
Herbert Hoover National Historic Site



General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

April 2004

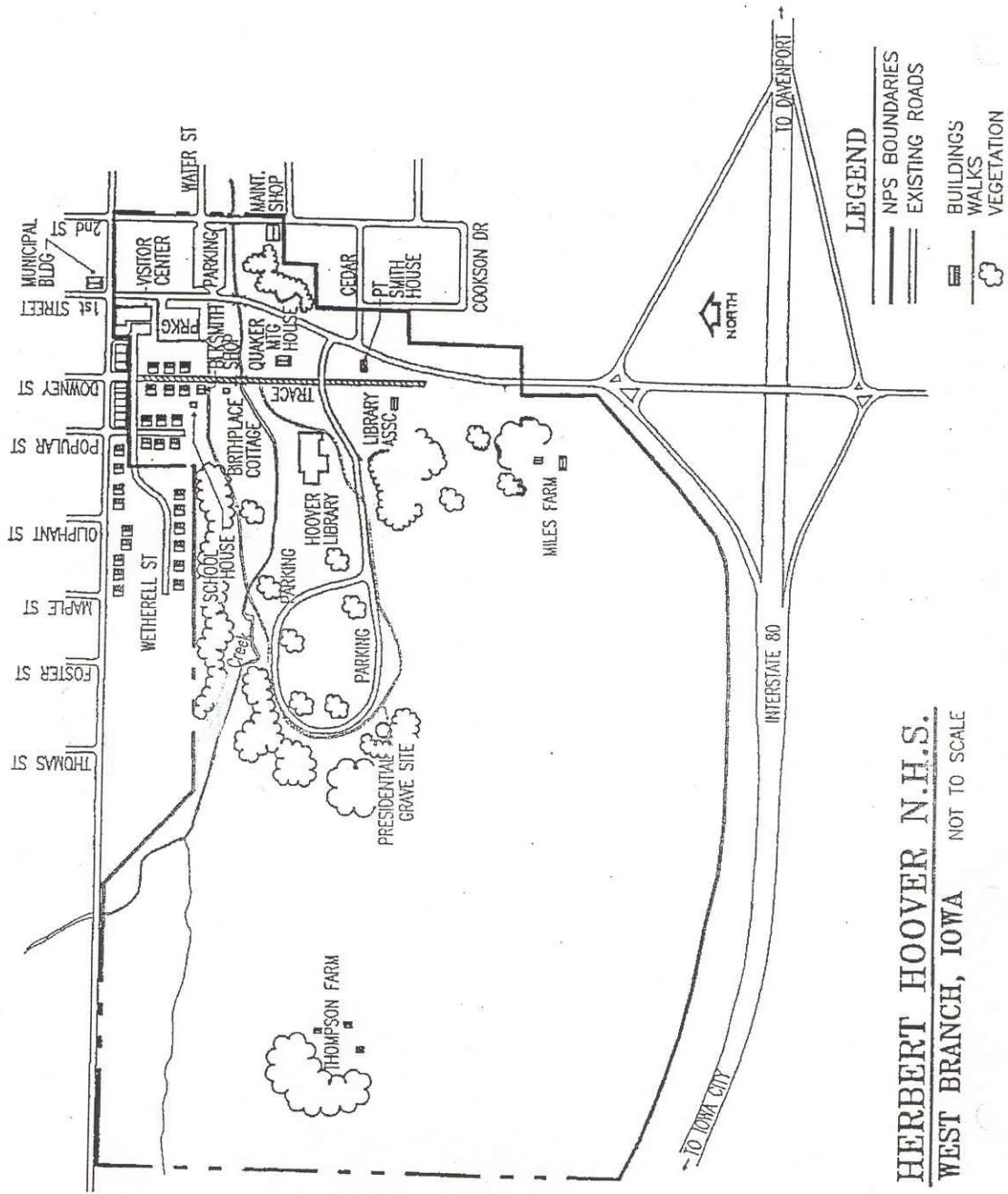


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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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PREAMBLE

He was a man of remarkable achievements and a succession of careers. A mining engineer and businessman whose far-flung enterprises touched six continents before World War I. A humanitarian whose name came to represent the staff of life to millions of human beings afflicted by famine and by war. An indefatigable traveler who spent more than two years of his adulthood at sea and who circled the globe five times before the advent of aviation. A prodigious worker, a translator of scientific treatise, an historian and philanthropist, the author of numerous books and hundreds of articles and speeches. An administrator, a Cabinet secretary, president of the United States. An elder statesman who, by the time he died, had lived nearly half as long as the American Republic. A life that began as a son of pioneers on the American prairie nine years after the Civil War.¹

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment* defines the direction for Herbert Hoover National Historic Site for the next 15-20 years. The general management plan represents the primary planning document for the National Park Service. The approved plan will provide a framework for decisions about ways to ensure the preservation of the park's cultural and natural resources and to provide high quality visitor experiences. The completed plan will establish a basis for decision-making to achieve defined long-term management goals.

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site (Historic Site), a 186.80 acre tract of land in the town of West Branch, Iowa (West Branch), includes the birthplace of President Herbert Hoover, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum (HHPL), the Gravesite of President and Mrs. Hoover, the site of a house in which Hoover lived in West Branch from 1879 until 1884, a Friends (Quaker) Meeting House, a representation of his father's Blacksmith Shop, a Schoolhouse, and several late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century houses and outbuildings.

Additional resources include an unnamed branch of the Wapsinonoc Creek (for reference purposes, we will refer to this branch as "Hoover Creek"), the Isaac Miles Farm, an eighty-one acre reconstructed tallgrass prairie, the Thompson Farm, maintenance facility, visitor center, picnic area, parking areas, and open space. The Historic Site also includes Parkside Drive, which connects West Branch with Interstate 80, and the Loop Road, which connects Parkside Drive with the HHPL and the Gravesite.

The Historic Site is located in Cedar County, Iowa, on the southern edge of West Branch. It is 10 miles east of Iowa City, 34 miles southeast of Cedar Rapids, and 46 miles west of Davenport. The Historic Site is in the Second Congressional District.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR A GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

¹George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover. The Engineer, 1874-1914* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983), 1.

The Historic Site has operated under a 1970 *Master Plan* and a 1978 *Addendum* that do not adequately address current levels of visitation and patterns of visitor use. In the early 1990's, a major expansion of the HHPL and the revival of West Branch's downtown commercial district increased visitation and length of visits to the Historic Site. Special programs and exhibits at the HHPL attract many repeat visitors. Successful visits to the area depend upon orientation to the many opportunities available at the HHPL, the Historic Site, and West Branch. Increased visitation has brought greater traffic volume and increased traffic congestion to the Historic Site. The separate entrance roads and parking lots for the HHPL and the visitor center confuse many drivers.

The Historic Site has additional deficiencies with two of its primary facilities. The maintenance facility stands within the 5-year regulatory flood plain of "Hoover Creek" and has flooded nine times in eleven years including five 100-year floods. Those events hinder efficiency and effectiveness of the maintenance program and damage equipment. The visitor center does not have sufficient space to accommodate orientation, museum exhibits, fee collection, special exhibits, cooperating sales, an interpretive film, and interpretive programs. The visitor center is also within the 10-year regulatory flood plain of "Hoover Creek".

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HERBERT HOOVER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Based on the Historic Site's legislation and legislative history, the planning team defined the following purpose and significance statements.

Congress authorized the Historic Site on August 12, 1965, through **Public Law 89-119 (79 Stat. 510)**. This legislation authorized the acquisition and development of lands in the City of West Branch to "preserve in public ownership historically significant properties associated with the life of Herbert Hoover." **Public Law 89-119** authorized the transfer of all federal property to the NPS with the exception of the HHPL. The law also authorized the acquisition of additional property to enlarge and develop the Historic Site. The NPS established the Historic Site on August 17, 1972.

Purpose

- Preserve the Birthplace Cottage, Gravesite, and other historically significant properties associated with the life of Herbert Hoover.
- Provide an accessible, dignified, and spacious setting in which visitors can experience the Birthplace Cottage, Gravesite, Presidential Library-Museum, and other resources.
- Commemorate and interpret the life, career, and accomplishments of Herbert Hoover in cooperation with other organizations.

Significance

- Herbert Hoover National Historic Site is the birthplace and site of the formative years that set Herbert Hoover on the road to becoming the nation's 31st President and a global humanitarian.
- From his birth to age 11, Herbert Hoover's experiences and associations with his family and the community of West Branch influenced his personality, work ethic, spiritual and moral character, and ambition. These strong traits are evident throughout his public service and private endeavors.
- Herbert Hoover National Historic Site memorializes Herbert Hoover by encompassing his Birthplace Cottage, Gravesite, Presidential Library-Museum, Friends Meeting House, Blacksmith Shop, Schoolhouse, statue of Isis, tallgrass prairie, and a branch of the Wapsinonoc Creek in a dignified setting in the town of West Branch, Iowa.
- The involvement of Herbert Hoover, Lou Henry Hoover, their family, friends, and the community was a driving force for the establishment, design, and management of Herbert Hoover National Historic Site. In this spirit of cooperation, the NPS facilitates the stewardship of this commemorative site.

ALTERNATIVES

The management alternatives describe overall management concepts and the alternate ways in which the Historic Site would apply the management prescriptions.

MANAGEMENT ZONES

The management zones, or management areas, identify how the Historic Site would manage different areas to achieve a combination of desired resource conditions and visitor experiences. The planning team developed the following management prescriptions for the Historic Site:

- Commemorative Zone
- Cultural Zone
- Development Zone
- Maintenance Zone
- Natural Zone
- Open Space Zone
- Orientation Zone
- Recreation Zone
- Special Use Zone

The location and size of each management zone would depend upon the overall emphasis of each alternative.

FORMULATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The planning team developed the management alternatives, including the preferred alternative, based on the issues or concerns, desired future conditions, and visitor experiences articulated by the general public, NPS staff, subject-matter specialists, park users, and the neighboring community of West Branch. The alternatives describe the overall management concepts and the alternative ways in which the Historic Site would apply the management zones to specific areas.

ALTERNATIVE A (PREFERRED)

This alternative is both the preferred and environmentally preferred alternative and the emphasis would be on commemorating the cultural heritage and life of President Herbert Hoover. Natural and cultural resources would serve as symbols of significant events and influences on the character and career of this great American. The interpretation program would provide the public with opportunities to use the Historic Site's tangible resources and Servicewide themes to make personal connections to the significance of the Hoover story and heritage of the area. Programs would provide new and innovative ways to present President Hoover's contributions to the U.S. and the World while maintaining the park's natural and cultural resources. The landscape and visitor facilities would support a commemorative-like atmosphere with opportunities for the public to spend time reflecting upon the life and significance of Herbert Hoover.

As the environmentally preferred alternative, the preservation of the cultural landscape, as identified by President Hoover, and associated historic structures maintains and provides an appropriate and safe setting for the public to understand and appreciate his birthplace. Restoration of the native prairie and removal of modern facilities from the floodplain will preserve important aspects of both natural and cultural resources while providing a wide choice of activities in a protected environment. These activities will ensure the continued existence and access to important historical and natural resources for many generations to come.

Estimated development costs for this alternative would total approximately \$3.5 million, including the rehabilitation of the Visitor Center, Laban Miles house, P.T. Smith house, and Varney house, and the construction of a new Maintenance Facility. These facility improvements and new construction would cost an additional \$8,000 a year to operate and maintain. This alternative would require 6.67 FTE of additional staff with an annual cost of \$250,000.

ALTERNATIVE B

This alternative would emphasize the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. Natural and cultural resources would serve as symbols of significant events and influences on the character and career of this great American. The interpretation program would provide the public with opportunities to use the Historic Site's tangible resources to make personal connections to the significance of the Hoover story. The NPS would collaborate with partners such as the Hoover Presidential Library to create a comprehensive experience for visitors to gain understanding of the resources and significance of the

complex. The landscape and visitor facilities would support the commemorative-like atmosphere with opportunities for the public to spend time reflecting upon the life and significance of Herbert Hoover.

Estimated development costs for this alternative would total approximately \$4.9 million, including the rehabilitation of the Visitor Center, P.T. Smith house, Varney house, and the construction of a new Maintenance Facility and a new Orientation Center with new parking and road connections between the center and historic site. These facility improvements and new construction would cost an additional \$10,000 a year to operate and maintain. This alternative would require 7.67 FTE of additional staff with an annual cost of \$287,000.

ALTERNATIVE C

This alternative would emphasize the preservation and protection of natural and cultural resources and scientific restoration of the tallgrass prairie. Visitor services and facilities would have the least possible impact on resources. Scientific management of the prairie ecosystem would take precedence over recreational use and interpretive access and minimize intrusive features on the park's landscape. Interpretive programs and visitors activities may limit physical access to historic structures to prevent the adverse impact of visitor use.

Estimated development costs of this alternative would total approximately \$5.0 million, including the rehabilitation of the Visitor Center, P.T. Smith house, and Varney house, and the construction of a new Maintenance Facility and a new Orientation Center near the Isaac Miles farm with new parking and road connections. These facility improvements and new construction would cost an additional \$10,000 a year to operate and maintain. This alternative would require 7.67 FTE of additional staff with an annual cost of \$292,000.

ALTERNATIVE D

This alternative would emphasize the accommodation of visitors with multiple opportunities to learn the entire meaning of Herbert Hoover's life story. The Historic Site would manage cultural and natural resources to support high levels of visitor access and use and interpretation and education programming of the park's historical significance.

Estimated development costs of this alternative would total approximately \$5.4 million, including the rehabilitation of the Visitor Center, P.T. Smith house, and Varney house; the construction of a new Maintenance Facility and a new Orientation Center with new parking and road connections; and the reconstruction of the House of the Maples. These facility improvements and new construction would cost an additional \$15,000 to operate and maintain. This alternative would require 9.67 FTE of additional staff with an annual cost of \$376,000.

ALTERNATIVE E (NO ACTION)

This alternative provided as a baseline for comparison, would maintain current resource and visitor experience conditions. Management of cultural and natural resources would remain reactive, rather than proactive. This alternative would not provide additional visitor services, nor build any new facilities. It would not meet all legal mandates. Where still suitable and feasible, the 1970 *Master Plan* and its 1978 *Addendum* would continue to provide primary management guidance. The Historic Site, however, would not carry out all of its recommendations.

This alternative would not include any facility development or rehabilitation, nor would it require additional staff.

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

Summary of Alternatives	Alternative A (Preferred)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (No Action)
Land Use and Management	Manage areas to emphasize commemoration of President Hoover.	Collaborate with HHPL to provide comprehensive overview of Herbert Hoover, Library more detailed.	Manage areas to emphasize preservation and protection of resources.	Manage areas to emphasize interpretation and visitor services, providing a high level of access and multiple opportunities.	Manage area to provide a sense of place and an understanding of Hoover.
Resource Management (Natural Resources)	Maintain current resource conditions; resources support commemoration. Minimize flood potential.	Maintain current resource conditions; resources support commemoration; protect visitor experiences from floods.	Scientific restoration of the prairie takes precedence over its interpretation; flooding managed completely through natural processes.	Maintain current resource conditions; resources support interpretation; protect media from floods.	Continue scientific restoration of the prairie. Maintain current condition of the creek. Take a reactive approach to creek flooding.
Resource Management (Historic Structures)	Preserve or rehabilitate structures to support commemoration; interpret the symbolism of buildings relocated to the site.	Preserve or rehabilitate structures to support commemoration; interpret the symbolism of buildings relocated to the site.	Study, preserve, and protect structures. Ensure that adapted use does not threaten structures. No reconstructions.	Prevent deterioration of existing conditions; use structures for interpretation; reconstruct House of the Maples for exhibits.	Maintain historic core to reflect Hoover's boyhood. Adaptive use of structures. Do not reconstruct House of Maples.
Resource Management (Cultural Landscape)	Preserve and rehabilitate to support commemoration as described in CLR; maintain visual connection of cottage and grave.	Preserve and rehabilitate to support commemoration as described in CLR; maintain visual connection of cottage and grave.	Preserve the period of significance. Maintain visual connection between cottage and grave.	Same as Alternative C.	Reflect the 1935-1966 sub-period of significance. Maintain formal landscape of the cottage and grave.
Visitor Use (Orientation).	Rehabilitate Visitor Center for improved orientation. Add waysides to park entrances focusing on the NHS and West Branch.	Move orientation to new Orientation Center near Miles Farm. Provide comprehensive orientation with HPPL & HPLA.	Move orientation to new Orientation Center near Miles Farm.	Move orientation to new Orientation Center near Miles Farm.	Emphasize Hoover's boyhood. Provide orientation at the Visitor center.

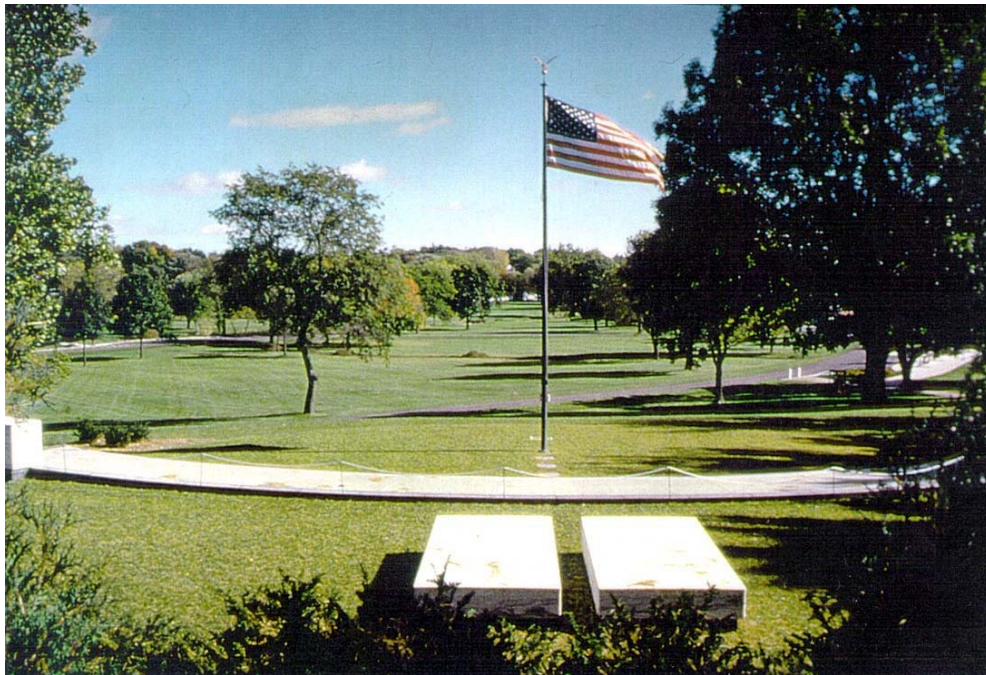
Continued	Alternative A (Preferred)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (No Action)
Visitor Use (Parking and Circulation)	Use existing parking facilities at HHPL, Visitor Center and Water Street Lot. Use existing streets and sidewalks.	Add parking and focus attention on new Orientation Center; build street from Center to HHPL; build new sidewalks from the Center to Downey Street, the HHPL, and Miles Farm.	Add parking and focus attention on new Orientation Center; build new sidewalks from the Center to Downey Street, the HHPL, and Miles Farm.	Add parking and focus attention on new Orientation Center; build street from Center to HHPL; build new sidewalks from the Center to Downey Street and the HHPL.	Use existing parking facilities at the HHPL, Visitor Center, and the Water Street Lot. Use existing streets and sidewalks.
Visitor Use (Interpretation Program)	Emphasize overall meaning of Hoover and links between his childhood and adult life; establish permanent museum exhibits at PT Smith Hse.	Emphasize overall meaning of Hoover and links between his childhood and adult life; establish special exhibits at P.T. Smith House.	Explain connection between Hoover's boyhood and his adult career; emphasize resources.	Provide comprehensive view of Hoover; establish exhibits in multiple locations.	Complement HHPL programs by emphasizing Hoover's boyhood.
Visitor Use (Education Program)	Use facility provided by park partner; emphasize significant lessons of Hoover's life.	Use facility provided by park partner; emphasize significant lessons of Hoover's life.	Use facility provided by park partner; emphasize the site's natural and cultural resources.	Build classroom and support facility in new Orientation Center to conduct a full program.	Present orientation programs in the Visitor Center; present guided tours of the Historic Site.
Recreation and Special Use	Ensure protection of resources and commemoration of Hoover.	Ensure protection of resources and commemoration of Hoover.	Ensure protection of resources and dignity of cottage and grave.	Ensure protection of resources and comprehensive understanding of Hoover.	Ensure protection of resources and preservation of the sense of place.
Park Operations (Staffing)	Fill some of the vacant positions (2.92 FTE) 24.67 total FTE	Fill some of the vacant positions (3.92 FTE); add 3.75 FTE. 25.67 total FTE	Fill some of the vacant positions (5.67 FTE); add 2.00 FTE. 25.67 total FTE	Fill some of the vacant positions (3.92 FTE); add 5.75 FTE. 27.67 total FTE.	Do not fill any vacant positions. 18.0 total FTE.
Park Operations (Administration)	Use the Visitor Center, and the Laban Miles, Varney, Garvin, and C.E. Smith houses.	Use the Visitor Center, and the Laban Miles, Varney, Garvin, and C.E. Smith houses.	Use the Visitor Center, and the Varney, Garvin, Thompson, and C.E. Smith houses.	Use the Orientation Center, and the Varney, Garvin, Thompson, and C.E. Smith houses.	Use the Visitor Center, and the Varney, C.E. Smith, and Garvin houses.

