into Huffman Prairie. Historically, a post and wire fence defined the perimeter of the flying field. Today, flags mark the seven corners of the flying field. Because the field is no longer grazed or frequently mown, the historic juxtaposition between the bumpy, closely grazed ground plane and surrounding meadow is not evident.

Today, most activity at the field is concentrated at its approximate center. Pylon Road provides access to the commemorative features that dot this area, such as the 1905 hangar replica, catapult replica, pylon building, and markers. The vertical orientation of the hangar, catapult, and flags punctuate the horizontal plane of the flying field. The skeet and firing ranges are clustered at the southern end of the field, and intrude upon an area that appears open in the historic photographs.

Over time, the spatial organization of the flying field has changed to a relatively minor degree. Although the Huffman property was probably just one in a series of pastured or cultivated open areas, the relationship between the pasture and the surrounding meadows was defined by tree rows and a post and wire fence. Historic photographs do not yield detailed information regarding the type of crops that could have grown in adjacent plots, or whether grazing patterns differed from the Huffman property.

Topography: Landscape Characteristics

The topographic character of the flying field has remained intact since the historic period, with the exception of the Pylon Road corridor. When the roadbed was constructed, the earth was built up approximately five feet in an attempt to avoid the low-lying spots near the field's center. Photographs taken to document the early flights show an uneven, closely grazed surface that posed many challenges to safe takeoffs and landings. The field remains flat and open; because the grass is currently maintained at a longer height, the bumpy quality is not as visible.

Chapter 8: Condition Assessment

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment:	Fair
Assessment Date:	6/24/2002

Condition Assessment:	Fair
Assessment Date:	7/24/2008

Chapter 9: Treatment

Approved Treament Document Explanatory Narrative

The 2002 Cultural Landscape Report for Huffman Prairie Flying Field states that “based on the flying field’s significance, physical condition, integrity, as well as more mundane factors such as available funding and staff, the most desirable and feasible alternative is rehabilitation.”

In order to protect historic features and facilitate interpretation with new features, “rehabilitation allows for the most flexibility for protecting the historic landscape while simultaneously accommodating appropriate contemporary use.” As part of the treatment, the CLR recommends determining the compatibility of the contemporary features and merit of retention.” (CLR, 2002, 84)

Approved Treatment:	Rehabilitation
Approved Treatment Document:	Cultural Landscape Report
Document Date:	6/24/2002
Approved Treatment Completed:	Unknown

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Huffman Priaire Flying Field
Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park

Supplemental Information

Table 1- Landscape Evaluation

Landscape Evaluation table from the 2002 Cultural Landscape Report, page 79

TABLE I—LANDSCAPE EVALUATION

HISTORIC FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	CONDITION
Meadow	Broad, unobstructed views of relatively flat topography with a bumpy, scruffy-textured ground, open sky, and an irregularly shaped perimeter.	Fair
Locust Tree	Visible in the most early flight photographs, the original tree was the Wright's landmark for navigating their circular flight path. A clump of possible descendents of the tree is located in the approximate center of the field	Good
Former Interurban Corridor	The linear corridor, lined by the tree row, defines the route of the former Dayton-Springfield Pike, the historic western boundary of the flying field. The track bed, still evident under the forest growth, represents the historic circulation system that the Wrights and other Dayton residents used to access the field. Although the tracks have been removed, the physical connection between the corridor and the field is intact. The tree row, which also retains its physical relationship with the field, is denser than during the historic period.	Fair
COMMEMORATIVE FEATURE	**DESCRIPTION**	**CONDITION**
1905 Hangar Replica	An interpretive feature constructed for the 1990 NHL dedication ceremony. It provides a sense of scale in the historic landscape and represents the austerity of the Wright's early flight experiments.	Good
1905 and 1910 Hangar and NHL Markers	Interpretive features constructed for the 1990 NHL dedication ceremony. They facilitate understanding of the historic landscape.	Good
Launching Catapult	An interpretive exhibit built as an Eagle Scout project in 1993. This exhibit is a two-thirds scale replica model of the historic structure.	Good
Stone Walls with Flags	Installed in 1991, they reflect the historic materials and construction methods of the Wright Brothers Memorial. The walls and flags serve to define the historic landscape boundary.	Good
Pylon Building	Installed in 1941 to improve visibility of the flying field from the Wright Brothers Memorial. Because the flying field was not open to the public at that time, the pylon served as a tool for interpreting the site from the Memorial.	Good
Concrete Sidewalks	Installed incrementally between 1941 and 1990, the walks provide access to the Pylon building and various commemorative markers. Some of the slabs are worn and cracked.	Good to fair
INTRUSIVE FEATURES	**DESCRIPTION**	**CONDITION**
CATM facility and Rod and Gun Club	Although the ranges are part of adjacent base operations and recreational land use, they present a visual and auditory intrusion.	Good
Pylon Road	The road divides the historic property and interrupts historic views.	Good
Guest Register Mailbox	A contemporary residential feature that appears incongruous in the historic landscape	Good
Shrub Plantings	The contoneaster and barberry shrubs are incompatible with the meadow character of the flying field and surrounding prairie.	Good
NON-EXTANT FEATURES		
1904 hangar, 1910 hangar, boundary fence, interurban tracks and platform, catapult, Yellow Springs Road, bridge across Trout Creek.		

79