Continued	Alternative A (Preferred)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (No Action)
General Development (Visitor Center)	Rehabilitate Visitor Center for services as above.	Construct new Orientation Center for orientation, fee collection, sales, museum exhibits, and special exhibits.	Construct new Orientation Center for orientation, fee collection, and sales; install special exhibits in P.T. Smith House and museum exhibits in Visitor Center.	Build new Orientation Center for orientation, fee collection, sales, and education. Install special exhibits in the P.T. Smith House, and museum exhibits in the "House of the Maples" and Visitor Center.	Use Visitor Center for fee collection, sales, orientation, education, museum exhibits, and special exhibits.
General Development (Maintenance Facility)	Construct new facilities and offices at Thomson Farm. Remove existing facility with exception of moving prefabricated building to Thompson Farm. Build service roads to Loop Road and Herbert Hoover Highway.	Construct new facilities and offices at Thomson Farm. Remove existing facility with exception of moving prefabricated building to Thompson Farm. Build service roads to Loop Road and Herbert Hoover Highway.	Construct new facilities and offices at Thomson Farm. Remove existing facility with exception of moving prefabricated building to Thompson Farm. Build service roads to Loop Road and Herbert Hoover Highway.	Construct new facilities and offices at Miles Farm. Remove existing facility with exception of moving prefabricated building to Miles Farm. Build service road to Loop Road.	Use existing Maintenance Facility and historic structures at the Miles Farm.
ESTIMATED COSTS (2001)					
	Alternative A (Preferred)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (No Action)
Recurring Operations	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	No additional costs
Staffing (recurring)	\$250,000	\$287,000	\$292,000	\$376,000	“
Development (one-time costs)	\$3,540,800	\$4,917,100	\$5,029,800	\$5,397,800	“

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site General Management Plan *Alternative A* (Preferred)

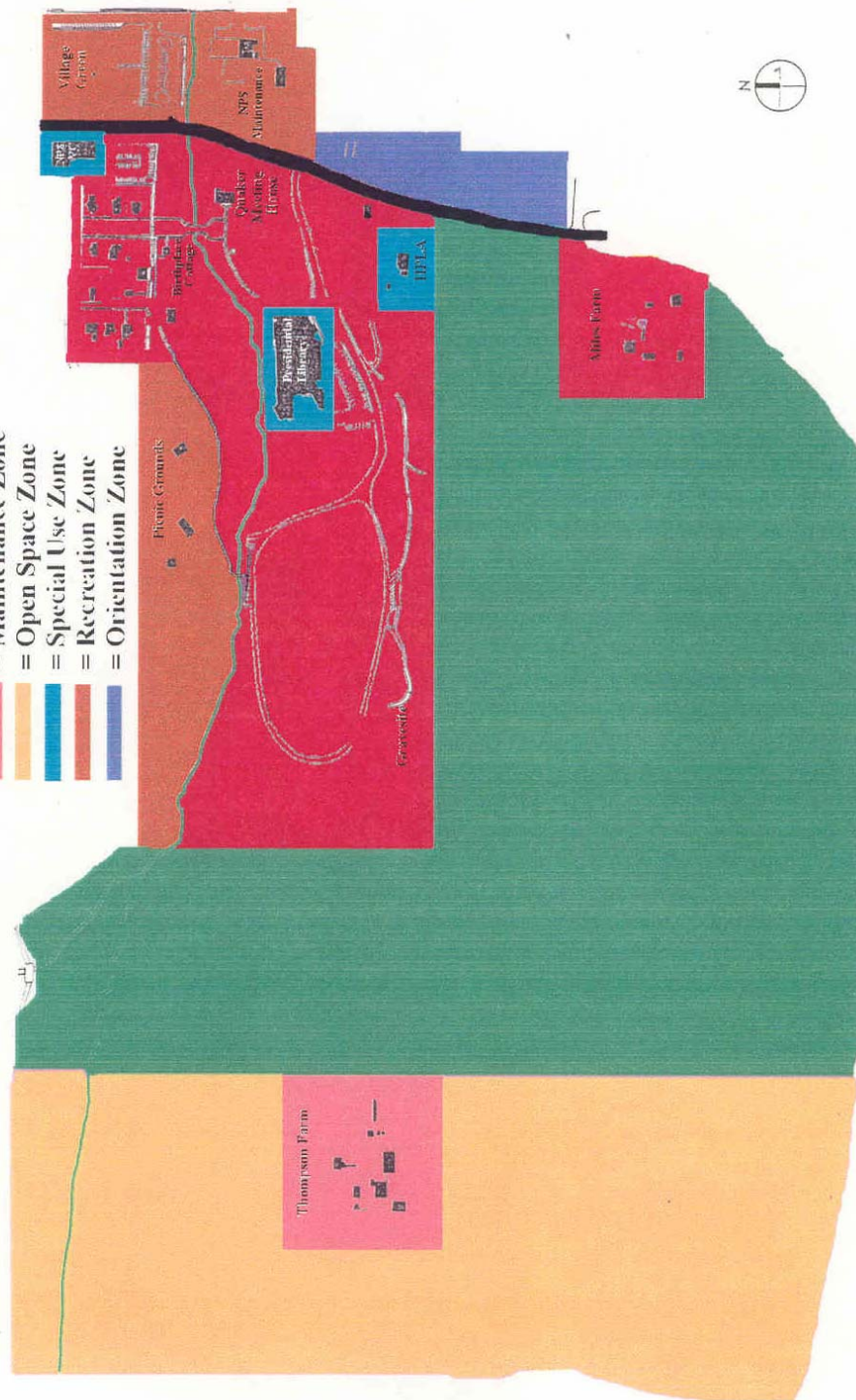
Concept:

This alternative would emphasize the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. Natural and cultural resources would serve as symbols of significant events and influences on the character and career of this great American. The interpretation program would provide the public with opportunities to use the historic site's tangible resources and Servicewide themes to make personal connections to the significance of the Hoover story and heritage of the area. The landscape and visitor facilities would support a commemorative-like atmosphere with opportunities for the public to spend time reflecting upon the life and significance of Herbert Hoover.



MANAGEMENT ZONES

- = Commemorative Zone
- = Natural Zone
- = Maintenance Zone
- = Open Space Zone
- = Special Use Zone
- = Recreation Zone
- = Orientation Zone



MANAGEMENT ZONES - ALTERNATIVE A (Preferred)

The following pages describe management prescriptions for each management zone.

Commemorative Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would manage resources and provide visitor experiences to emphasize the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS would preserve, protect, and maintain cultural resources in good condition with a rehabilitation treatment. A highly designed setting for the resources would encourage personal reflection on the meaning of Hoover's life. Visitors would consider cultural resources as symbols of the various influences of Hoover's childhood upon his character and public accomplishments. Visitors would have a high probability of encountering staff in the Birthplace Cottage. They would have a moderate probability of meeting staff in other areas. Although visitors would have a high probability of encountering many other visitors, opportunities would exist for personal contemplation and solitude. Pedestrian and vehicular facilities would provide visitor access to cultural resources. Recreational walking and cross-country skiing would take place in this zone. Recreational bicycling would take place only in designated areas. Special events supporting the commemoration of Herbert Hoover would take place only in areas that do not jeopardize natural or cultural resources, especially the dignity of the Birthplace Cottage and the Gravesite.

Resource Management

Preservation and rehabilitation of the cultural landscape would support and enhance the commemorative nature of the Site as proposed in the *Herbert Hoover National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*. The cultural landscape would provide tangible symbols of Hoover's life in West Branch to help visitors understand the intangible meanings within those symbols. Interpretation would explain the development of the entire commemorative landscape. Visitors would view the Gravesite, the HHPL, the statue of Isis, and other features as components of the commemorative landscape. They would understand that the contrived historic neighborhood along Downey Street represents a commemoration of the influence of Hoover's neighborhood on his childhood development rather than an accurate depiction of the area during Hoover's youth.

The NPS would make changes to the landscape only to enhance the landscape's commemorative nature. It would keep the Birthplace Cottage, the Gravesite, the HHPL, and other key components of the landscape free from any development or activity except commemorative use.

The NPS would follow the recommendation of the *Herbert Hoover National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report* to preserve or rehabilitate historic structures to support and enhance the commemorative nature of the Historic Site. The NPS would prepare a study to evaluate the existing conditions of all historic structures. The study would include design guidelines for the preservation of the exteriors of the structures and the rehabilitation of the interiors.

The use of historic structures for employee housing would continue as an effective means to preserve and maintain them. The preservation of the structures provides significant support to the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS will provide employee housing for staff with responsibility to make immediate responses to after-hours situations involving the protection of visitors, resources, or facilities; and staff with responsibility for keeping Parkside Drive open during winter storms. As each structure becomes vacant, management would evaluate its future use. If a structure lies in the 100-year regulatory flood area, the NPS would take appropriate mitigating action to continue its use as employee housing.

Interpretation

Interpretation would support the commemoration of Herbert Hoover through programs that provide opportunities for visitors to contemplate the overall significance of Hoover's life, accomplishments, and contributions to the world. Visitors would receive an understanding of the commemorative nature of the cultural landscape, historic structures, and facilities.

Paid staff and volunteers would offer interpretive services at the principle resources of the Historic Site including the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, Blacksmith Shop, and the Schoolhouse. Guided tours of the historic core area, West Branch, and the prairie would emphasize the commemorative nature and meaning of the Historic Site.

A system of wayside exhibits and the existing audio stations would emphasize the commemorative nature of the Historic Site. Un-staffed museum exhibits at the P.T. Smith house would explain the symbolic importance of the adjacent "House of the Maples" site in relation to Hoover's family life and personal tragedies in West Branch.

While focusing on Hoover, the Historic Site also would present interpretation programs related to the overall mission of the NPS and its special emphasis programs appropriate to the Historic Site's resources.

Ongoing surveys of visitor satisfaction with interpretive programming and the level of understanding of interpretive themes would determine if the Historic Site would need to develop capacities for any of its interpretive programs.

Interpretation would explain the decisions made from 1935-1966 to rehabilitate and relocate historic structures at the Historic Site to provide symbols for the meaning associated with the life and character of President Hoover. Interpretation also would explain why structures with little direct connection to Hoover came to the site as symbols of important aspects of Hoover's childhood development. For example, interpretation at the Blacksmith Shop would emphasize family values of hard work, perseverance, and achievement rather than the craft of forging hot iron into tools.

The NPS would use wayside exhibits, historic plantings, and construction of a fence around the site of the “House of the Maples” to emphasize the significance of the site as a symbol of Hoover's loss of his parents. Museum exhibits in the P.T. Smith house would interpret the “House of the Maples” with an emphasis on how Hoover's family life in West Branch influenced his character, careers, and public life.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

To recognize and mitigate adverse impacts of visitation upon cultural resources, the NPS would document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record resource conditions. Conditions of the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, the Schoolhouse, and the Blacksmith Shop would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation and/or resource management programs to mitigate the problem.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would rehabilitate the P.T. Smith house for special exhibits on the first floor and storage on the second floor.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would rehabilitate the Varney house for offices and storage. The NPS would rehabilitate the Laban Miles house for offices, storage and seasonal quarters.

C.E. Smith house and the Garvin house would continue to provide space for offices.

Natural Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would provide a natural, spacious setting to support the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS would manage natural resources to meet all applicable laws, policies, and management standards to preserve, but it would not fully restore the ecosystem. Visitors would have the opportunity to experience the influence of the natural world on Herbert Hoover's life through interpretation, contemplation, and recreation. They would experience opportunities for personal exploration and discovery. They would have a low probability of encountering staff or other visitors with a high degree of solitude. Simple footpaths would provide access. A modest amount of interpretive programs and media would promote understanding. Recreational walking and cross-country skiing would occur in this zone.

Resource Management

The NPS would recognize that the small size of the prairie reconstruction would encumber its complete restoration as a functional ecosystem without a very significant

investment of fiscal and human resources. The NPS, therefore, would not attempt to restore a complete prairie ecosystem, but it would manage the prairie community in a manner that would complement the spacious, commemorative setting of the Historic Site. The prairie also would provide a natural boundary between the Historic Site and Interstate Highway 80 and other modern distractions.

The NPS would continue its present natural resource management actions including prescribed burns of sections of the prairie to improve populations of native grasses and forbs, and suppress the growth of invasive plants. The NPS would continue to monitor the prairie for undesirable exotic or invasive species. It would control such growth by localized treatments. The NPS would use seeding of prairie species to assist the natural diversification of the plant community. The NPS would not reintroduce animal species to the prairie, but would consider animal species that colonize the prairie in any management decisions.

The NPS would assess the impact of existing culverts, roads, and bridges on stream stability and potential flooding. The NPS would determine what modifications to the Historic Site's infrastructure, the streambed of the Creek, and associated riparian areas would mitigate flood damage to park resources. The NPS would implement actions that benefit both the natural resources and the commemorative nature of the Historic Site.

Interpretation

The NPS would use interpretation to help the public understand and appreciate the prairie and the "Hoover Creek" as symbols of nature's influence upon Hoover's childhood development and value system.

Interpretation along the creek would compare and contrast the condition of this feature and its associated resources during Hoover's childhood and today.

Wayside exhibits installed along the prairie trails would provide opportunities for quiet and contemplative visitor experiences linked to the commemorative nature of the prairie.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

To recognize and mitigate adverse impacts of visitation upon natural resources, the NPS would document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record resource conditions. Conditions of the prairie and creek would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation and/or resource management programs to mitigate the problem.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

Hardened service roads would pass through this zone to connect the maintenance facility with the Loop Road and with the Herbert Hoover Highway.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

None.

Maintenance Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide a safe, low-profile location for the Historic Site's maintenance operations. Although the setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive management, the design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the Thompson Farm buildings. The facility would harmonize with the setting of the adjacent zones. Where feasible, the facility would employ rehabilitated farm structures. The physical footprint of structures and stored materials would remain minimal. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. To the greatest degree practical, the facility would serve as a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would encounter staff conducting maintenance functions. They rarely would encounter other visitors. The facility's landscaping would limit its visual and auditory impact upon visitors in adjacent zones while creating a harmonious setting with adjacent natural resources. Landscaping would include only native species.

Resource Management

Where feasible, the new maintenance facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Thompson Farm. The design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the farm. The NPS would stabilize farm buildings not suitable or feasible for use in the maintenance facility.

Interpretation

No active interpretation would take place in this area of limited incidental visitor access.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

None.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

None.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would establish a centralized maintenance facility in this zone. This facility would include space for offices, shops, a small parking lot, and storage for vehicles, equipment, and supplies. Where feasible, the new maintenance facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Thompson Farm. The NPS would move a prefabricated building in the existing maintenance facility to the new location. New construction of buildings would supplement the existing structures and the prefabricated building. The NPS would construct hardened service roads to connect the maintenance facility with the Loop Road and with the Herbert Hoover Highway.

The NPS would install utilities necessary to support the new maintenance facility.

Orientation Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide an opportunity for visitors to orient themselves to the entire Hoover Complex. Resources in this small area would be maintained in a highly manicured manner to create a welcoming atmosphere. Visitors would be provided with orientation and interpretive information, and would have a high probability of encountering small groups of other visitors in this zone.

Resource Management

The landscaping in this zone would reflect that of the Commemorative Zone, primarily kept in manicured lawn, various ornamental plantings and trees.

Interpretation

A pullout with orientation wayside exhibits would be constructed in this zone. The waysides would include information that will allow visitors to receive an initial, overall orientation to the historic site, Library-Museum, Hoover Association, and the City of West Branch. This wayside area would not be staffed. The pullout would also allow visitors to take photographs of the main entrance sign, something they currently cannot safely accomplish.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

A small pullout and parking area would be constructed in this zone. Future planning and engineering will determine exactly how many parking spaces would be constructed, though it is not anticipated to be more than five.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

No facilities would be added or removed in this zone. The pullout and waysides described above would be added.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

No offices or maintenance facilities would be constructed in this zone. The only utilities necessary would possibly be electricity to power lights or audio-interpretive wayside. Solar power and alternative energy utility sources could be considered.

Open Space Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide an open, spacious atmosphere to support the commemorative setting of the Historic Site. Natural Resources would remain in a highly manipulated condition as agricultural fields or as maintained groundcover vegetation. This area would not contain any significant cultural resources. Vegetation would include non-native species. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would rarely encounter other people. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance functions.

Resource Management

The NPS would manage this zone adjacent to the Thompson Farm buildings as agricultural land or as low-maintenance ground vegetation. This would enhance the open, spacious area of the Commemoration Zone.

Interpretation

None.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

Visitors would have only incidental access to this zone.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

None.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

This zone would not have any offices or maintenance facilities. A hardened service road would connect the new maintenance facility to the Herbert Hoover Highway. Existing utilities would remain.

Special Use Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would include facilities operated or controlled by other governmental agencies or private interests on lands within the boundary of the Historic Site. The HHPL, the Federal Office Building, and the Administrative Building for the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., all support the public's understanding and appreciation of President Hoover. Visitors would have access to the HHPL and the Federal Building where they would have a high probability of encountering other visitors. Visitor experiences would include museum exhibits, an interpretive film, information desks, sales areas, and visitor convenience facilities. Buildings would dominate natural resources. The design of the east façade of the HHPL represents a significant cultural resource as a tangible connection to President Hoover. The intensively designed and maintained buildings would provide safe and aesthetic work environments for staff.

Resource Management

The NPS would ensure the maintenance of the visitor center in a clean, safe, and welcoming condition.

Interpretation

The administrative offices would be moved from the visitor center to the Laban Miles house. The visitor center would be rehabilitated to accommodate a small theatre to view an interpretive film, cooperating association sales, and orientation exhibits.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would maintain the visitor center parking lot. If special events or periods of high visitation would fill parking areas, the NPS would direct visitors to alternative parking areas off-site.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would rehabilitate the visitor center to accommodate a small theater, cooperating association sales, and exhibits. It would maintain the size of the visitor center parking lot. If additional space became available in the Federal Building, the NPS would consider renting and rehabilitating that space for visitor use.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

Some offices would be removed to historic structures. Public rest rooms, an employee break room, workroom and limited storage would remain in the building. If additional space became available in the Federal Building, the NPS would consider renting and rehabilitating that space for workspace and storage.

Recreation Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide visitors and local residents with facilities and opportunities for safe recreational activities that do not relate to the commemoration of President Hoover. Activities would include picnicking, kite flying, softball, badminton, volleyball, cross-country skiing, and recreational walking. This zone would include a designated public assembly area for First Amendment activities. Social and group activities would result in a moderate degree of contact with other visitors. Visitors would have a high degree of contact with other visitors during special events and First Amendment activities. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance and protection functions. Visitors would have safe, accessible, and enjoyable experiences. They would have a low opportunity for solitude. No significant cultural resources would occur in this zone. Natural resources would remain in a highly designed and manipulated condition. Vegetation would include non-native species. Facilities would include picnic shelters and tables, restrooms, drinking fountains, paved sidewalks, and a parking area.

Resource Management

After removal of the buildings in the present maintenance facility, the NPS would rehabilitate and re-vegetate the area as green space.

The NPS would monitor the condition of the historic Boy Scout picnic shelter to determine the impact of unrestricted public use. If the studies concluded that such use represented a long-term threat to the structure, the NPS would limit use of the shelter.

The landscape in this zone would remain highly manipulated and intensively maintained including the use of non-native species of grass. The NPS would continue to care for the trees and mow the lawns on a regular basis. The landscaping would complement the open, spacious setting of the Commemorative Zone.

Interpretation

The NPS would present interpretive programs to complement special events held in this zone.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

If picnic use increased, the NPS would install additional picnic tables.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

Upon relocation of the maintenance facility, the NPS would remove all buildings in the present maintenance facility area. Utilities in the other areas of this zone would remain.

General Prescriptions for this Alternative

Adjacent Land Use

The NPS would encourage the City of West Branch to adopt and follow growth policies and zoning compatible with the open and spacious setting of the Historic Site. Areas of particular attention would include properties on Downey Street, Wetherell Street, Parkside Drive, and in areas along the northwest boundary proposed for residential and commercial development.

Partners

Education programs, presented in an offsite facility owned by the HPLA, would highlight significant lessons from Hoover's life in West Branch. Programs would employ the Historic Site's cultural and natural resources.

The NPS would work actively with the HHPL, the HPLA, the Hoover family, the City of West Branch, and local school districts to support the commemoration of Hoover through public programs, education programs, special exhibits, and special events.

Staffing

The Historic Site's staffing level would reflect an emphasis on interpretation and cultural resource management. It would maintain adequate staff to manage and protect cultural and natural resources.

Signs

Signs on Parkside Drive would mark the orientation highway pullout, the visitor center parking lot, and the Water Street parking lot. Directional signs would guide pedestrians from the visitor center to the Birthplace Cottage, Downey Street trace, HHPL, Gravesite, prairie, and other features of the Commemorative Zone.

A wayside and small vehicle pull-out would be installed in the Orientation Zone at the park entrance to inform first-time visitors of the facilities of the Hoover Complex and downtown West Branch.

Boundary Adjustments

The NPS would not propose any adjustments to its boundary.

Summary of Needed and Allowable Changes

Management Zone	Needed or Allowable Changes
Commemorative Zone	Rehabilitate Varney house for office space Develop wayside exhibits Conduct additional education programs at HPLA facility Rehabilitate PT Smith house for exhibits and storage
Natural Zone	Continue prescribed fire program Conduct study and take measures to stabilize stream-banks Initiate inventory and monitoring program of natural resources
Maintenance Zone	Relocate maintenance facility to Thompson farm
Orientation Zone	Install wayside and small parking pull-out at park entrance.
Open Space Zone	Establish and maintain open space ground vegetation in the Thompson Farm fields.
Special Use Zone	Remove administrative offices and rehabilitate visitor center for improved interpretation and visitor services.

COSTS

Because of the conceptual nature of this plan, the following cost estimates remain very general. They provide one means for comparing the various alternatives. Future design planning will prepare detailed cost estimates.

Development Costs

Maintenance facility:	\$ 3,062,800
Visitor center rehabilitation:	\$ 150,000
Laban Miles house rehabilitation:	\$ 21,000
P.T. Smith house rehabilitation:	\$ 139,000
Varney house rehabilitation:	\$ 88,000
Wayside exhibits	\$ 80,000

Total \$ 3,540,800

Additional Operating Costs

The new maintenance facility, rehabilitated P.T. Smith House, rehabilitated Laban Miles House, rehabilitated Varney House, and rehabilitated visitor center would cost approximately \$8,000 a year to maintain. The 6.67 additional FTE of operations staff would require an annual cost of \$ 250,000.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Additional Studies and Plans

This alternative would require additional design planning for the new maintenance facility; rehabilitation of the visitor center; rehabilitation of the P.T. Smith house; and rehabilitation of the Varney house. Minimal planning would be required for rehabilitation of the Laban Miles house. Planning would include detailed project costs, resource impacts, and actions necessary to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Historic Preservation Act as appropriate.

- Long Range Interpretation Plan/Comprehensive Interpretation Plan
- Education Plan
- Museum Exhibit Plan
- Wayside Exhibit Plan
- Historic Resource Study
- Cultural Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan
- Historic Structure Reports and Structural Analyses for the Isaac Miles Farm Barn and the Isaac Miles Farm House.
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Natural Resources

- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Cultural Resources
- Design Guidelines for the Preservation and Rehabilitation of Historic Structures
- Administrative History

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

General Management Plan

Alternative B

Concept:

This alternative would emphasize the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. Natural and cultural resources would serve as symbols of significant events and influences on the character and career of this great American. The interpretation program would provide the public with opportunities to use the historic site's tangible resources to make personal connections to the significance of the Hoover story. The NPS would collaborate with partners such as the Hoover Presidential Library to create a comprehensive experience for visitors to gain understanding of the resources and significance of the complex. The landscape and visitor facilities would support a commemorative-like atmosphere with opportunities for the public to spend time reflecting upon the life and significance of Herbert Hoover.



The following pages describe management prescriptions for each management zone.

Commemorative Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would manage resources and provide visitor experiences to emphasize the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS would preserve, protect, and maintain cultural resources in good condition with a rehabilitation treatment. A highly designed setting for the resources would encourage personal reflection on the meaning of Hoover's life. Visitors would consider cultural resources as symbols of the various influences of Hoover's childhood upon his character and public accomplishments. Visitors would have a high probability of encountering staff in the Birthplace Cottage. They would have a moderate probability of meeting staff in other areas. Although visitors would have a high probability of encountering many other visitors, opportunities would exist for personal contemplation and solitude. Pedestrian and vehicular facilities would provide visitor access to cultural resources. Recreational walking and cross-country skiing would take place in this zone. Recreational bicycling would take place only on established roads. Special events supporting the commemoration of Herbert Hoover would take place only in areas that do not jeopardize natural or cultural resources, especially the dignity of the Birthplace Cottage and the Gravesite.

Resource Management

Preservation and rehabilitation of the cultural landscape would support and enhance the commemorative nature of the Site as proposed in the *Herbert Hoover National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*. The cultural landscape would provide tangible symbols of Hoover's life in West Branch to help visitors understand the intangible meanings within those symbols. Interpretation would explain the development of the entire commemorative landscape. Visitors would view the Gravesite, the HHPL, the statue of Isis, and other features as components of the commemorative landscape. They would understand that the contrived historic neighborhood along Downey Street represents a commemoration of the influence of Hoover's neighborhood on his childhood development rather than an accurate depiction of the area during Hoover's youth.

The NPS would make changes to the landscape only to enhance the landscape's commemorative nature. It would keep the Birthplace Cottage, the Gravesite, the HHPL, and other key components of the landscape free from any development or activity except commemorative use.

The NPS would follow the recommendation of the *Herbert Hoover National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report* to preserve or rehabilitate historic structures to support and enhance the commemorative nature of the Historic Site. The NPS would prepare a study to evaluate the existing conditions of all historic structures. The study would include design guidelines for the preservation of the exteriors of the structures and the rehabilitation of the interiors.

The use of historic structures for employee housing would continue as an effective means to preserve and maintain them. The preservation of the structures provides significant support to the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS will provide employee housing for staff with responsibility to make immediate responses to after-hours situations involving the protection of visitors, resources, or facilities; and staff with responsibility for keeping Parkside Drive open during winter storms. As each structure becomes vacant, management would evaluate its future use. If a structure lies in the 100-year regulatory flood area, the NPS would take appropriate mitigating action to continue its use as employee housing.

Interpretation

Interpretation would support the commemoration of Herbert Hoover through programs that provide opportunities for visitors to contemplate the overall significance of Hoover's life, accomplishments, and contributions to the world. Visitors would receive an understanding of the commemorative nature of the cultural landscape, historic structures, and facilities.

Paid staff and volunteers would offer interpretive services at the principle resources of the Historic Site including the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, Blacksmith Shop, and the Schoolhouse. Guided tours of the historic core area, West Branch, and the Prairie would emphasize the commemorative nature and meaning of the Historic Site.

A system of wayside exhibits and the existing audio stations would emphasize the commemorative nature of the Historic Site. Un-staffed museum exhibits at the P.T. Smith House would explain the symbolic importance of the adjacent "House of the Maples" site in relation to Hoover's family life and personal tragedies in West Branch.

While focusing on Hoover, the Historic Site also would present interpretation programs related to the overall mission of the NPS and its special emphasis programs appropriate to the Historic Site's resources.

Ongoing surveys of visitor satisfaction with interpretive programming and the level of understanding of interpretive themes would determine if the Historic Site would need to develop capacities for any of its interpretive programs.

Interpretation would explain the decisions made from 1935-1966 to rehabilitate and relocate historic structures at the Historic Site to provide symbols for the meaning associated with the life and character of President Hoover. Interpretation also would explain why structures with little direct connection to Hoover came to the site as symbols of important aspects of Hoover's childhood development. For example, interpretation at the Blacksmith Shop would emphasize family values of hard work, perseverance, and achievement rather than the craft of forging hot iron into tools.

The NPS would use wayside exhibits, historic plantings, and construction of a fence around the site of the “House of the Maples” to emphasize the significance of the site as a symbol of Hoover's loss of his parents. Museum exhibits in the P.T. Smith House would interpret the “House of the Maples” with an emphasis on how Hoover's family life in West Branch influenced his character, careers, and public life.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

To recognize and mitigate adverse impacts of visitation upon cultural resources, the NPS would document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record resource conditions. Conditions of the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, the Schoolhouse, and the Blacksmith Shop would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation and/or resource management programs to mitigate the problem.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would rehabilitate the P.T. Smith House for special exhibits on the first floor and storage on the second floor.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would rehabilitate the Varney House for offices and storage.

The visitor center, Varney House, C.E. Smith House, and the Garvin House would provide space for offices.

Natural Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would provide a natural, spacious setting to support the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS would manage natural resources to meet all applicable laws, policies, and management standards to preserve, but it would not fully restore the ecosystem. Visitors would have the opportunity to experience the influence of the natural world on Herbert Hoover's life through interpretation, contemplation, and recreation. They would experience opportunities for personal exploration and discovery. They would have a low probability of encountering staff or other visitors with a high degree of solitude. Simple footpaths would provide access. A modest amount of interpretive programs and media would promote understanding. Recreational walking and cross-country skiing would occur in this zone.

Resource Management

The NPS would recognize that the small size of the prairie reconstruction would encumber its complete restoration as a functional ecosystem without a very significant

investment of fiscal and human resources. The NPS, therefore, would not attempt to restore a complete prairie ecosystem, but it would manage the prairie community in a manner that would complement the spacious, commemorative setting of the Historic Site. The prairie also would provide a natural boundary between the Historic Site and Interstate Highway 80 and other modern distractions.

The NPS would continue its present natural resource management actions including prescribed burns of sections of the prairie to improve populations of native grasses and forbs, and suppress the growth of invasive plants. The NPS would continue to monitor the prairie for undesirable exotic or invasive species. It would control such growth by localized treatments. The NPS would use seeding of prairie species to assist the natural diversification of the plant community. The NPS would not reintroduce animal species to the prairie, but would consider animal species that colonize the prairie in any management decisions.

The NPS would assess the impact of existing culverts, roads, and bridges on stream stability and potential flooding. The NPS would determine what modifications to the Historic Site's infrastructure, the streambed of "Hoover Creek", and associated riparian areas would mitigate flood damage to park resources. The NPS would implement actions that benefit both the natural resources and the commemorative nature of the Historic Site.

Interpretation

The NPS would use interpretation to help the public understand and appreciate the prairie and "Hoover Creek" as symbols of nature's influence upon Hoover's childhood development and value system.

Interpretation along the creek would compare and contrast the condition of this feature and its associated resources during Hoover's childhood and today.

Wayside exhibits installed along the prairie trails would provide opportunities for quiet and contemplative visitor experiences linked to the commemorative nature of the prairie.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

To recognize and mitigate adverse impacts of visitation upon natural resources, the NPS would document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record resource conditions. Conditions of the prairie and creek would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation and/or resource management programs to mitigate the problem.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

Hardened service roads would pass through this zone to connect the maintenance facility with the Loop Road and with the Herbert Hoover Highway.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

None.

Development Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would welcome visitors with a comprehensive orientation to the Historic Site, HHPL, HPLA, and City of West Branch. A new Orientation Center would offer visitors a variety of quality orientation and interpretive experiences. Visitors would have a nearly constant interaction with other people. They would have a high probability of encountering staff responsive to their need for information. They would have almost no opportunity for quiet and solitude. This zone would not contain any significant natural or cultural resources. While the natural setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive management, development would have a low impact on nearby natural or cultural resources, especially the view from the Gravesite. The design of the facility would attract the attention of motorists on Parkside Drive, but express great sensitivity to the natural landscape. Landscaping would include only native species. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. The intensively maintained orientation Center would provide a safe and aesthetic work environment for staff. Its minimal physical footprint would remain responsive to its orientation and interpretation functions. To the greatest degree practical, the Center would represent a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones.

Resource Management

Natural resources would undergo substantial modification and intensive management with a high degree of landscaping.

Interpretation

The NPS would work with officials of the HPLA, HHPL, and the City of West Branch to ensure that visitors at the Orientation Center receive a comprehensive orientation to the Historic Site, the HHPL, and the City of West Branch. Orientation would emphasize the commemorative relationship between the Historic Site, the HHPL, and West Branch, as well as the significance of the Birthplace Cottage, HHPL, and Gravesite.

The Orientation Center would provide information services, orientation exhibits, museum exhibits, an interpretive film, publications, and a cooperating association sales area. The sales area would emphasize the connection between Hoover's boyhood and his later accomplishments, and the symbolic importance of various sites and structures in relation to Hoover's childhood development. Exhibits would explain the significant role of the

Hoover family, citizens of West Branch, and other people in establishing the Historic Site.

The NPS would relocate the Travelers Information System to the Orientation Center to continue to broadcast an orientation message to travelers on Interstate 80 a few miles east or west of West Branch. The message would include an introduction to the commemorative nature of the Historic Site.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The Orientation Center would include parking and traffic/pedestrian circulation. A single-lane, one-way paved street would connect the Center with the HHPL. Sidewalks would connect the Orientation Center to the HHPL, the Downey Street trace, and the Isaac Miles Farm. Although the Orientation Center would provide a few parking spaces for recreational vehicles and buses, most would park in the Water Street parking lot. If a need for overflow parking developed in the future, the NPS would expand the Water Street parking lot to the south in the recreation area.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would build an Orientation Center including an information/fee collection desk, orientation exhibits, cooperating association sales and storage areas, theater, public rest rooms, staff offices, and a parking lot for cars and recreational vehicles or buses. The Center's design would have minimum impact on the Isaac Miles Farm or the Commemorative Zone.

The NPS would construct a single-lane, one-way street to connect Parkside Drive to the Orientation Center Parking Lot to the HHPL. The NPS would work closely with the HHPL to ensure that the new street facilitated entry into the HHPL's parking lot. Design of the street would take special care to minimize impacts on the natural environment. New sidewalks would connect the Center with the HHPL, the Downey Street trace, and the Isaac Miles Farm. The NPS would work closely with the HPLA to ensure that the new street and sidewalks do not affect their property and their operation.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would maintain the Orientation Center. The Center would contain a small amount of office and storage space for staff operating and maintaining the Center. The NPS would install necessary utility systems to support the Center.

Maintenance Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide a safe, low-profile location for the Historic Site's maintenance operations. Although the setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive

management, the design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the Thompson Farm buildings. The facility would harmonize with the setting of the adjacent zones. Where feasible, the facility would employ rehabilitated farm structures. The physical footprint of structures and stored materials would remain minimal. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. To the greatest degree practical, the facility would serve as a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would encounter staff conducting maintenance functions. They rarely would encounter other visitors. The facility's landscaping would limit its visual and auditory impact upon visitors in adjacent zones while creating a harmonious setting with adjacent natural resources. Landscaping would include only native species.

Resource Management

Where feasible, the new Maintenance Facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Thompson Farm. The design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the farm. The NPS would stabilize farm buildings not suitable or feasible for use in the Maintenance Facility.

Interpretation

No active interpretation would take place in this area of limited incidental visitor access.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

None.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

None.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would establish a centralized Maintenance Facility in this zone. This facility would include space for offices, shops, a small parking lot, and storage for vehicles, equipment, and supplies. Where feasible, the new Maintenance Facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Thompson Farm. The NPS would move a prefabricated building in the existing maintenance facility to the new location. New construction of buildings would supplement the existing structures and the prefabricated building. The NPS would construct hardened service roads to connect the Maintenance Facility with the Loop Road and with the Herbert Hoover Highway.

The NPS would install utilities necessary to support the new maintenance facility.

Open Space Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide an open, spacious atmosphere to support the commemorative setting of the Historic Site. Natural Resources would remain in a highly manipulated condition as agricultural fields or as maintained groundcover vegetation. This area would not contain any significant cultural resources. Vegetation would include non-native species. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would rarely encounter other people. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance functions.

Resource Management

The NPS would continue to manage the section of this zone adjacent to Parkside Drive as maintained ground cover including non-native grass species. It would manage the section of this zone adjacent to the Thompson Farm buildings as agricultural land or as low-maintenance ground cover. This would enhance the open, spacious area of the Commemoration Zone.

Interpretation

None.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

Visitors would have only incidental access to this zone. The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks in the section of this zone adjacent to Parkside Drive.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

None.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

This zone would not have any offices or maintenance facilities. A hardened service road would connect the new Maintenance Facility to the Herbert Hoover Highway. Existing utilities would remain.

Special Use Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would include facilities operated or controlled by other governmental agencies or private interests on lands within the boundary of the Historic Site. The HHPL, the Federal Building, and the Administrative Building for the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., all support the public's understanding and appreciation of President Hoover. Visitors would have access to the HHPL and the Federal Building where they would have a high probability of encountering other visitors. Visitor experiences would include unstaffed museum exhibits, an interpretive film, information desks, a sales area, and visitor convenience facilities. Buildings would dominate natural resources. The design of the east façade of the HHPL represents a significant cultural resource as a tangible connection to President Hoover. The intensively designed and maintained buildings would provide safe and aesthetic work environments for staff.

Resource Management

The NPS would ensure the maintenance of the Visitor Center in a clean, safe, and welcoming condition.

Interpretation

The NPS would convert space in the Visitor Center presently used for orientation and cooperating association sales into unstaffed exhibits or other interpretive uses.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would maintain or reduce the Visitor Center Parking Lot. If special events or periods of high visitation would fill parking areas, the NPS would direct visitors to alternative parking areas off-site.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

In the existing visitor center, the NPS would install unstaffed orientation exhibits in the present lobby. It would convert the special exhibit room into a staff office and workspace. It would maintain or reduce the size of the Visitor Center parking lot.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would convert the special exhibit room in the Visitor Center into additional office and staff workspace. Public rest rooms, the employee break room, workroom, conference room, research library, and a storage area would remain in the building.

Recreation Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide visitors and local residents with facilities and opportunities for safe recreational activities that do not relate to the commemoration of President Hoover. Activities would include picnicking, kite flying, softball, badminton, volleyball, cross-country skiing, and recreational walking. This zone would include a designated public assembly area for First Amendment activities. Social and group activities would result in a moderate degree of contact with other visitors. Visitors would have a high degree of contact with other visitors during special events and First Amendment activities. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance and protection functions. Visitors would have safe, accessible, and enjoyable experiences. They would have a low opportunity for solitude. No significant cultural resources would occur in this zone. Natural resources would remain in a highly designed and manipulated condition. Vegetation would include non-native species. Facilities would include picnic shelters and tables, restrooms, drinking fountains, paved sidewalks, and a parking area.

Resource Management

After removal of the buildings in the present Maintenance Facility, the NPS would rehabilitate and re-vegetate the area as green space.

The NPS would monitor the condition of the historic Boy Scout picnic shelter to determine the impact of unrestricted public use. If the studies concluded that such use represented a long-term threat to the structure, the NPS would limit use of the shelter.

The landscape in this zone would remain highly manipulated and intensively maintained including the use of non-native species of grass. The NPS would continue to care for the trees and mow the lawns on a regular basis. The landscaping would complement the open, spacious setting of the Commemorative Zone.

Interpretation

The NPS would present interpretive programs to complement special events held in this zone.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

If picnic use increased, the NPS would install additional picnic tables.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

Upon relocation of the Maintenance Facility, the NPS would remove all buildings in the present maintenance facility area. Utilities in the other areas of this zone would remain.

General Prescriptions for this Alternative

Adjacent Land Use

The NPS would encourage the City of West Branch to adopt and follow growth policies and zoning compatible with the open and spacious setting of the Historic Site. Areas of particular attention would include properties on Downey Street, Wetherell Street, Parkside Drive, and in areas along the northwest boundary proposed for residential and commercial development.

Partners

Education programs, presented in an offsite facility owned by the HPLA, would highlight significant lessons from Hoover's life in West Branch. Programs would employ the Historic Site's cultural and natural resources.

The NPS would work actively with the HHPL, the HPLA, the Hoover family, the City of West Branch, and local school districts to support the commemoration of Hoover through public programs, education programs, special exhibits, and special events.

Staffing

The Historic Site's staffing level would reflect an emphasis on interpretation and cultural resource management. It would maintain adequate staff to manage and protect cultural and natural resources.

Signs

Signs on Parkside Drive would mark the entrance to the Orientation Center, the Visitor Center Parking Lot, and the Water Street Parking Lot. Directional signs at Parkside Drive and the Orientation Center Parking Lot would guide vehicular traffic down the new one-way street to the HHPL and the Gravesite. Directional signs would guide pedestrians from the Orientation Center to the Downey Street trace, the HHPL, the Birthplace Cottage, the Gravesite, the Isaac Miles Farm, the Prairie, and other features of the Commemorative Zone.

Boundary Adjustments

The NPS would not propose any adjustments to its boundary.

Summary of Needed and Allowable Changes

Management Zone	Needed or Allowable Changes
Commemorative Zone	Rehabilitate Varney House for office space Develop wayside exhibits Conduct additional education programs at HPLA facility Rehabilitate PT Smith House for exhibits and storage
Natural Zone	Continue prescribed fire program Conduct study and take measures to stabilize stream-banks Initiate inventory and monitoring program of natural resources
Development Zone	Construct new Orientation Center Install appropriate landscaping and parking Relocate Travelers Information Station to Orientation Center
Maintenance Zone	Relocate Maintenance Facility to Thompson farm
Open Space Zone	Establish and maintain open space ground in the Thompson Farm fields.
Special Use Zone	Rehabilitate Visitor Center for unstaffed exhibits and additional offices.
Recreation Zone	Remove existing maintenance buildings Rehabilitate and re-vegetate area

COSTS

Because of the conceptual nature of this plan, the following cost estimates remain very general. They provide one means for comparing the various alternatives. Future design planning will prepare detailed cost estimates.

Development Costs

Maintenance Facility:	\$ 3,062,800
Orientation Center:	\$ 1,223,900
Street from Center to Loop Road	\$ 162,200
Visitor Center Rehabilitation:	\$ 180,300
P.T. Smith House Rehabilitation:	\$ 139,200
Varney House Rehabilitation:	\$ 87,700
Wayside Exhibits:	\$ 61,000

Total	\$ 4,917,100
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Additional Operating Costs

The Orientation Center, new Maintenance Facility, rehabilitated P.T. Smith House, rehabilitated Varney House, and rehabilitated Visitor Center would cost approximately \$10,000 a year to maintain. The 7.67 additional FTE of operations staff would require an annual cost of \$287,000.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Additional Studies and Plans

This alternative would require additional design planning for the Orientation Center, parking lot, and sidewalks; the street connecting Parkside Drive to the Orientation Center to the HHPL; the new Maintenance Facility; rehabilitation of the visitor center; rehabilitation of the P.T. Smith House; and rehabilitation of the Varney House. This additional planning would include detailed project costs, resource impacts, and actions necessary to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Historic Preservation Act.

- Long Range Interpretation Plan/Comprehensive Interpretation Plan
- Education Plan
- Museum Exhibit Plan
- Wayside Exhibit Plan
- Historic Resource Study
- Cultural Landscape Management Plan
- Historic Structure Reports and Structural Analyses for the Isaac Miles Farm Barn and the Isaac Miles Farm House.
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Natural Resources
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Cultural Resources
- Design Guidelines for the Preservation and Rehabilitation of Historic Structures
- Administrative History

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site General Management Plan

Alternative C

Concept:

This alternative would emphasize the preservation and protection of natural and cultural resources. Visitor services and facilities would have the least possible impact on resources. Scientific management of the prairie ecosystem would take precedence over recreational use and interpretive access. Interpretive programs and visitor activities may limit physical access to historic structures to prevent the adverse impact of visitor use.



The following pages describe management prescriptions for each management zone.

Cultural Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would preserve, protect, and maintain historic structures in an exemplary condition with preservation and rehabilitation treatments. Preservation of the cultural landscape would continue to provide strong visual support for the historic structures. Natural resources would remain in a scientifically stable condition. Visitors would have a high probability of encountering staff and volunteers who would explain the significance of the cultural resources. They would encounter very few wayside exhibits and audio stations intruding upon the integrity of the cultural landscape. Visitors would have access to historic structures only to the extent that such use would not threaten the long-term integrity of the resources. Interpretation would emphasize the significance of the historic structures and cultural landscape in relation to the childhood of Herbert Hoover. Visitors would have a high probability of encountering other visitors. They would have a limited opportunity for solitude and reflection in the Gravesite area. Facilities would provide pedestrian and vehicular access to significant resources. Rehabilitated historic structures would contain museum exhibits, staff housing, or offices only if such use would not jeopardize the structures.

Resource Management

The Historic Site would conduct studies to determine and evaluate existing conditions of all its historic structures. The NPS would provide appropriate preservation treatment to the structures in a priority order based on the urgency of need. The Historic Site would conduct an ongoing monitoring program to analyze the impact of existing use on rehabilitated structures. While the NPS would strive to use historic structures rather than new buildings for its operational needs, it would not permit any use that might jeopardize an historic structure.

The NPS would continue to manage the Isaac Miles Farm as a primary cultural resource including the rehabilitation of its structures.

The NPS would manage the cultural landscape to preserve the period of significance. The landscaping in this zone would retain its existing appearance. No development or use would take place that would jeopardize the integrity of those resources in the period of significance. In particular, the Birthplace Cottage, Gravesite, and HHPL would remain free from any development or activity other than interpretive or commemorative use.

Interpretation

Interpretation would take place in historic structures in a manner that would have no significant adverse impact on them.

Interpretive programs would emphasize the significance and meaning of natural and cultural resources related to Hoover's boyhood while taking special care not to jeopardize these resources. Programs and exhibits would provide visitors with multiple opportunities to understand and appreciate the connection between Hoover's boyhood and his later accomplishments. Paid staff and volunteers would offer informal interpretive services at the principle cultural resources including the Gravesite, the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, Blacksmith Shop, and the Schoolhouse.

Guided tours would emphasize the overall impact of Hoover's boyhood upon his adult life and careers.

Special exhibits in the PT Smith house would emphasize particular aspects of either natural or cultural resources. Education programs, presented in an off-site facility owned by the HPLA would emphasize the Historic Site's natural and cultural resources.

A system of wayside exhibits would interpret cultural resources. The current unobtrusive audio stations would substitute for wayside exhibits at locations where wayside exhibits would hinder visitor experiences of the resources.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would develop a program to document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record the impact of visitor use on natural and cultural resources. Conditions of the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, the Schoolhouse, and the Blacksmith Shop would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation program or limit visitor access to mitigate the problem.

Visitors would continue to receive encouragement to use the existing pedestrian circulation system to experience and appreciate resources in this zone.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would rehabilitate the first floor of the P.T. Smith house to provide space for special exhibits.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would rehabilitate the Varney house for offices and storage. It would rehabilitate the second floor of the P.T. Smith house for offices or storage. The Varney house, CE Smith house, and Garvin house would provide space for offices.

Natural Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would preserve, protect, and restore the tallgrass prairie ecosystem to a good condition. This natural, spacious setting would support the dignified character of the Cultural Preservation Zone without jeopardizing cultural resources in that zone. This zone would not have any significant cultural resources. Public use would take place in this zone only in ways that did not jeopardize natural resources and processes. Simple, unpaved footpaths would represent the only facilities in this zone. They would provide visitor access to the area in a way that would not jeopardize natural resources. Visitors would have a low probability of encountering staff or other visitors with a high degree of solitude and sense of discovery. Organized interpretive programs and environmental education would occur on a regular basis. A few wayside exhibits that would not intrude on natural resources would explain natural processes, promote environmental stewardship, and interpret the influence of the natural world upon Herbert Hoover. Recreational walking and cross-country skiing could take place, but would not be encouraged.

Resource Management

The scientific restoration of the prairie in the natural environment area would take precedence over interpretation programs and recreational activities in the prairie. Such activities would take place only in a manner that would not damage natural resources or disrupt resource management operations.

The NPS would attempt to restore a tallgrass prairie ecosystem by promoting an increased diversity of native plant and animal species while actively preventing the invasion of exotic plant species into the prairie. Actions would include an aggressive, comprehensive program of prescribed burns and species restoration. The NPS would take actions to increase the number and diversity of the prairie's forb species. The NPS would use herbicides to control the growth of woody plants in areas not suitable for prescribed burns. An ongoing program of scientific inventories, monitoring, and research would analyze the current health of the prairie, progress toward ecosystem restoration, and the impact of interpretation and recreational activities upon natural resources. The NPS would ensure that natural resource management actions would not impact cultural resources.

Upon expiration of the life estate interest in the Thompson Farm, the NPS would expand the prairie ecosystem by seeding existing farm fields to prairie.

The NPS would conduct a scientific study to determine if the removal or modification of any culverts, roads, or bridges would support the stabilization of the Historic Site's riparian areas or the mitigation of the periodic floods of "Hoover Creek". The NPS would implement any actions recommended in the study that would provide significant benefit for the Historic Site's natural resources.

Interpretation

Limited guided tours of the prairie would emphasize the significance of its natural resources, as well as their connection to Herbert Hoover. Additional exhibit and audio-visual materials would provide educational opportunities. The NPS would conduct an extensive environmental education program.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would develop a program to document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record the impact of visitor use on natural resources. The condition of the prairie would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation program or limit visitor access to the resources to mitigate the problem.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would not add any visitor facilities. If visitor use appeared to affect the prairie in an adverse way, the NPS would restrict visitor use by reducing the length of the prairie trail system or relocating portions of a trail to mitigate the problem.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

None.

Development Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would welcome visitors with a comprehensive orientation to the Historic Site, HHPL, HPLA, and City of West Branch. A new orientation center would offer visitors a variety of quality orientation and interpretive experiences. Visitors would have a nearly constant interaction with other people and a high probability of encountering staff responsive to their need for information. They would have almost no opportunity for quiet and solitude. This zone would not contain any significant natural or cultural resources. While the natural setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive management, development would have a low impact on nearby natural or cultural resources, especially the view from the Gravesite. The design of the facility would attract the attention of motorists on Parkside Drive, but express great sensitivity to the natural landscape. Landscaping would include only native species. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. The intensively maintained orientation center would provide a safe and aesthetic work environment for staff. Its minimal physical footprint would remain responsive to its orientation and interpretation functions. To the greatest degree practical, the center would represent a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones.

Resource Management

Natural resources would undergo substantial modification and intensive management with a high degree of landscaping with native species.

Interpretation

The NPS would work with officials of the HPLA, HHPL, and the City of West Branch to ensure that visitors at the orientation center receive a comprehensive orientation to the resources of the Historic Site, the HHPL, and the City of West Branch. Orientation would emphasize the significance and meaning of the resources. The design of the orientation center would strive to have minimum impact on the management zones surrounding it. The orientation center would provide information services, orientation exhibits, museum exhibits, an interpretive film, publications, and a cooperating association sales area.

The NPS would relocate the Travelers Information System to the orientation center to continue to broadcast an orientation message to travelers on Interstate 80 a few miles east or west of West Branch. The message would emphasize the natural and cultural resources of the Historic Site.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The orientation center would include parking and traffic/pedestrian circulation. Sidewalks would connect the orientation center to the HHPL and the Downey Street trace. Although the orientation center's parking lot would provide a few spaces for recreational vehicles and buses, most would park in the Water Street parking lot. If a need for overflow parking developed in the future, the NPS would work with the City of West Branch to designate an overflow parking area in the city.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would build an orientation center in the development area for the beginning of most visits to the Historic Site. The center's design would have minimum impact on the Cultural Zone, especially the Isaac Miles Farm, and HPLA's building. The orientation center would include an information/fee collection desk, orientation exhibits, cooperating association sales and storage areas, theater, special exhibits preparation area, public rest rooms, staff offices, and a parking lot for cars, recreational vehicles, and buses.

New sidewalks would connect the orientation center with the HHPL, the Downey Street trace, and the Isaac Miles Farm. The NPS would work closely with the HPLA to ensure that the new sidewalks do not affect their property and their operation.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The orientation center would include office space for the fee collection, interpretation, and cooperating association operations.

Maintenance Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide a safe, low-profile location for the Historic Site's maintenance operations. Although the setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive management, the design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the Thompson Farm buildings. The facility would harmonize with the setting of the adjacent zones. Where feasible, the facility would employ rehabilitated farm structures. The physical footprint of structures and stored materials would remain minimal. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. To the greatest degree practical, the facility would serve as a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would encounter staff conducting maintenance functions. They rarely would encounter other visitors. The facility's landscaping would limit its visual and auditory impact upon visitors in adjacent zones while creating a harmonious setting with adjacent natural resources. Landscaping would include only native species.

Resource Management

Where feasible, the new maintenance facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Thompson Farm. The design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the farm. The NPS would stabilize farm buildings not suitable or feasible for use in the maintenance facility.

Interpretation

No active interpretation would take place in this area of limited incidental visitor access. Publications would interpret the history of the Thompson Farm.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

None.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

None.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would establish a centralized maintenance facility in this zone. This facility would include space for offices, shops, a small parking lot, and storage for vehicles, equipment, and supplies. Where feasible, the new maintenance facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Thompson Farm. The NPS would move a prefabricated building in the existing maintenance facility to the new location. New construction of buildings would supplement the existing structures and the prefabricated building. The NPS would construct paved service roads to connect the maintenance facility with the Loop Road and with the Herbert Hoover Highway.

The NPS would install utilities necessary to support the new maintenance facility.

Open Space Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide an open, spacious atmosphere to support the commemorative setting of the Historic Site. Natural Resources would remain in a highly manipulated condition as agricultural fields or as maintained groundcover vegetation. This area would not contain any significant cultural resources. Vegetation would include non-native species. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would rarely encounter other people. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance functions.

Resource Management

The NPS would continue to manage this zone as maintained ground cover including non-native grass species. This would enhance the open, spacious area of the Cultural Zone.

Interpretation

None.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

Visitors would have only incidental access to this zone. The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or restricted

None.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

This zone would not have any offices or maintenance facilities. Existing utilities would remain.

Special Use Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would include facilities operated or controlled by other governmental agencies or private interests on lands within the boundary of the Historic Site. The HHPL, the Federal Building, and the Administrative Building for the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., all support the public's understanding and appreciation of President Hoover. Visitors would have access to the HHPL and the Federal Office Building where they would have a high probability of encountering other visitors. Visitor experiences would include unstaffed museum exhibits, an interpretive film, information desks, sales areas, and visitor convenience facilities. Buildings would dominate natural resources. The design of the east façade of the HHPL represents a significant cultural resource as a tangible connection to President Hoover. The intensively designed and maintained buildings would provide safe and aesthetic work environments for staff.

Resource Management

The NPS would ensure the maintenance of the visitor center in a clean, safe, and welcoming condition.

Interpretation

The NPS would convert space in the visitor center presently used for orientation, cooperating association sales, and special exhibits into unstaffed museum exhibits about the Historic Site's natural and cultural resources.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would maintain or reduce the visitor center parking lot. If special events or periods of high visitation would fill parking areas, the NPS would direct visitors to alternative parking areas off-site.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would convert space in the visitor center from orientation and special exhibits into museum exhibits.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

Existing office space would remain in the visitor center. Public rest rooms, the employee break room, conference room, the research library, workroom, and a storage area also would remain in the building.

Recreation Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide visitors and local residents with facilities and opportunities for safe recreational activities that do not relate to the commemoration of President Hoover. Activities would include picnicking, kite flying, softball, badminton, volleyball, cross-country skiing, and recreational walking. This zone would include a designated public assembly area for First Amendment activities. Social and group activities would result in a moderate degree of contact with other visitors. Visitors would have a high degree of contact with other visitors during special events and First Amendment activities. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance and protection functions. Visitors would have safe, accessible, and enjoyable experiences. They would have a low opportunity for solitude. No significant cultural resources would occur in this zone. Natural resources would remain in a highly designed and manipulated condition. Vegetation would include non-native species. Facilities would include picnic shelters and tables, restrooms, drinking fountains, paved sidewalks, and a parking area.

Resource Management

After removal of the buildings in the present maintenance facility, the NPS would rehabilitate and re-vegetate the area as green space.

The NPS would monitor the condition of the historic Boy Scout picnic shelter to determine the impact of unrestricted public use. If the studies concluded that such use represented a long-term threat to the structure, the NPS would limit use of the shelter.

The landscape in this zone would remain highly manipulated and intensively maintained including the use of non-native species of grass. The NPS would continue to care for the trees and mow the lawns on a regular basis. The landscaping would complement the open, spacious setting of the Cultural Zone.

Interpretation

The NPS would use portions of this zone for interpretive programs and special events to minimize their impact on other zones.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks. It would strictly enforce capacity limits for the historic picnic shelters.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

If picnic use increased, the NPS would install additional visitor picnic tables.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

Upon relocation of the maintenance facility, the NPS would remove all buildings in the present maintenance facility area. Utilities in the other areas of this zone would remain.

General Prescriptions for this Alternative

Adjacent Land Use

The NPS would encourage the City of West Branch to adopt and follow growth policies and zoning compatible with the open and spacious setting of the Historic Site. Areas of particular attention would include properties on Downey Street, Wetherell Street, Parkside Drive, and in areas along the northwest boundary proposed for residential and commercial development. The NPS would discourage any development that might threaten its natural and cultural resources.

Partners

Education programs, presented in an offsite facility owned by the HPLA, would interpret the Historic Site's cultural and natural resources. Some programs would highlight resource management actions of the Historic Site.

The NPS would work actively with the HHPL, Hoover family, the Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., and the City of West Branch to limit the impact of their programs, activities, and development upon the Historic Site's natural and cultural resources. The NPS would exchange information and expertise about resource management issues with its partners to further protect and preserve each other's natural and cultural resources. The NPS would engage in cooperative ventures with its partners to promote public understanding and appreciation of Herbert Hoover.

Staffing

Staffing levels would reflect an emphasis on resource protection, preservation, and management. Visitor services staff would provide orientation, interpretation of the Hoover story, and educational programs employing the resources of the Historic Site.

Signs

Directional signs on Parkside Drive would guide vehicular traffic to the orientation center. Directional signs would guide pedestrians from the orientation center to the Downey Street trace, the HHPL, the Birthplace Cottage, the Gravesite, the prairie, and other features of the *Cultural Zone*. Directional signs on Parkside Drive would guide vehicular traffic to the HHPL, the Gravesite, the visitor center parking lot, and the Water Street parking lot.

Boundary Adjustments

The NPS would not propose any adjustments to its boundary.

Summary of Needed and Allowable Changes

Management Zone	Needed or Allowable Changes
Cultural Zone	Rehabilitate PT Smith house Rehabilitate Hannah Varney house Install Wayside Exhibits Add preservation staff
Natural Zone	Add natural resource staff Limit visitor access to prairie Enhance scientific study of resources Expand prairie into Thompson Farm fields
Development Zone	Construct orientation center, associated landscape and parking Relocate travelers' information station to new orientation center Provide pedestrian access to the HHPL and the <i>Cultural Zone</i>
Maintenance Zone	Relocate maintenance facility to this zone Restrict visitor access Construct and maintain service roads Construct new buildings and rehabilitate existing buildings
Open Space Zone	Minimal changes from current management
Special Use Zone	Rehabilitate exhibits and offices in existing visitor center Reduce size of current visitor center parking lot if necessary
Recreation Zone	Remove existing maintenance facility Rehabilitate old facility to green space

COSTS

Because of the conceptual nature of this plan, the following cost estimates remain very general. They provide one means for comparing the various alternatives. Future design planning will prepare detailed cost estimates.

Development Costs

Maintenance facility:	\$ 3,062,800
Orientation center:	\$ 1,355,000
Visitor center rehabilitation:	\$ 412,000
P.T. Smith house rehabilitation:	\$ 51,000
Varney house rehabilitation:	\$ 88,000
<u>Wayside exhibits:</u>	<u>\$ 61,000</u>

Total	\$ 5,029,800
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Additional Operating Costs

The orientation center, new maintenance facility, rehabilitated P.T. Smith house, rehabilitated Varney house, and rehabilitated visitor center would cost approximately \$10,000 a year to maintain. The 7.67 additional FTE of operations staff would require an annual cost of \$292,000.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Additional Studies and Plans

This alternative would require additional planning for the orientation center, parking lot, and walkways; the new maintenance facility; and the rehabilitation of the visitor center and the PT Smith house. The planning would detail project design costs, resource impacts, and actions necessary to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Historic Preservation Act.

- Long Range Interpretation Plan/Comprehensive Interpretation Plan
- Education Plan
- Museum Exhibit Plan
- Wayside Exhibit Plan
- Historic Resource Study
- Cultural Landscape Management Plan

- Historic Structure Reports and Structural Analyses for the Thompson Farm barn and the Thompson Farm house.
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Natural Resources
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Cultural Resources
- Assessment and recommended actions to mitigate the impact of the Historic Site's roads, bridges, and culverts upon natural resources
- Administrative History

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site General Management Plan

Alternative D

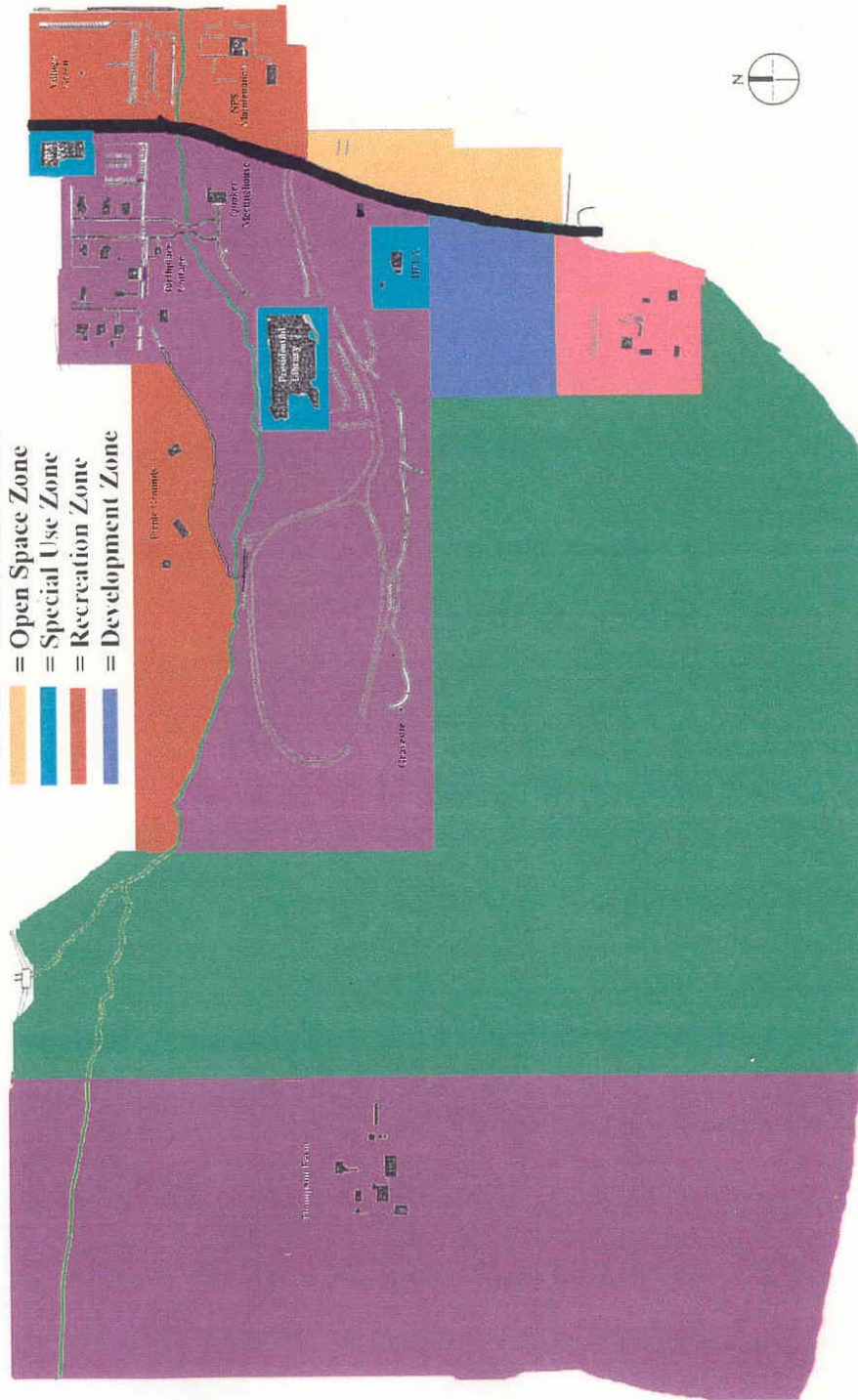
Concept:

This alternative would emphasize the accommodation of visitors with multiple opportunities to learn the entire story of Herbert Hoover's life and meaning. The NPS would manage cultural and natural resources to support high levels of visitor access and use.



MANAGEMENT ZONES

- = Cultural Zone
- = Natural Zone
- = Maintenance Zone
- = Open Space Zone
- = Special Use Zone
- = Recreation Zone
- = Development Zone



MANAGEMENT ZONES - ALTERNATIVE D

The following pages describe management prescriptions for each management zone.

Cultural Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would emphasize the interpretation of the cultural resources associated with Herbert Hoover's early life. The NPS would preserve, protect, and maintain cultural resources in good condition through rehabilitation treatments within a highly designed setting. Historic structures and a reconstructed structure would provide a setting for museum exhibits and public access to the greatest extent possible without jeopardizing the long-term integrity of the structures. Natural resources would remain in an intensively manipulated and maintained condition with some non-native species. No significant natural resources would occur in this zone. Visitors would encounter an extensive amount and variety of media and interpretive programs. They would have a high level of choice in activities and experiences with some direction to their movement in the congested Birthplace Cottage area. Visitors would have a high probability of encountering staff in formal programs and informal contacts. They would have a very high probability of encountering other visitors in the Birthplace Cottage area. Visitors would have some opportunity for solitude and discovery in the Gravesite and Thompson Farm areas. Facilities would provide vehicular and pedestrian access to significant cultural resources.

Resource Management

Rehabilitation of historic structures for museum exhibits, support services, and offices would support interpretation and visitor services. Interpretation of historic structures would reflect the Historic Site's period of significance

The NPS would conduct studies to determine and evaluate existing conditions of all historic structures. The NPS would take resource management actions intended to prevent deterioration of the existing conditions of any cultural resources.

The NPS would manage the cultural landscape to preserve the period of significance. The Cultural Zone would retain its existing appearance. The NPS would not initiate any development or use in this zone that could jeopardize the integrity of any resource. The Birthplace Cottage and Gravesite would remain free from any development or activity other than interpretive or commemorative use. The NPS would develop landscaping to diminish the visual prominence of Parkside Drive from the Historic Site

Interpretation

This zone would emphasize visitor services, interpretation, and education. Interpretation would explain the intent of the landscape features in this zone, especially the vista between the Gravesite and the Birthplace Cottage, the Downey Street trace, the contrived village scene, and the HHPL.

The NPS would locate orientation wayside exhibits at the primary entrances to the Historic Site: HHPL parking lot, the Water Street parking lot, the old visitor center's parking lot, and the Boy Scout picnic shelter. It would place an orientation exhibit at the Downey Street entrance to the Historic Site.

Information services, orientation exhibits, an interpretive video, and publications at the new orientation center would emphasize the connection between Hoover's boyhood and his later accomplishments. At the P.T. Smith house, special exhibits (unstaffed) would complement the HHPL's special exhibits and events or support special NPS interpretation initiatives. Wayside exhibits and audio stations at the Thompson Farm would interpret the influence of agriculture upon Hoover and his personal connection to the farm. Wayside exhibits, an audio station, and museum exhibits (unstaffed) at the reconstructed "House of the Maples" would interpret Hoover's family life. Museum exhibits at the visitor center would interpret Hoover's childhood development, especially the influence of education, religion, family, and West Branch upon his personality and values. Wayside exhibits would interpret the significance of individual structures and sites.

Paid staff and volunteers would offer informal interpretive services at the principal resources including the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, Blacksmith Shop, and the Schoolhouse. Guided tours in the historic area and West Branch would emphasize the overall impact of Hoover's boyhood upon his careers and public life.

The NPS would work with the HHPL, the HPLA, and local school districts to produce education programs, exhibits, and products that cover a complete spectrum of Hoover's life and significance. NPS education programs, presented in the new orientation center, would emphasize the connection between Hoover's childhood and his adult life.

Ongoing surveys of visitor satisfaction would determine if the Historic Site would need to develop capacities for any of its interpretive programs.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

To recognize and mitigate adverse impacts of visitation upon natural and cultural resources, the NPS would document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record resource conditions. Conditions of the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, the Schoolhouse, and the Blacksmith Shop would receive primary emphasis. If any resources appeared affected by visitor use, the NPS would rehabilitate the resource to withstand such use.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would reconstruct the "House of the Maples," using its interior space for museum exhibits interpreting Hoover's family life. The NPS would rehabilitate the P.T. Smith house into unstaffed exhibit space. The NPS would maintain and interpret the

Thompson Farm to reflect the influence of the agricultural environment upon Hoover's boyhood world.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The Varney, C.E. Smith, and Garvin houses would provide space for staff offices.

The NPS would install utilities necessary to support the reconstructed "House of the Maples" and the P.T. Smith exhibits.

The NPS would build a paved service road to connect the new maintenance facility in the Maintenance Zone with the Loop Road.

Natural Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would emphasize the interpretation of natural resources associated with Herbert Hoover's early life. The NPS would manage natural resources to meet all applicable laws, policies, and management standards, but it would preserve existing conditions with as little direct intervention as possible. The NPS would not attempt to restore any ecosystems. This zone would not have any significant cultural resources. Activities and facilities would not jeopardize cultural resources in adjacent zones. Visitors would have a choice of well-defined pedestrian access facilities with both hardened trails and simple footpaths. They would encounter a wide variety of interpretive programs and media explaining the connection between Herbert Hoover and the natural world. They would have a moderate probability of meeting other people. Visitors would have a moderate sense of discovery. Some areas would provide a high degree of solitude.

Resource Management

The NPS would manage the prairie and other natural resources as an outdoor setting for the interpretation of Herbert Hoover. Resource management actions would maintain current conditions with the least possible intervention needed to prevent a deterioration of the present conditions. The NPS would not attempt to restore complete ecosystems or individual species of plants and animals to their natural condition. Resource management would ensure that the prairie would remain in its present condition, but no new scientific restoration of the prairie would take place.

Interpretation

Interpretation programs and media in the prairie would emphasize the influence of the natural environment upon Hoover's boyhood, adult life, and career. Interpretation also would emphasize Hoover's appreciation of natural resources

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

To recognize and mitigate adverse impacts of visitor use upon natural resources, the NPS would document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record resource conditions. Conditions of the prairie and “Hoover Creek” would receive primary emphasis. If visitor use affected any resource, the NPS would rehabilitate that resource to withstand such use.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would expand the interpretive trail system in the prairie with new trails and wayside exhibits. Some of the trail would become hard surfaced to ensure full accessibility for visitors.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

Existing utilities would remain in place. The NPS would build a paved service road to connect the new maintenance facility in the Maintenance Zone with the Loop Road.

Development Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would welcome visitors with a comprehensive orientation to the Historic Site, the HHPL, the HPLA, and the City of West Branch. A new orientation center would offer visitors a variety of quality orientation and interpretive experiences. Visitors would have a nearly constant interaction with other people. They would have a high probability of encountering staff responsive to their need for information. They would have almost no opportunity for quiet and solitude. This zone would not contain any significant natural or cultural resources. While the natural setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive management, development would have a low impact on nearby natural or cultural resources, especially the view from the Gravesite. The design of the facility would attract the attention of motorists on Parkside Drive, but express great sensitivity to the natural landscape. Landscaping would include only native species. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. The intensively maintained orientation center would provide a safe and aesthetic work environment for staff. Its minimal physical footprint would remain responsive to its orientation and interpretation functions. To the greatest degree practical, the center would represent a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones.

Resource Management

Natural resources would undergo substantial modification and intensive management with a high degree of landscaping.

Interpretation

Comprehensive orientation to public programs, facilities, and special events at the Historic Site, the HHPL, and West Branch, would take place in a new orientation center. Orientation would emphasize the multiple opportunities to understand the significance and meaning of Herbert Hoover. In addition to orientation and visitor services, the center would provide an interpretive film, publications, and a cooperating association sales area. The sales area would provide a comprehensive selection of publications related to Herbert Hoover.

The NPS would move the Travelers Information System to the orientation center. It would continue to broadcast an orientation message to travelers on Interstate 80. Its message would include all interpretive programs, exhibits, and special events available at the Historic Site, the HHPL, and West Branch.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The orientation center would include parking and traffic/pedestrian circulation. The NPS would build sidewalks to connect the orientation center with the HHPL and the Downey Street trace. Although the orientation center would provide a few parking spaces for recreational vehicles and buses, most would park in the Water Street parking lot. The NPS would establish overflow parking for special events by constructing a structurally reinforced lawn area alongside the entire Loop Road. If a need for additional overflow parking developed in the future, the NPS would expand the Water Street parking lot to the south in the Recreation Zone.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would build an orientation center including an information/fee collection desk, orientation exhibits, cooperating association sales and storage areas, theater, classroom, special exhibit preparation area, education preparation area, public rest rooms, staff offices, and a parking lot for cars and recreational vehicles or buses. The center's design would take care to have minimum impact on the Commemorative Zone.

The NPS would construct a single-lane, one-way street to connect Parkside Drive to the orientation center parking lot and to the HHPL. The NPS would work closely with the HHPL to ensure that the new street facilitated entry into the HHPL's parking lot. Design of the street would take special care to minimize impacts on the natural environment. Sidewalks would connect the Center with the HHPL and the Downey Street trace. The NPS would work closely with the HPLA to ensure that the new street and sidewalks do not affect their property and their operation.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

NPS personnel would maintain the orientation center. The orientation center would provide offices for staff working in the center. The NPS would install necessary utility systems to support the center.

Maintenance Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide a safe, low-profile location for the Historic Site's maintenance operations. Although the setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive management, the design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the Miles Farm buildings. The facility would harmonize with the setting of the adjacent zones. Where feasible, the facility would employ rehabilitated farm structures. The physical footprint of structures and stored materials would remain minimal. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. To the greatest degree practical, the facility would serve as a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would encounter staff conducting maintenance functions. They rarely would encounter other visitors. The facility's landscaping would limit its visual and auditory impact upon visitors in adjacent zones while creating a harmonious setting with adjacent natural resources. Landscaping would include only native species.

Resource Management

Where feasible, the new maintenance facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Isaac Miles Farm. The design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the farm. The NPS would stabilize farm buildings not suitable or feasible for use in the maintenance facility.

Interpretation

No active interpretation would take place in this zone. Publications would interpret the Isaac Miles Farm.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

None.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

None.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would establish a centralized maintenance facility in this zone. This facility would include space for offices, shops, a small parking lot, and storage for vehicles, equipment, and supplies. Where feasible, the new maintenance facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Isaac Miles Farm. The NPS would move a prefabricated building in the existing maintenance facility to the new location. New construction of buildings would supplement the existing structures and the prefabricated building. It would pave the access road from Parkside Drive to the Isaac Miles Farm.

The NPS would install utilities necessary to support the new maintenance facility.

Open Space Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide an open, spacious atmosphere to support the commemorative setting of the Historic Site. Natural Resources would remain in a highly manipulated condition as agricultural fields or as maintained groundcover vegetation. This area would not contain any significant cultural resources. Vegetation would include non-native species. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would rarely encounter other people. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance functions.

Resource Management

The NPS would continue to manage this zone as maintained ground cover including non-native grass species. This would enhance the open, spacious area of the Cultural Zone.

Interpretation

None.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

Visitors would have only incidental access to this zone. The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

None.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

This zone would not have any offices or maintenance facilities. Existing utilities would remain.

Special Use Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would include facilities operated or controlled by other governmental agencies or private interests on lands within the boundary of the Historic Site. The HHPL, the Federal Building, and the Administrative Building for the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., all support the public's understanding and appreciation of President Hoover. Visitors would have access to the HHPL and the Federal Building where they would have a high probability of encountering other visitors. Visitor experiences would include unstaffed museum exhibits, an interpretive film, information desks, sales areas, and visitor convenience facilities. Buildings would dominate natural resources. The design of the east façade of the HHPL represents a significant cultural resource as a tangible connection to President Hoover. The intensively designed and maintained buildings would provide safe and aesthetic work environments for staff.

Resource Management

The NPS would ensure the maintenance of the visitor center in a clean, safe, and welcoming condition.

Interpretation

The NPS would continue to operate a staffed information desk in the visitor center. It would convert the orientation exhibit into a museum exhibit concerning Hoover's childhood development, especially the influence of education, religion, family, and West Branch upon his personality and values. The NPS would convert the special exhibit room into an office and workspace.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

If special events or periods of high visitation would fill parking areas, the NPS would direct visitors to hardened overflow parking area along the Loop Road and to alternative parking areas off-site.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

In the visitor center, the NPS would convert the orientation exhibit to a museum exhibit. It would convert the special exhibit room into an office and workspace.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would convert the special exhibit room in the visitor center into an office and workspace. Public rest rooms, the employee break room, workroom, conference room, research library, and a storage area would remain in the building. Existing utilities would remain.

Recreation Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide visitors and local residents with facilities and opportunities for safe recreational activities that do not relate to the commemoration of President Hoover. Activities would include picnicking, kite flying, softball, badminton, volleyball, cross-country skiing, and recreational walking. This zone would include a designated public assembly area for First Amendment activities. Social and group activities would result in a moderate degree of contact with other visitors. Visitors would have a high degree of contact with other visitors during special events and First Amendment activities. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance and protection functions. Visitors would have safe, accessible, and enjoyable experiences. They would have a low opportunity for solitude. No significant cultural resources would occur in this zone. Natural resources would remain in a highly designed and manipulated condition. Vegetation would include non-native species. Facilities would include picnic shelters and tables, restrooms, drinking fountains, paved sidewalks, and a parking area.

Resource Management

After removal of the buildings in the present maintenance facility, the NPS would rehabilitate and re-vegetate the area as green space.

The NPS would monitor the condition of the historic Boy Scout picnic shelter to determine the impact of unrestricted visitor use. If the studies concluded that such use represented a long-term threat to the structure, the NPS would rehabilitate the shelter to withstand such use.

The landscape in this zone would remain highly manipulated and intensively maintained including the use of non-native species of grass. The NPS would continue to care for the trees and mow the lawns on a regular basis. The landscaping would complement the open, spacious setting of the Cultural Zone.

Interpretation

The NPS would present interpretive programs to complement special events held in this zone.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would maintain existing walkways.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

If visitor use increased, the NPS would install additional picnic tables and another comfort station.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

Upon relocation of the maintenance facility, the NPS would remove all buildings in the present maintenance facility area. Utilities in the other areas of this zone would remain.

General Prescriptions for this Alternative

Adjacent Land Use

The NPS would encourage the City of West Branch to adopt and follow growth policies and zoning compatible with the open and spacious setting of the Historic Site. Areas of particular attention would include properties on Downey Street, Wetherell Street, Parkside Drive, and in areas along the northwest boundary proposed for residential and commercial development.

Partnerships

The NPS would facilitate a coordinated interpretation program with the HHPL, the City of West Branch, and the HPLA. Whenever possible, the partners would work together to produce special exhibits and events intended to enhance public understanding of President Hoover. Together the partners would offer the public opportunities to gain a complete view of Hoover's life and accomplishments through public programs, education programs, special exhibits, and special events.

Staffing

The Historic Site's staffing levels would reflect an emphasis on interpretation. The NPS would add staff to operate the orientation center, provide interpretive tours of cultural and natural resources, present talks and other special programs, develop permanent and temporary exhibits, and present an extensive educational program.

Signs

Signs on Parkside Drive would mark the entrance to the orientation center, the visitor center parking lot, and the Water Street parking lot. Directional signs at Parkside Drive and the orientation center parking lot would guide vehicular traffic down the new one-way street to the HHPL and the Gravesite. Directional signs would guide pedestrians

from the orientation center to the Downey Street Trace, the HHPL, Birthplace Cottage, the Gravesite, the prairie, and other features in the Cultural Zone. A directional sign on the Herbert Hoover Highway would guide vehicular traffic to the Thompson Farm.

Boundary Adjustments

The NPS would not propose any adjustments to its boundary.

Summary of Needed and Allowable Changes

Management Zone	Needed or Allowable Changes
Cultural Zone	Rehabilitate P.T. Smith house for exhibits Reconstruct House of the Maples Add interpretive staff Rehabilitate Varney house for offices Add additional wayside exhibits
Natural Zone	Provide additional interpretive activities involving the prairie and creek
Development Zone	Construct orientation center Install appropriate landscaping and park facilities Construct street from orientation center to the Loop Road
Maintenance Zone	Relocate maintenance facility to the Isaac Miles Farm Construct service road from maintenance facility to the Loop Road
Open Space Zone	No changes
Recreation Zone	Remove existing maintenance buildings Rehabilitate and re-vegetate area
Special Use Zone	Rehabilitate visitor center orientation exhibit into a museum exhibit Convert visitor center special exhibit room into an office and workspace Staff visitor center information desk

COSTS

Because of the conceptual nature of this plan, the following cost estimates remain very general. They provide one means for comparing the various alternatives. Future design planning will prepare detailed cost estimates.

Development Costs

Maintenance facility:	\$ 2,268,800
Orientation center:	\$ 1,824,000
Road from center to Loop Road:	\$ 162,000
Reconstruct House of the Maples	\$ 548,000
Visitor center rehabilitation:	\$ 293,000
P.T. Smith house rehabilitation:	\$ 51,000
Varney house rehabilitation:	\$ 88,000
Reinforced lawn parking:	\$ 61,000
<u>Wayside exhibits:</u>	<u>\$ 102,000</u>

Total	\$ 5,397,800
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Additional Operating Costs

The orientation center, new maintenance facility, reconstructed “House of the Maples,” rehabilitated P.T. Smith house, rehabilitated Varney house, and rehabilitated visitor center would cost approximately \$ 15,000 per year to operate and maintain. The 9.67 additional FTE would require an annual cost of \$ 376,000.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Additional Studies and Plans

This alternative would require additional design planning for the new orientation center, parking lot, and walkways; the street connecting the orientation center with the Loop Road, the new maintenance facility; the reconstruction of the “House of the Maples” and installation of museum exhibits; the rehabilitation of P.T. Smith house for special exhibits; the rehabilitation of the visitor center for museum exhibits and staff offices; and the rehabilitation of the Varney house for offices. This planning would include detailed project costs, resource impacts, and actions necessary to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Historic Preservation Act.

- Long Range Interpretation Plan/Comprehensive Interpretation Plan
- Education Plan
- Museum Exhibit Plan

- Wayside Exhibit Plan
- Historic Resource Study
- Cultural Landscape Management Plan
- Historic Structure Report and Structural Analyses for the Thompson Farm Barn and the Thompson Farm House
- Historic Structure Report for the “House of the Maples”
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Natural Resources
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Cultural Resources
- Administrative History

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site General Management Plan

Alternative E

(No Action)

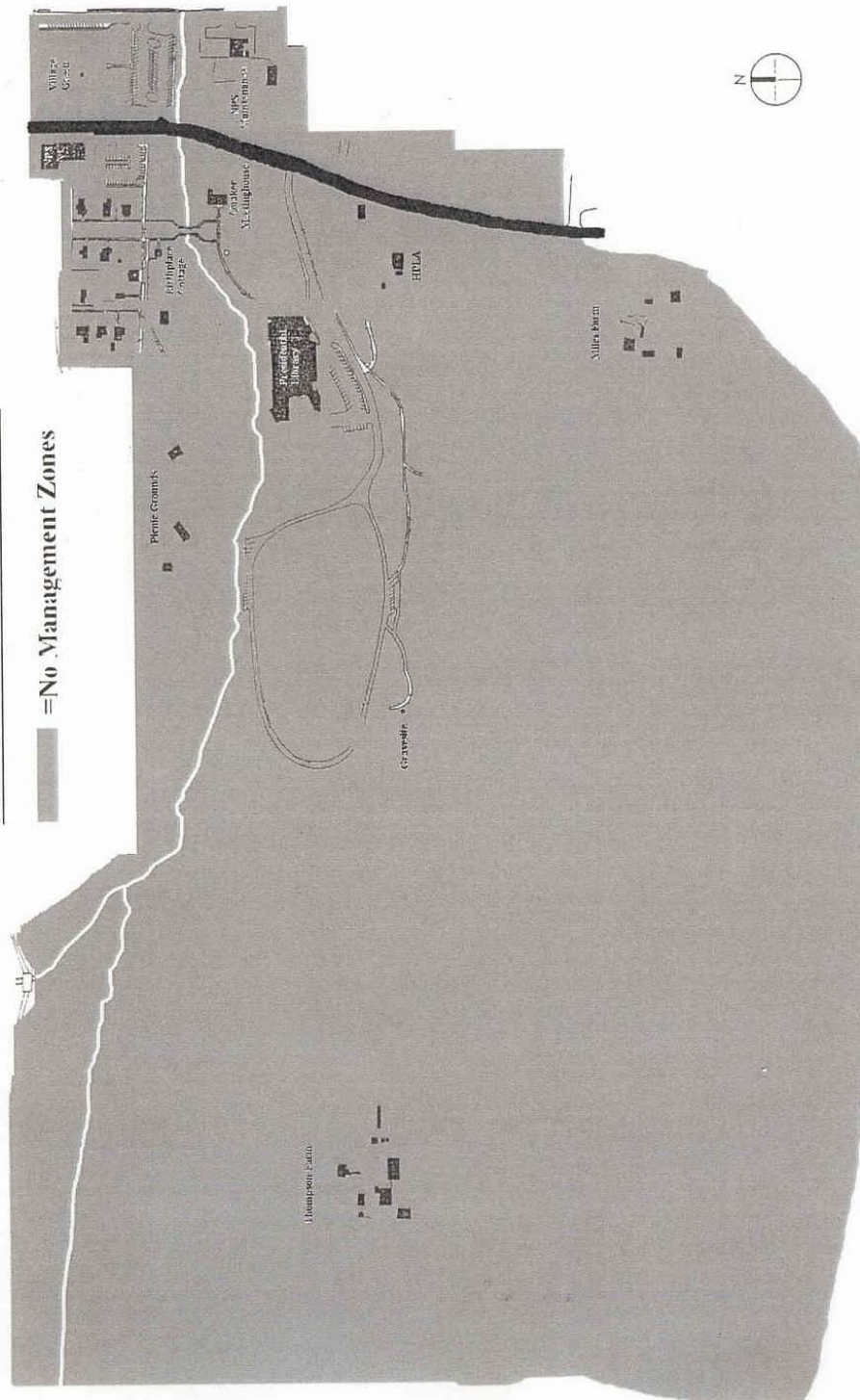
Concept:

This alternative, provided as a baseline for comparison, would maintain current resource and visitor experience conditions. Management of cultural and natural resources would remain reactive, rather than proactive. This alternative would not provide additional visitor services, nor build any new facilities. It would not meet all legal mandates. Where still suitable and feasible, the 1970 Master Plan and its amendment (1978) would continue to provide primary management guidance. The NPS, however, would not carry out all of its recommendations.



MANAGEMENT ZONES

■ = No Management Zones



MANAGEMENT ZONES - ALTERNATIVE E

Management Zones:

The historic site would continue to be managed without delineated management zones. The following management prescriptions would be applied to the site.

Management Prescriptions for this Alternative

Resource Management

The NPS would follow the 1978 Addendum to the Master Plan in its management of historic structures. It would rehabilitate historic structures in the Birthplace Cottage neighborhood to reflect the historic scene in Hoover's boyhood. It would use historic structures as employee residences, interpretation and visitor services facilities, staff offices, and education facilities. Many of these facilities would remain in the 100-year regulatory flood zone of "Hoover Creek". It would restore the external features of the buildings at the Isaac Miles Farm to the farm's period of significance, 1874-1885. The Historic Site would continue to use the farm home as an employee residence. The interior of other farm buildings would continue as storage for maintenance equipment and supplies. The Historic Site would manage visitor use of historic resources in a way that would not threaten their integrity.

The NPS would use the 1970 Master Plan to guide the transition between the Hoover neighborhood restoration and reconstruction with the surrounding area. It would use landscaping to buffer future development outside the Historic Site's boundaries that might detract from the character of the Historic Site.

The NPS would preserve and rehabilitate historic structures to maintain them in good condition. Historic structures would continue to serve as staff housing or storage space. The NPS would manage the cultural landscape to support the commemorative character of the area.

The NPS would recognize that the small size of the prairie reconstruction would encumber its complete restoration as a functional ecosystem without a very significant investment of fiscal and human resources. The NPS, therefore, would not attempt to restore a complete prairie ecosystem, but it would manage the prairie community in a manner that would complement the spacious, commemorative setting of the Historic Site. The prairie also would provide a natural boundary between the Historic Site and Interstate Highway 80 and other modern distractions.

The NPS would continue to follow the 1970 Master Plan to transform former agricultural areas into native prairie. It would take resource management actions designed to restore the scientific integrity of the prairie environment including the establishment of an inventory and monitoring program. It would continue its present natural resource management actions including prescribed burns of sections of the prairie to improve

populations of native grasses and forbs, and suppress the growth of invasive plants. The NPS would continue to monitor the prairie for undesirable exotic or invasive species. It would control such growth with localized treatments. The NPS would use seeding of prairie species to assist the natural diversification of the plant community. The NPS would not reintroduce animal species to the prairie, but would consider animal species that colonize prairie environments in any management decisions. The NPS would take minimal actions to stabilize the banks of the tributary to the West Branch of the Wapsinonoc Creek. The NPS would determine if modifications to the Historic Site's infrastructure, the streambed of the Creek, and its associated riparian areas would mitigate flood damage to natural and cultural resources. The NPS would implement actions that would benefit both the natural resources and the interpretive commemorative nature of the Historic Site. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify public access and use to mitigate the problem.

The NPS would monitor adverse impacts on the Creek caused by storm-water runoff and pollutants from the maintenance operation. The Historic Site would take actions to mitigate this impact on the creek. Natural resources would remain in a highly modified condition in this developed area.

The NPS would continue to manage the section of this zone adjacent to Parkside Drive as maintained ground cover including non-native grass species. It would manage the section of this zone adjacent to the Thompson Farm buildings as agricultural land or as low-maintenance ground cover.

The visitor center would be maintained in a clean, safe, and welcoming manner.

The NPS would monitor the condition of the historic Boy Scout picnic shelter to determine the impact of unrestricted public use. If the studies concluded that such use represented a long-term threat to the structure, the NPS would limit use of the shelter. The landscape would remain highly manipulated and intensively maintained including the use of non-native species of grass. The NPS would continue to care for the trees and mow the lawns on a regular basis.

Interpretation

The NPS would complement interpretation at the HHPL by emphasizing Hoover's boyhood in West Branch. Interpretation would continue to follow the direction of the 1978 Addendum to the Master Plan to provide programs for year-round day use for people of all ages and interest levels. Volunteers and paid staff would offer informal interpretation at the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meeting House, the Blacksmith Shop, and other historic structures. Guided tours of the Historic Site would take place only after fulfilling staffing requirements at the visitor center and the historic structures. Educational groups would receive an orientation in the visitor center and a guided tour of the Historic Site.

The visitor center would remain the focus for visitor services through a staffed information desk, a few orientation exhibits, a short orientation audio-visual program, a cooperating association sales area, a special exhibit room, staff offices, and public rest rooms.

A limited number of directional signs would guide both traffic and pedestrians. People visiting the HHPL before the visitor center would receive an orientation to the Historic Site through the HHPL's distribution of the Historic Site's free folder. People arriving first at the Birthplace Cottage would receive an orientation through contact with staff stationed at the cottage.

The NPS would not follow the 1978 Addendum to the Master Plan that proposed adaptive use of the first floor of the P.T. Smith house as an orientation center for organized group visits because of potential traffic congestion. The structure would remain in place, but not open to the public.

The Travelers Information System would continue to provide orientation by broadcasting a message to travelers on Interstate 80. Its message would promote exhibits, programs, and special events available at the Historic Site, the HHPL, and West Branch.

Informal contacts with park rangers and occasional guided tours would interpret the area for visitors. A wayside exhibit overlooking the Isaac Miles Farm would interpret the farm's connection to Herbert Hoover. Visitors would not have access to the interior of any of the historic structures.

A few wayside exhibits, an audio station, and a free publication would interpret the tallgrass prairie environment and the Historic Site's ongoing efforts to reconstruct that environment. Occasional guided tours for visitors and environmental education programs for schoolchildren would provide opportunities for an enriched experience.

The NPS would continue to use the visitor center for orientation, cooperating association sales, and limited exhibits.

The NPS would present interpretive programs to complement special events held in this zone.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

To recognize and mitigate adverse impacts of visitation, the NPS would document baseline conditions of cultural resources; then periodically monitor and record resource conditions. Conditions of the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, the Schoolhouse, the Blacksmith Shop, and the reconstructed prairie would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation and/or resource management programs to mitigate the problem.

The NPS would maintain the existing parking facilities at the visitor center. Parking would accommodate the average peak visitation in July and August. Special events at the Historic Site would utilize local parking facilities in West Branch for overflow parking. The existing paved paths and other walkways would connect visitor facilities, historic structures, and other significant resources.

The NPS would maintain the existing parking and paved roads. The HHPL Parking Lot would accommodate the average peak visitation in July and August. Special events at the HHPL would utilize local parking facilities in West Branch and edges of existing roads for overflow parking. The existing paved paths and other walkways would connect visitor facilities, historic structures, and other significant resources.

To recognize and mitigate adverse impacts of visitation upon natural resources, the NPS would document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record resource conditions. Conditions of the prairie and creek would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would restrict or eliminate public access.

The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would not expand or remove any visitor facility. It would limit access to any historic structure believed threatened by unlimited public use.

If the resource monitoring program indicated that visitor use near any wayside exhibit had threatened natural resources, the NPS would relocate or remove the wayside exhibit. Visitor circulation would remain restricted to established footpaths. If the resource monitoring program indicated that any of the footpaths had threatened natural resources, the NPS would relocate or remove the footpath.

The NPS would install additional picnic tables if picnic use increased.

Administrative, Maintenance, and Utilities

The visitor center and historic structures would continue to provide administrative office space.

Historic structures would continue to serve as staff housing and storage space. Maintenance would continue to use structures at the Isaac Miles farm to store equipment and materials.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The existing maintenance facility would be maintained in the floodplain.

Adjacent Land Use

The NPS would encourage the City of West Branch to develop and follow growth policies and zoning that would support the open and spacious setting of the Historic Site. Areas of particular attention would include properties on Downey and Wetherell Streets, Parkside Drive, and in areas along the northwest boundary proposed for development.

Partners

The NPS would maintain its cooperation with the HHPL, the Hoover Family, and the City of West Branch within the limits of the Historic Site's mission. It also would engage in cooperative ventures with the Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc.

Staffing

Several vacant positions would remain unfilled due to insufficient base funding.

Signs

Directional signs would guide vehicular traffic and pedestrians to the Historic Site's facilities, historic structures, and other resources.

Boundary Adjustments

The NPS would not propose any adjustments to its boundary.

Summary of Needed and Allowable Changes

No major changes.

COSTS

No additional costs.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Present management practices would continue to take place under the direction of the 1970 Master Plan and the 1978 Addendum to the Master Plan.

Additional Studies and Plans

- Long Range Interpretation Plan/Education Plan
- Historic Resource Study
- Administrative History

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED

The present location of West Branch Ford (formerly Radford Motors), adjacent to the Historic Site, was considered for the centralized maintenance facility. The NPS rejected this alternative because suitable locations within the Historic Site existed for the facility. In addition, the West Branch Ford site had the potential for hazardous material from underground fuel storage tanks.

The NPS considered the Varney house, the P.T. Smith house, the lobby of the HHPL, and the Isaac Miles Farm barn as an existing facility to provide orientation to the Historic Site. It found, however, that each building lacked sufficient space for orientation and visitor services (information desk, orientation exhibits, and a theater). The Varney and P.T. Smith houses also lacked space for public rest rooms. Only the barn had the potential to provide orientation in an appropriate location at the start of most visits to the Historic Site. The barn, however, stands so close to Interstate 80 that many visitors would return to the highway after their visit to the barn without experiencing the Historic Site. The barn also lacked the size necessary to accommodate orientation and visitor services.

The NPS considered rerouting Parkside Drive to the east in order to provide safe access to the Historic Site for pedestrians coming from the Water Street parking lot. Subsequent installation of a pedestrian crosswalk with a traffic light has substantially improved the safety of pedestrians. The expense of rerouting Parkside Drive, therefore, would not merit the small increase in safety provided by that action.

The NPS considered moving the Water Street parking lot to the north end of the village green to provide a natural background for the view of the Birthplace Cottage from the Gravesite. It rejected the action for its negative impact on recreational opportunities on the village green. The new location of the parking lot would place users farther away from the historic structures in the Historic Site and would add to the present traffic congestion at the corner of Parkside Drive and Main Street.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferred alternative represents the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy expressed in the National Environmental Policy Act (Section 101 (b)). The “Forty Most Asked Questions concerning Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) National Environmental Policy Act Regulations” suggests “this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.” (Q6a)

Alternative C represents the environmentally preferred alternative for the historic site in this document. This alternative would emphasize the preservation and protection of natural and cultural resources. Visitor services and facilities would have the least possible impact on resources. At the same time, this alternative would ensure that visits to the historic site would take place in safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and

culturally pleasing surroundings. Important historic and cultural aspects of our national heritage would receive preservation while maintaining an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice. At the same time, this alternative would achieve a balance between human population and resource considerations.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes the resources and current uses that may be affected by implementing the proposal or alternatives.

Cultural Resources

Cultural Landscape

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site (Historic Site) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its significance as the birthplace of Herbert Hoover. In addition to the birthplace cottage, the Historic Site includes the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum (HHPL) and the graves of President Hoover and his wife, Lou Henry Hoover. The period of significance portrayed by the cultural landscape spans ninety-two years - from Hoover's birth in 1874 through his death and burial on-site in 1964. Two distinct sub-periods have the most direct associations with Herbert Hoover: 1874-1885, the years of Hoover's boyhood spent in West Branch, and 1935-1964, the post-presidential period when the Hoover family actively participated in site preservation and commemoration.

The historic core of the Site includes a re-created village neighborhood representative of eastern Iowa in the 1880's. The neighborhood, which consists largely of residential structures, is aligned along a typical Midwest grid pattern of streets. Within this area, the Birthplace Cottage is the primary resource associated with the period of significance. The other structures are a combination of buildings that have remained on the site from the Hoover boyhood era, others that were relocated to the site, and a blacksmith shop that was built to depict a typical shop of the boyhood era. The connection of the Hoover boyhood neighborhood to the larger West Branch community is not visibly apparent.

An unnamed tributary of the west branch of Wapsinonoc Creek, known locally as "Hoover Creek", is the defining natural feature through the middle of the Historic Site. A loop road through a park-like setting extends west of the HHPL in the riparian area. The loop concept retains the characteristics of a nineteenth century racetrack that was part of the former Cedar County fairgrounds that was located on this site. An expansive lawn area contains picnic shelters, a comfort station, paved sidewalks, and clusters of trees and shrubs. The southwest portion of the Loop Road climbs slightly to the upland location of the Gravesite, from which there is a panoramic view of the core area below. An open vista is provided between the Gravesite and Birthplace Cottage.

The Isaac Miles Farm and the Thompson Farm contribute a rural, agricultural landscape to the site. The farms represent nineteenth and early-twentieth century Iowa farmsteads, which provided the setting Hoover associated with West Branch. A portion of the Isaac Miles Farm, lying between Interstate 80 and the Loop Road, has been planted with prairie grasses. During the period of significance, this area contained cultivated fields. Although the reconstructed prairie does not have any historic Hoover association, it is in keeping with management objectives to maintain both the openness associated with the agrarian landscape and a dignified setting befitting the commemoration of President Hoover. The Thompson Farm, located in the upland area of the western portion of the Historic Site, is actively used for agriculture under a life estate interest.

The HHPL and its associated entry drive and parking areas add a formal, institutional layer to the cultural landscape. The visitor center and the maintenance facility are relatively undistinguished within the business and residential setting of the town and do not contribute significantly to landscape integrity.

Historic Structures

The primary structures related to the Hoover boyhood period are located within the re-created village in the historic core area. Aligned along a grid of former streets are: the Birthplace Cottage, nine other nineteenth century residences (some in their original locations and some relocated), a relocated and restored Friends meeting house (1856) and one-room schoolhouse (1853), and a representation of Hoover's father's blacksmith shop. The Birthplace Cottage, Friends Meetinghouse, Schoolhouse, and Blacksmith Shop are used as interpretive sites. Five of the historic residences are used for staff offices and the remaining four for employee housing.

The P.T. Smith house, on the south side of the HHPL entrance drive, is visually isolated from the core area. The exterior has been renovated, but the house is not currently being utilized. The site of the "House of the Maples", the Hoover's third home, is adjacent to the P.T. Smith house.

The Isaac Miles Farm and Thompson Farm each include a house, barn, and various farm-related sheds and structures. The barn at the Isaac Miles Farm is the only agricultural structure in the vicinity of the Historic Site remaining from Hoover's youth. The Miles farmhouse is currently used as employee housing.

Museum Collection

The Historic Site's museum collection contains 1,687 objects. These include household furnishings and furnishings for the Schoolhouse and Friends Meetinghouse, tools for blacksmithing and woodworking, agricultural implements, books, and works of art. Approximately 700 of these objects are on display in four furnished structures where they help visitors to visualize the surroundings of Hoover's boyhood in West Branch. A portion of the Historic Site's collections is currently stored at the University of Iowa and at the Midwest Archeological Center in Lincoln, NE. Museum object acquisition needs

have been identified and the museum collection is still growing though there is no aggressive acquisition program.

Archeological Resources

Archeological investigations conducted at the Historic Site in conjunction with past construction and restoration activities have led to the discovery of such features as cisterns, wells, and foundations.

Natural Resources

Topography, Geology, and Soils

The Historic Site is located on the southern Iowa Drift Plain. Elevation ranges from about 710 to 790 feet above sea level. Topography is flat in the riparian area to gently rolling in the upland areas. Slopes vary from 1 to 12 percent with north and northeast aspects.

The primary soils are of the Tama-Downs and Tama-Muscatine associations. These are silt loams of the Tama and Colo series. The Tama Series consists of well-drained, moderately permeable soils that formed in more than 40 inches of loess. They occur primarily on upland areas. The Colo Series consists of poorly drained, moderately permeable soils that formed in moderately fine-textured alluvial deposits. These soils are found on floodplains and in upland drainage ways.

Water Resources

The entire Historic Site lies within the drainage basin of the west branch of Wapsinonoc Creek which is fed by the Silurian-Devonian aquifer. An unnamed tributary of the west branch flows through the site from west to east and is a degraded but character-defining feature that is closely associated with Hoover's boyhood memories. It meanders through a deeply cut channel which is susceptible to flooding during peak flows. Since the riparian zone is a modified environment, none of it meets the criteria for wetlands.

More than half of the Historic Site lies within the 100-year regulatory flood plain and frequent over-the-bank-flooding events occur. These events cause accelerated erosion and sloughing of banks that result in meandering in the vicinity of the HHPL and historic core area. The visitor center is located within the 100-year regulatory flood plain but has not experienced direct effects from flooding with the exception of the parking lot. The maintenance facility, located on the south bank of "Hoover Creek", has been most severely impacted by flooding. A 500-year flood event has not occurred to date.

A severe storm and flood event in the summer of 1993 led to a flood analysis by the United States Geological Survey (USGS 1995). Over the bank flooding occurs within the Historic Site an average of 1.5 times per year. Five flooding events requiring temporary relocation of maintenance equipment and materials occurred in 1993 alone. The immediate cause for flooding is the downstream constriction of flow caused by bridges

built with less hydraulic capacity than the streams. These restrictions cause a backwater upstream that floods adjacent areas. The incidence of flooding in the area is increased by the lack of an adequate city sewer system to drain even moderately heavy rainfall events.

During flood events, two types of bank instability occur along the creek. On the upstream side of bridges, turbulence causes grain-by-grain erosion of the soil. Gabions have been installed to mitigate the problem at the Second Street Bridge. Massive sloughing of the banks occurs along the meadow after flood events. As high waters quickly recede, saturated soils cause localized slumping.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has recommended building dikes upstream from the Historic Site for temporary detention of peak flows, but no action has been taken to initiate such a project.

Upstream land use is primarily farming with increasing urban development near West Branch. Although there are no documented water quality problems in “Hoover Creek”, water quality surveys downstream from the Historic Site show that groundwater contamination from agricultural run-off periodically produces *e. coli*, nitrogen, and atrazine levels just below tolerable limits.

Vegetation

Three general vegetative types have been identified within the Historic Site. The first is the well-tended lawn area encompassing approximately a quarter of the Site. Extending from the visitor center and Birthplace Cottage to the Gravesite, around the HHPL, along Parkside Drive, and adjacent to the farmstead buildings, this vegetative type is characterized by large expanses of manicured turf with scattered clusters of deciduous trees, evergreens, flowering trees, and shrubs. A narrow corridor of vegetation in the riparian area along “Hoover Creek” contains disturbance species associated with deeply eroded, channeled flood areas. Areas of this corridor have been hardened at key points by planting native deep-rooted plants to impede erosion. Trees have been removed from the creek banks to eliminate the potential of being swept downstream and obstructing flow during high water events. Weeding, pruning, and other management of creek bank vegetation add to the manicured appearance of the adjacent lawn.

The second vegetative type is the 81-acre reconstructed prairie in the southern half of the Historic Site. This area was in crop cultivation for a century but was seeded with a mix of big blue stem, Indian grass, switch grass, little blue stem, and side oats gramma in 1972, as part of a prairie reconstruction project. Forbs are scattered throughout the prairie but are thinly populated compared with the grasses. Prescribed burns and brush cutting have been used in the past nine years to maintain prairie species. Vegetation surveys are conducted annually on fixed transects by Dr. Paul Christianson of nearby Cornell College. In 1996, 119 species were identified on transects that include both early and recent reconstruction efforts.

The third vegetative type includes agricultural fields in the western portion of the Historic Site. These fields are currently cultivated in crops, although portions are often left fallow.

Wildlife

Documented species of mammals found at the Historic Site include red fox, white-tailed deer, eastern cottontail, mink, raccoon, eastern chipmunk, fox squirrel, woodchuck, and the big brown bat. Seventeen species of mammals, four species of reptiles, and fifty-nine species of birds have been confirmed. Some bird species nest outside of the Historic Site but utilize the area for much of the year; others are transients that move through the area during migration. Nine species of butterflies and forty-three species of insects and spiders have been observed. No fish surveys have been conducted within the park.

Threatened and Endangered Species

No federally-listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species, or candidate species, are known to occur in Cedar County, Iowa (USFWS August 1997).

Socioeconomic Environment

Land Ownership and Use

The Historic Site is a 186.8-acre tract on the southern edge of the city of West Branch, Iowa. It is bordered on the north and east by privately-owned residential and commercial properties in West Branch. The southern boundary runs parallel to Interstate 80. The western boundary passes through the agricultural fields of the Thompson Farm.

Within the Historic Site, 181.11 acres are owned by the United States government, 4.59 acres of street rights-of-way and alleys are owned by the City of West Branch, and 1.10 acres encompassing a parking lot and historic house used as an office are owned by the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc. While the NPS administers most of the Historic Site, the National Archives and Records Administration manages the HHPL, and the General Services Administration manages the Federal Office Building housing the visitor center and post office. The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc. has purchased property adjacent to the Historic Site's north boundary with the intent of developing an education center.

Farming is the predominant land use in the surrounding area, with increasing urbanization near West Branch. The 44.79 acres of the Thompson Farm on the west edge of the Historic Site are federally owned, but the farm remains under cultivation as part of a life estate interest. Recent housing, school, and commercial developments are visible on former agricultural lands west, northwest, and southeast of the Historic Site.

Population and Economy

Located in Cedar County, West Branch has a current estimated population of 2100. This represents ten-percent growth in population since the 1990 census. About 50 percent of the labor force of the county is involved with some aspect of agriculture, but recent growth can be attributed largely to increased employment opportunities in Iowa City, 10 miles west of the Historic Site. A shortage of affordable housing is spurring increased development in outlying rural areas.

West Branch offers some retail services but is struggling to compete with shopping opportunities available in Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and Davenport. Visual connections between the Historic Site and downtown West Branch are somewhat obscured by vehicles and structures on Wetherell Street. The lack of visual connection and the fact that visitors can access and depart from the Historic Site via Interstate 80 without passing through downtown West Branch effectively diminishes potential visitor expenditures at local businesses. Additional orientation and coordination with available downtown businesses and activities is needed to further connect the Historic Site with its surroundings.

Since one-third of the acreage of West Branch was transferred to the NPS when the Historic Site was established, there is currently a shortage of open space in town for recreational facilities. There is interest in developing additional recreational amenities and being able to accommodate special events that draw large numbers of people. NPS management policies and the 1970 Master Plan limit use of the open space area of the Loop Road to activities that are associated with the 1935-1964 period of significance and compatible with the commemorative focus of the gravesite.

Park Operations

The existing maintenance facility is located in the 100-year floodplain. Past floods have caused damage to equipment and presented serious health and safety hazards. Most buildings in the current facility were constructed as temporary structures and there is not sufficient storage space for equipment, supplies, and materials.

The existing visitor center in the Federal Office Building contains office and workspace, a small orientation area, and a small room for special exhibits. This space is insufficient for interpretive operations and needed workspace.

Visitor Use

Annual visitation at the Historic Site has declined in the past few years from a 1994 peak of 267,833 visitors to 201,365 visitors in 2003. This peak can be largely attributed to the newly expanded HHPL. A variety of promotions, including Hooverfest, Christmas Past, and other special events and exhibits, contribute significantly to visitation. Hooverfest attracts approximately 15,000 people each August. Approximately 10,000 students visit the historic site in the spring and fall for educational programs and tours.

Circulation and Access

The Historic Site is directly accessible from Interstate 80 by way of Parkside Drive, the major West Branch exit. Just north of Interstate 80, a gravel road leading west from Parkside Drive provides access to the Miles Farm. Approximately 300 yards further north, the concrete entry road to the HHPL also extends west from Parkside Drive. This road continues west past the HHPL parking area to form a loop road that provides access to the picnic grounds and the Gravesite. Continuing north on Parkside Drive leads to the parking lot of the visitor center and then the intersection with Main Street. Heading west on Main Street takes you through the main business district and out the Herbert Hoover Highway to the Thompson Farm.

Within the historic core area, access is geared to pedestrians, including wheelchairs and strollers. Boardwalks are the primary component of the pedestrian circulation system, but brick and paved walks, and limestone paths are also present. Two bridges provide pedestrian access over “Hoover Creek” in this area.

In the northwest corner of the Historic Site, an asphalt bicycle path connects the sidewalk along Main Street to a bicycle path that leads to West Branch High School. The path includes a concrete bridge over “Hoover Creek”.

A 1.3 mile network of mown grass paths through the reconstructed prairie has been designated a National Recreation Trail.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section describes the potential impact of each alternative on the visitor experience, natural and cultural resources, the socioeconomic environment, and park operations. The No Action Alternative (E) sets a baseline of the impacts of existing policies and programs. The alternatives in this plan offer general strategies for long-term management and protection of park resources. Since the plan does not provide detailed recommendations for long term management, impacts can only be assessed in general terms. Prior to any construction, the design process will include more detailed analyses and assessment of proposed actions.

Impacts on the Visitor Experience

Orientation

Alternative A: The pullout with orientation exhibits on the east side of Parkside Drive would help visitors arriving from Interstate Highway 80 to identify facilities of the Hoover complex, plan their itinerary, and understand the commemorative nature of the historic site. Although renovation of the interior of the existing visitor center would enhance the visitor information services available there, the location of the center would continue to limit its visibility and effectiveness as the primary orientation point.

Alternative B: Development of a staffed orientation center directly off of Interstate Highway 80 and appropriate signage to direct people there would greatly improve the ability of the NPS to inform visitors about the location and opportunities available at each component of the Hoover complex. Establishing a highly visible and informative first point of contact would enhance the potential for visitors to explore the area with an integrated understanding of Hoover's boyhood, career, and accomplishments. Collaboration with the HPLA, HHPL, and City of West Branch would ensure that visitors to the orientation center were fully informed about the opportunities available at the HHPL and in the downtown area.

Alternative C: Development of a staffed orientation center directly off of Interstate Highway 80 and appropriate signage to direct people there would greatly improve the ability of the NPS to inform visitors about the location of key features at the historic site and available opportunities. Establishing a highly visible and informative first point of contact would enhance the potential for visitors to explore the area with an integrated understanding of Hoover's boyhood, career, and accomplishments.

Alternative D: Development of a staffed orientation center directly off of Interstate Highway 80 and appropriate signage to direct people there would greatly improve the ability of the NPS to inform visitors about the location of key features at the historic site and the full range of available opportunities. Establishing a highly visible and informative first point of contact would enhance the potential for visitors to explore the area with an integrated understanding of Hoover's boyhood, career, and accomplishments. The development of orientation wayside exhibits at alternative access points would help visitors who do not stop at the orientation center to plan their activities, locate key features, and learn about available opportunities.

Alternative E (No Action): The availability of multiple access points to the historic site and lack of an obvious source of information for first-time visitors will continue to create confusion. Most visitors will continue to be drawn first to the HHPL due to its visual prominence and the location of its entrance road. Although staff at the HHPL offer the historic site's folder and information pertinent to their facility, the HHPL will not be staffed or equipped to provide comprehensive information regarding the historic site. This will continue to result in underutilization of the visitor center and missed opportunities for visitors unaware of all the site has to offer.

Circulation and Access

Alternative A: Separate entrance roads and parking lots for the HHPL and the visitor center would continue to create confusion and traffic congestion. The location of the orientation pullout along Parkside Drive would cause a minor negative impact on traffic flow with vehicles entering and exiting the pullout. Visitor-related traffic would not increase significantly with existing parking lots accommodating peak visitation. Special events sponsored by the HHPL, HHPLA, and the historic site would continue to need overflow parking facilities.

Alternative B: Visitor-related traffic would not increase significantly, but traffic flow on Parkside Drive would be affected by traffic entering and exiting the parking lot of the new orientation center. Additional signing and turn lanes at the intersection would help minimize congestion and associated traffic interruptions. Construction of a one-way street from the orientation center to the HHPL would reduce the amount of traffic exiting onto Parkside Drive and would provide access to additional parking. The street would enhance the prominence of the HHPL by channeling traffic directly to its parking lot. Providing walkways from the orientation center to the Downey Street trace, HHPL, and Isaac Miles farm would encourage visitors to walk to these features, thereby reducing vehicular traffic. The location of the orientation center adjacent to Interstate Highway 80 could reduce the amount of traffic venturing into downtown West Branch, causing a nominal decrease in the intrusion of such traffic on local residents. Construction of a service road from the new maintenance facility at the Thompson farm to the Loop Road would provide efficient access to the remainder of the historic site for maintenance workers and would minimize travel by NPS maintenance vehicles on Herbert Hoover Highway.

Alternative C: Visitor-related traffic would not increase significantly, but traffic flow on Parkside Drive would be affected considerably by traffic entering and exiting the parking lot of the new orientation center. Additional signing and turn lanes at the intersection would help minimize congestion and associated traffic interruptions. Providing pedestrian walkways from the orientation center to the Downey Street trace, HHPL, and Isaac Miles farm would encourage visitors to walk to these features, but parking would be limited at the orientation center due to the location and topography of the site. Visitor traffic into downtown West Branch would be reduced due to the proximity of the orientation center to Interstate Highway 80. Construction of a service road from the new maintenance facility at the Thompson farm to the Loop Road would provide efficient access to the remainder of the historic site for maintenance workers and would minimize travel by NPS maintenance vehicles on Herbert Hoover Highway.

Alternative D: Visitor-related traffic would not increase significantly, but vehicles accessing the new orientation center would affect the flow of traffic on Parkside Drive. Additional signing and turn lanes at the intersection would help minimize congestion and associated traffic interruptions. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Isaac Miles farm would further add to the traffic turning off Parkside Drive. Construction of a one-way street from the orientation center to the HHPL and a service road from the maintenance facility to the Loop Road would reduce traffic impacts on Parkside Drive and allow visitors to directly access additional parking at the HHPL. By channeling traffic directly to the HHPL parking lot, the one-way street would enhance the prominence of the HHPL. Providing a walkway from the orientation center to the Downey Street trace and HHPL would encourage visitors to walk to the historic core area. The location of the orientation center adjacent to Interstate Highway 80 would reduce the amount of traffic venturing into downtown West Branch, causing a nominal decrease in the intrusion of such traffic on local residents.

Alternative E (No Action): Without an identifiable initial visitor destination, separate entrance roads and parking lots for the HHPL and the visitor center will continue to create confusion and traffic congestion. Existing parking will accommodate peak visitation, but overflow parking areas will continue to be needed for special events.

Educational and Interpretive Opportunities

Alternative A: Interpretive opportunities for visitors would be improved by enhancing the small theater and providing new exhibits in the visitor center, and installing new wayside exhibits in the commemorative zone. NPS guidelines restricting the housing of museum objects in a flood plain would limit the content and interpretive impact of new exhibits at the visitor center.

Alternatives B and C: These alternatives would require a strong partnership between the HPLA and the NPS for collaborative planning and implementation of educational and interpretive programs. The HPLA would develop an educational center on property they have acquired adjacent to the historic site. This facility would accommodate school classes, other organized groups, and special events. Although the specific role of the NPS in this endeavor has not yet been determined, a viable partnership would result in more diverse opportunities for local residents, students, and out-of-town visitors. Construction and operational costs would be significantly lower than if each entity developed such programs independently of one another. Providing a theater and exhibit space in the orientation center and additional exhibits at the visitor center, P. T. Smith house, and wayside exhibit locations would enhance interpretative opportunities for visitors. Hiring additional staff to present educational and interpretive programs would be an important element of these improvements.

Alternative D: The design of the new orientation center would incorporate a classroom to accommodate school and other groups, and a work area for NPS staff. This would greatly enhance current educational programming at the historic site, but would not be dependent on a partnership with the HPLA. Adding these functions to the design of the orientation center would require a significantly larger and more expensive structure. A staffed information desk would continue to be provided in the visitor center. Reconstruction of the "House of the Maples" would provide visible evidence of the improved economic status of Hoover's family before his father's death and an additional setting for museum exhibits relating to Hoover's boyhood. New exhibits also would be developed in the visitor center, P. T. Smith house, orientation center, and at wayside exhibit locations. These additions coupled with increased staffing would significantly improve the educational and interpretative opportunities at the historic site.

Alternative E (No Action): Space in the existing visitor center will continue to be insufficient to accommodate museum exhibits, educational programs, and cooperating association sales

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Cultural Landscape

Under all of the alternatives, character-defining landscape features, which have been identified in the Herbert Hoover NHS Cultural Landscape Report, would be preserved and protected. Partnership efforts with the local community would reduce the likelihood of incompatible visual intrusions being built within view of the Historic Site.

Alternative A: This alternative would attempt to portray the entire period of significance without emphasis on anyone sub-period. Strengthening the visual connection between the re-created neighborhood and downtown West Branch would provide landscape continuity and re-establish the historic link between these areas. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Thompson farm would alter the cultural landscape at a peripheral area of the historic site both during and after construction. Sensitive design, site location, and vegetative screening would be stressed to mitigate the intrusion of new structures and uses on the historic scene. The Thompson farm location would not be visually prominent. Auxiliary buildings of the type needed for the maintenance facility would be similar to those used for storing large farm equipment and would not be out of character with the region's agricultural landscape.

Alternatives B and C: Each of these alternatives would also attempt to portray the entire period of significance without emphasis on anyone sub-period. Strengthening the visual connection between the re-created neighborhood and downtown West Branch would provide landscape continuity and re-establish the historic link between these areas. Construction of an orientation center and relocation of the maintenance facility would alter the cultural landscape at peripheral areas of the historic site both during and after construction. Sensitive design, site location, and vegetative screening would be stressed to mitigate the intrusion of new structures and uses on the historic scene. The Thompson farm location for the maintenance facility would not be visually prominent. Proposed auxiliary buildings of 4700 and 2400 square feet would be similar to those used for storing large farm equipment and would not be out of character with the agricultural landscape. The new one-way street connecting the orientation center with the HHPL in Alternative B would have a minor negative impact on the cultural landscape.

Alternative D: This alternative would also attempt to portray the entire period of significance without emphasis on anyone sub-period. Strengthening the visual connection between the re-created neighborhood and downtown West Branch would provide landscape continuity and re-establish the historic link between these areas. Reconstruction of the "House of the Maples" would add an element to the landscape from the Hoover boyhood sub-period and lessen the isolated appearance of the P. T. Smith house. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Isaac Miles farm and construction of an orientation center would alter the cultural landscape at peripheral upland areas of the historic site both during and after construction. Sensitive design, site location, and vegetative screening would be stressed to mitigate the intrusion of new structures and uses on the historic scene. The Isaac Miles farm location for the maintenance facility would be more conspicuous than the Thompson farm alternative. Additional auxiliary

structures of 4700 and 2400 square feet would be visually prominent but not out of character with the region's agricultural landscape. The new one-way street connecting the orientation center to the HHPL would have a minor negative impact on the cultural landscape.

Alternative E (No Action): The cultural landscape will continue to portray elements spanning the ninety years of Hoover's life with major features primarily from the post-presidential period.

Historic Structures

In all alternatives, existing historic structures would continue to be protected and preserved for the enjoyment and education of future visitors. Six historic structures would continue to serve as employee residences. These particular buildings would require maintenance and repair to counteract the wear and tear of human use and the natural effects of aging.

Alternatives A and B: A historic resource study would provide critical information about the current condition and recommended treatment for each structure. Rehabilitation of the interiors of the Varney and P. T. Smith houses would allow for better utilization of available structures while maintaining their historic character. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Thompson farm could potentially have negative effects on the historic integrity of the farm, which has been identified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Completion of a historic structure report and analysis of the farmhouse and outbuildings prior to relocation would prescribe the treatment necessary to protect the site's historic significance. Structures at the Thompson farm would be rehabilitated where feasible. It is anticipated that auxiliary structures at the Thompson farm would require extensive fortification and renovation before they could be used for maintenance operations.

Alternative C: A systematic study of the condition, appropriate treatment, and prioritized needs of each historic structure would enable the NPS to pro actively program rehabilitation and maintenance projects. Rehabilitation of the interiors of the Varney and P. T. Smith houses would allow for full utilization of available structures while maintaining their historic character. As in Alternatives A and B, relocation of the maintenance facility to the Thompson farm could potentially have negative effects on the historic integrity of the farm, which has been identified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Completion of a historic structure report and analysis of the farmhouse and outbuildings prior to relocating the facility would prescribe treatment necessary to protect historic significance. It is anticipated that auxiliary structures at the Thompson farm would require extensive fortification and renovation before they could be used for maintenance operations.

Alternative D: Rehabilitation of the interiors of the Varney and P.T. Smith houses would allow for full utilization of available structures while maintaining their historic character. Reconstruction of the "House of the Maples" would replicate the structure that was adjacent to the P. T. Smith house and depict the upwardly mobile status of Hoover's

family before his father's death. This would be an expensive undertaking and it is unlikely that there is adequate documentation to accurately reconstruct the house. The *NPS Management Policies 2001* states that a missing historic structure will not be reconstructed unless there is no alternative that would accomplish the park's interpretive mission, and sufficient data exist to enable its accurate reconstruction substantiated by documentary or physical evidence. The NPS Director must approve any reconstruction. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Isaac Miles farm could potentially have negative effects on the historic integrity of the farm, which has been identified as eligible for the National Register. Completing a historic structure report and analysis of the farmhouse and outbuildings prior to relocation would prescribe the treatment necessary to protect their historic integrity. Auxiliary structures at the Isaac Miles farm are generally in better condition than those at the Thompson farm and would be suitable for adaptive use if a structural analysis proves favorable. Structures at the Thompson farm would continue to deteriorate since the NPS is not responsible for maintaining them under the life estate interest.

Alternative E (No Action): Eight historic structures within the re-created neighborhood will continue to be used for interpretation and staff offices. The Miles farmhouse and five structures in the historic core area will continue to be used as employee residences. These buildings will require maintenance and repair to counteract the wear and tear of human use and the natural effects of aging. The P. T. Smith house will continue to be vacant since it is too small to accommodate groups as called for in the 1977 Addendum to the Master Plan. Without analysis of the most appropriate and cost-effective means of preserving and interpreting each building, limited NPS resources may be misdirected and some structures may not be adequately protected. Structures at the Thompson farm will continue to deteriorate.

Museum Collection

In all alternatives, security systems and response by staff living on-site would continue to provide protection for historic items.

Alternative A: Inadequate storage space would continue to affect the historic site's ability to properly care for items in the museum collection. Due to the location of the visitor center in the 100 year regulatory flood plain, museum objects could not be permanently installed as exhibits in the rehabilitated visitor center. The *NPS Museum Handbook* (2000) states that museum collections should not be located in flood-prone areas. The P. T. Smith house would provide additional space to exhibit and store items from the museum collection.

Alternatives B, C, and D: These alternatives would provide improved storage and care for the museum collection. Museum-quality storage and curatorial space would be provided in the orientation center and P. T. Smith house. Increased space for exhibiting historic items would be developed at the orientation center, visitor center, and P. T. Smith house in all three alternatives. Alternatives C and D include curatorial staff, special exhibit preparation space in the proposed orientation center, and additional museum exhibits in

the visitor center. Alternative D would have the added benefit of providing museum exhibit space in the reconstructed "House of the Maples".

Alternative E (No Action): Inadequate storage space will continue to affect the historic site's ability to properly care for items in the museum collection. Exhibit space will be insufficient to fully display the present collection.

Archeological Resources

Alternative A: Prior to relocating the maintenance facility to the Thompson farm and constructing wayside exhibits, archeological investigations would be conducted during the design phase. If significant archeological resources are uncovered, no work would occur in the discovery area until the NPS has consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer and complied with all laws and regulations pertaining to such resources.

Alternatives B, C, and D: Prior to relocating the maintenance facility and constructing the orientation center, archeological investigations would be conducted during the design phase. If significant archeological resources are uncovered, no work would occur in the discovery area until the NPS has consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer and complied with all laws and regulations pertaining to such resources.

Alternative E (No Action): There will be no impact on archeological resources if no new actions take place.

Impacts on Natural Resources

Soils

Alternatives A, B, C, and D: Construction of new facilities described in these alternatives would temporarily increase the potential for soil erosion in developed areas. Gentle slopes in the Isaac Miles Farm and Thompson Farm areas and at the proposed sites of the orientation center and the orientation pullout would allow for new construction without major land disturbance. Negative impacts to the sites would be mitigated by employing soil stabilization techniques and by seeding disturbed areas. Native species would be used for seeding where appropriate.

Alternative E (No Action): Continued operation under the 1970 Master Plan will not change impacts to soils.

Water Resources

Alternative A: Relocation of the maintenance facility to an upland area would eliminate impacts to the maintenance operation and equipment from periodic over-the-bank flooding. The potential, however, would still exist for floodwaters to rise higher than they have in the past and impact the visitor center and structures in the historic core area.

Taking an active role in developing and implementing a stream management and flood mitigation plan would reduce the potential for future impacts from flooding. No negative impacts on natural resources in the riparian zone would occur since the proposed relocation of the maintenance facility and construction of orientation wayside exhibits would occur in upland areas away from “Hoover Creek”.

Alternatives B, C, and D: Since all proposed construction and relocation of buildings would occur in upland areas away from “Hoover Creek”, no negative impacts on resources in the riparian zone would occur. Adding a natural resources position to the historic site's staff would permit routine monitoring of water quality, rainfall, and other indicators of healthy aquatic systems. Such monitoring would enable the historic site to respond early to potential degradation of water resources. Relocation of NPS facilities prone to flooding would significantly reduce impacts to NPS property and to the visitor service and maintenance operations. The potential, however, would still exist for floodwaters to rise higher than they have in the past and impact structures and visitor use in the historic core area. Taking an active role in developing and implementing a stream management and flood mitigation plan would reduce the potential for future impacts from flooding.

Alternative E (No Action): Flood events will continue to occur, resulting in erosion, bank sloughing, potential meandering of the stream channel, and damage to buildings, structures, and bridges within the flood plain. Bank sloughing will increase water turbidity and downstream siltation during high water events. The NPS will not monitor water quality on a recurring basis.

Vegetation

Alternative A: Vegetation would be disturbed in the immediate vicinity of new development, but significantly less acreage would be involved than in Alternatives B, C, and D. Re-vegetation of disturbed areas with native species would mitigate unavoidable impacts. Re-vegetation of the site of the present maintenance facility after removal of the buildings would create a nominal positive impact on vegetative resources.

Alternative B: Vegetation would be disturbed in the immediate vicinity of new development. Re-vegetation of disturbed areas with native species would mitigate unavoidable impacts. Re-vegetation of the site of the present maintenance facility after removal of the buildings would create a nominal positive impact on vegetative resources.

Alternative C: Vegetation would be disturbed in the immediate vicinity of new development. Re-vegetation of disturbed areas with native species would mitigate unavoidable impacts. Re-vegetation of the site of the present maintenance facility after removal of the buildings would create a nominal positive impact on vegetative resources. Intensive management, monitoring and expansion of the prairie would be a significant program focus and expenditure. Effective use of prescribed burning as a management tool would increase the number and diversity of plant and animal species in the prairie

but would require staff training and availability, equipment, partnerships with local fire departments, and outreach programs.

Alternative D: Vegetation would be disturbed in the immediate vicinity of new development. The acreage affected would be greatest in this alternative since two new roads would be constructed to link the orientation center with the HHPL and the maintenance facility with the Loop Road. Re-vegetation of disturbed areas with native species would mitigate unavoidable impacts. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Isaac Miles farm would result in the loss of 0.5-1.0 acre of tallgrass prairie. Re-vegetation of the site of the present maintenance facility after removal of the buildings would create a nominal positive impact on vegetative resources.

Alternative E (No Action): Continued operation under current management plans will not significantly impact vegetative resources since all areas have been previously disturbed or manipulated.

Wildlife

Alternatives A, B, C, and D: None of the alternatives would negatively impact wildlife habitat. Temporary disturbances would occur during proposed construction and rehabilitation due to noise and human activity. No permanent impacts are anticipated. Increased resource management staffing in Alternative C would allow for baseline documentation and monitoring of park fauna. This would provide the means to detect potential population declines.

Alternative E (No Action): Continued action under the current program will not adversely affect wildlife. Inventorying and monitoring will continue to be done on an opportunistic basis when staff and funding are available.

Air Quality

Alternatives A, B, C, and D: The actions proposed in Alternatives A, B, C, and D could result in small, temporary increases in levels of dust, particulates, and diesel exhaust during construction activities and heavy equipment operation. These activities would not significantly affect air quality or exceed air quality standards. Initiation of air quality monitoring would detect any changes in air resources. Alternatives B and D would discontinue the existing prescribed fire program for the prairie, thus eliminating public concern about air quality degradation during burns.

Alternative E (No Action): Air quality in the area is generally good. Impacts on air quality would continue in current minimal amounts. The NPS will not monitor air quality.

Impacts on the Socioeconomic Environment

None of the alternatives would require acquisition of additional property for the historic site. Encouraging the City of West Branch to adopt protective ordinances or zoning would minimize the potential for development incompatible with park values adjacent to the historic site. It is unlikely that any of these alternatives would spur significant new business development in the West Branch area.

Alternative A: Relocation of the maintenance facility would provide minor short-term economic benefits to the county. NPS staffing would increase slightly with corresponding benefits to the local economy, but not as much as in Alternatives B, C, and D. Development of a roadside pullout with orientation exhibits would improve information currently available to first-time visitors, but would not be as effective as a staffed information center or kiosk in directing people to specific places that meet their needs and interests. It is anticipated that those seeking restrooms or further information about the historic site would be likely to use the HHPL for this purpose.

Alternatives B, C, and D: Construction of the orientation center and relocation of the maintenance facility would provide minor short-term economic benefits to the county. Improved facilities would enhance the visitor experience at the Hoover complex and in the downtown area. Increased staffing would benefit the local economy. The location of the orientation center away from the downtown area could result in a nominal loss of patronage for local businesses. On the other hand, it could potentially lead to some increase in patronage as a result of improved orientation to services available locally. In Alternative B, collaboration with the city, HPLA, and HHPL in oversight of the orientation center would strengthen existing partnerships and maximize information and orientation services. This could lead to increased usage of the HHPL and downtown businesses by visitors truly interested in experiencing these opportunities, rather than those seeking restrooms or general information.

Alternative E (No Action): Continued operation under the 1970 Master Plan will not significantly impact the socioeconomic resources associated with the historic site. Visitation, staffing, and related economic benefits to the community will remain relatively stable. The HHPL will continue to be the initial stop for many visitors seeking orientation information and restrooms.

Impacts on Park Operations

Alternative A: If the General Management Plan is fully funded, there would be sufficient space to support park programs but not as much opportunity for expanding programs as in Alternatives B, C, and D. The information, education, and maintenance functions would be enhanced. Utilization of historic structures for staff residences and offices would allow cost-efficient adaptive use and maintenance of these buildings and provide for quick emergency response and protection of valued park resources. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Thompson Farm would consolidate maintenance operations at a single location but would further separate maintenance staff from the administrative

offices and historic core area. The distance would decrease by the construction of a new service road from the Thompson Farm through the northwest buffer area to the Loop Road. Strengthening current partnerships would better serve visitors, minimize management conflicts, and encourage shared decision-making.

Alternative B: If the General Management Plan were fully funded, there would be adequate staff and workspace to efficiently support proposed park programs. The information, education, resource management, and maintenance functions would be enhanced. Utilization of historic structures for staff residences and offices would allow cost-efficient adaptive use and maintenance of these buildings and provide for quick emergency response and protection of valued park resources. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Thompson Farm would consolidate maintenance operations at a single location but would further separate maintenance staff from the administrative offices and historic core area. The distance would decrease by the construction of a new service road from the Thompson Farm to the Loop Road. Strengthening current partnerships and collaborative planning for the orientation center would maximize visitor service, minimize management conflicts, and promote shared decision-making.

Alternative C: If the General Management Plan is fully funded, there would be adequate staff and workspace to efficiently support proposed park programs. The information, education, and maintenance functions would be enhanced, and resource management objectives would receive added emphasis. Utilization of historic structures for staff residences and offices would allow cost-efficient adaptive use and maintenance of these buildings and provide for quick emergency response and protection of valued park resources. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Thompson Farm would consolidate maintenance operations at a single location but would further separate maintenance staff from the administrative offices and historic core area. The distance would decrease by the construction of a new service road from the Thompson Farm to the Loop Road. Strengthening current partnerships would better serve visitors, minimize management conflicts, and encourage shared decision-making.

Alternative D: If the General Management Plan is fully funded and implemented, there would be adequate staff and workspace to efficiently support proposed park programs. The information, education, and interpretive programs would be significantly expanded. Utilization of historic structures for staff residences and offices would allow cost-efficient use and maintenance of these buildings and provide for quick emergency response and protection of valued park resources. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Isaac Miles farm would consolidate maintenance operations at a single area. Current partnerships would be maintained and shared decision-making encouraged, but there would be some duplication of services and educational programs.

Alternative E (No Action): The existing maintenance facility will continue to provide inadequate storage and work space and will be subject to flooding during high water events. The need for frequent repairs to aging buildings and for relocation of stored equipment and materials during flooding will continue to require a disproportionate share of the park budget. The current visitor center will not be sufficient to accommodate the

visitor information function, educational programs, cooperating association sales, administrative support services, staff offices, and the library. Adaptive use of historic structures for staff residences and offices will provide a cost-effective means of utilizing and maintaining buildings within the re-created neighborhood. Housing employees on-site will also provide after-hours security and quicker response to emergencies and law enforcement incidents.

Cumulative Impacts

Alternatives A, B, C, and D: There would be no significant adverse cumulative impacts from implementing Alternative A, B, C, or D. As more development occurs in the upland areas of the “Hoover Creek” drainage and less acreage is available for water infiltration, increased run-off can be expected to augment flow during flood events. Under each of these alternatives, the NPS would partner with other agencies to develop a stream management plan and mitigate the potential for future flooding. A proactive approach to maintenance of historic structures would be adopted, preventing further deterioration or loss of historic elements.

Alternative E (No Action): Significant long-term impacts can be expected if no action is taken. Historic structures, natural resources, and visitor services will continue to deteriorate over time as the NPS will take only a reactive stance toward preservation and interpretation. Park operations and facilities, visitor use, and cultural resources will continue to be threatened by periodic flood events.

Conclusions

The merits of the five alternatives can be summarized by evaluating their anticipated impacts relative to how well they address the four decision points specified in the general management plan (pp.9-10).

Alternative A: Alternative A entails fewer changes and is the least costly alternative to the existing situation. There would be short-term impacts associated with relocating the maintenance facility to the Thompson Farm, but this action would provide a long-term solution to the storage and flooding issues that currently hamper efficient maintenance operations. The proposed wayside pullout would provide improved orientation to the Hoover complex, but its potential effectiveness in providing visitor information would be limited since it would not be staffed. Renovating the present visitor center for use as the primary location for visitor information and services would slightly increase the space currently available for these functions but would not eliminate the potential for impacts from flooding. Improved orientation, partnering with the HPLA in educational programs at their education facility, and strengthening the visual connection between the NHS’s re-created neighborhood and downtown West Branch would increase the cooperative role of each of the key partners in the Hoover complex. Protection of natural and cultural resources would not be compromised. Public understanding and appreciation of Herbert Hoover would be enhanced by the commemorative focus of this alternative and by expanding the period of significance that is currently portrayed in the cultural landscape.

Alternative B: Alternative B is similar in focus to Alternative A but involves more extensive facility development and collaboration with the HHPL and HPLA. Construction of an orientation center and access roads would increase short-term development-related impacts, both negative and beneficial, and the associated construction and operating costs, as compared to Alternative A. The new center would, however, provide a more sustainable and effective means of providing clear and complete orientation to the visitor services offered by the HHPL, NPS, and City of West Branch. Relocating the maintenance facility and moving visitor service functions from the current visitor center to the new orientation center would resolve the space and flooding issues that presently hinder efficient NPS operations. Collaboration with the HHPL, HPLA, and City of West Branch in the design and operation of the orientation center, educational programming at the HPLA education facility, and improved linkage between the NHS and the downtown area would strengthen the partnership roles of all involved in the Hoover complex. As in Alternative A, increased protection of natural and cultural resources and public appreciation of the Hoover legacy would be primary objectives of this alternative.

Alternative C: Alternative C involves the same development as Alternative B but does not include new road access from the proposed orientation center to the HHPL. It is distinct from the other alternatives in its emphasis on preservation and protection of park resources over interpretation and visitor services. Visitor use of the prairie and adaptive use of historic structures are two programmatic features that would be more restricted. As a result of this emphasis, Alternative C would provide the greatest protection for natural and cultural resources but would not be as effective in supporting public understanding of Herbert Hoover. Orientation to the Hoover complex would be greatly improved with the development of the new center, but there would be less emphasis on the partnership roles of the HHPL and City of West Branch as compared to Alternative B. Relocation of the maintenance facility and visitor center functions would provide a long-term remedy to existing space and flooding constraints.

Alternative D: This alternative includes the most extensive development and, therefore, the highest construction and operating costs. It would provide more visitor access, orientation, and interpretive opportunities with less reliance on partnerships with the HHPL and HPLA. The orientation center would be larger to include classroom space for educational programs, and the "House of the Maples" would be reconstructed for interpretive purposes. While these actions would enhance public understanding and appreciation of Hoover, the associated impacts of facility development and increased visitor use would be greater than the other alternatives. Protection of natural and cultural resources would receive less emphasis. Relocation of the maintenance facility to the Isaac Miles Farm would potentially diminish the historic integrity of this site, but would ensure more efficient and sustainable NPS operations.

Alternative E (No Action): If no action is taken, the issues associated with current management will continue to act as obstacles to reaching desired future conditions as described in the "Issues" section of the General Management Plan (pp. 7 -9).

REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

The NPS will comply with applicable laws, regulations, and executive orders in preparing and implementing the General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment. The following list is not all-inclusive but summarizes portions of laws, regulations, and executive orders that are particularly relevant to the resources and the alternatives described in the Environmental Assessment.

The National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 created the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior with the mission “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife 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”.

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requires federal agencies to prepare an interdisciplinary study of the impacts of and alternatives to “major federal actions” as an integral part of all planning and decision-making. The Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment was prepared in accordance with this act and its implementing guidelines. Following public review of the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment, the NPS will either issue a finding of no significant impact or a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement. Additional compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act will be required during the design and implementation phases of the plan.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, requires federal agencies to survey, document and, where feasible, preserve properties listed on, or eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places. Compliance with Section 106 involves consultation with the state historic preservation officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) as prescribed in the October 1995 programmatic agreement among the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, the ACHP, and the NPS. The NPS will work closely with the Iowa SHPO and the Advisory Council in planning and designing any proposed actions that affect cultural resources. Actions included in the planning alternatives that require review by the SHPO and ACHP include:

- Historic structure reports
- Historic resource study
- Development of a new maintenance facility
- Demolition of old maintenance facility
- Relocation of prefabricated maintenance building
- Construction of an orientation center, parking lot, and sidewalk
- Construction or rehabilitation of service and entrance roads
- Development of an orientation wayside exhibit and traffic pullout
- Rehabilitation of the interior of the Varney house
- Rehabilitation of the interior of the P.T. Smith house
- Reconstruction of the "House of the Maples"

- Installation of wayside exhibits, restoration of fence and historic plantings at the "House of the Maples"
- Installation of wayside exhibits and audio stations
- Installation of directional signs for vehicles
- Changes or additions to landscaping
- Installation of benches at wayside exhibits in the prairie
- Construction of structurally reinforced lawn area along Loop Road

Executive Order 11988 ("Floodplain Management") requires Federal agencies to take action to reduce the risk of flood loss, minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health and welfare, and restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values of floodplains. Federal agencies are to avoid construction within the 100-year regulatory flood plain unless no practical alternative exists.

Section 118 of the Clean Air Act, as amended, requires compliance with all state, federal, and local air pollution control laws. The NPS will ensure that all proposed activities meet the requirements of the state air quality implementation plan.

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, requires consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that proposed actions will not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or critical habitat. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has been consulted and reported that there are no applicable species in the project area.

The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards require that all programs and developed facilities be as accessible as possible to people with disabilities. The NPS will comply with these laws when designing both new and rehabilitated buildings.

PLANNING TEAM AND CONSULTANTS

Planning Team

Dan Banta	Chief Park Ranger (retired) Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
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Kim Dietz	Seasonal Maintenance Worker Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Mary Mae Hardt	Former Outdoor Recreation Planner Midwest Regional Office
Carol Jones	Park Ranger (retired) Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Craig Kenkel	Chief, Division of Cultural Resources Midwest Regional Office
Carol Kohan	Former Superintendent Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Candy Madsen	Program Specialist (retired) Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
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Bill Wilcox	Historian (retired) Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

Consultants

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Iowa State Historic Preservation Office

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Daris Honemann	Maintenance Mechanic Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Brian James	Former City Administrator City of West Branch, Iowa
Judy Maske	Administrative Officer (retired) Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Mari Mathews	Administrative Officer Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Doug Pratt	Buildings and Utilities Foreman Apostle Islands National Lakeshore
Dick Rex	Former Mayor City of West Branch, Iowa
Luke Roehrig	Former Gardener Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Jerry Schnieders	Woodcrafter Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Tim Walch	Director Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum
Carolyn Wallingford	Curator Midwest Regional Office

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT INPACT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
Iowa

Background: The National Park Service has prepared the Final General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment (FGMP/EA) for Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, Iowa. The FGMP/EA proposes management direction for the park for the next 10-20 years and documents the anticipated effects of the selected action and other alternatives on the human environment, including natural and cultural resources. This Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is a concise statement of the decisions made, other alternatives considered, the basis for the decision, the environmentally preferable alternative, and the mitigating measures developed to avoid or minimize environmental harm.

Purpose and Need:

The goal of the selected alternative, which was identified as Alternative A in the Final Environmental Assessment, is to emphasize the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. Natural and cultural resources would serve as symbols of significant events and influences on the character and career of this great American. The interpretation program would provide the public with opportunities to use the historic site's tangible resources to make personal connections to the significance of the Hoover story and heritage of the area. The landscape and visitor facilities would support a commemorative-like atmosphere with opportunities for the public to spend time reflecting upon the life and significance of Herbert Hoover. Management zones: Commemorative; Natural; Maintenance; Orientation; Open Space; Special Use; and Recreation, will provide guidance for managing specific areas for desired visitor experience and resource conditions.

The Commemorative Zone would manage resources and provide visitor experiences to emphasize the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS would preserve, protect, and maintain cultural resources in good condition with a rehabilitation treatment. A highly designed setting for the resources would encourage personal reflection on the meaning of Hoover's life. Visitors would consider cultural resources as symbols of the various influences of Hoover's childhood upon his character and public accomplishments. Visitors would have a high probability of encountering staff in the Birthplace Cottage. They would have a moderate probability of meeting staff in other areas. Although visitors would have a high probability of encountering many other visitors, opportunities would exist for personal contemplation and solitude. Pedestrian and vehicular facilities would provide visitor access to cultural resources. Special events supporting the commemoration of Herbert Hoover would take place only in areas that do not jeopardize natural or cultural resources, especially the dignity of the Birthplace Cottage and the Gravesite.

The Natural Zone would provide a natural, spacious setting to support the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. Natural resources would be managed to meet all applicable laws, policies, and management standards to preserve, but it would not fully restore the ecosystem. Visitors would have the opportunity to experience the influence of the natural world on Herbert Hoover's life through interpretation, contemplation, and recreation. They would experience opportunities for personal exploration and discovery. They would have a low probability of

encountering staff or other visitors with a high degree of solitude. Simple footpaths would provide access. A modest amount of interpretive programs and media would promote understanding. Recreational walking and cross-country skiing could occur in this zone.

The Maintenance Zone would provide a safe, low-profile location for the historic site's maintenance operations and curatorial storage facility. Although the setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive management, the design of new buildings would remain compatible with or replicate the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the Thompson farm buildings. The facility would harmonize with the setting of the adjacent zones. Where feasible, the facility would employ rehabilitated farm structures. The physical footprint of structures and stored materials would remain minimal. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. To the greatest degree practical, the facility would serve as a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would encounter staff conducting maintenance functions. They rarely would encounter other visitors. The facility's landscaping would limit its visual and auditory impact upon visitors in adjacent zones while creating a harmonious setting with adjacent natural resources. Landscaping would include only native species.

The Orientation Space Zone would provide an opportunity for visitors to orient themselves to the entire Hoover Complex. Resources in this small area would be maintained in a highly manicured manner to create a welcoming atmosphere. Visitors would have an opportunity for orientation and interpretive information. They would have a high probability of encountering small groups of other visitors.

The Open Space Zone would provide an open, spacious atmosphere to support the commemorative setting of the historic site. Natural Resources would remain in a highly manipulated condition as agricultural fields or as maintained groundcover vegetation. This area would not contain any significant cultural resources. Vegetation would include non-native species. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors rarely would encounter other people. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance functions.

The Special Use Zone would include facilities operated or controlled by other governmental agencies or private interests on lands within the boundary of the historic site. The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum (HHPL) and Administrative Building for the Hoover Presidential Library Association (HPLA) all support the public's understanding and appreciation of President Hoover. Visitors would have access to the HHPL where they would have a high probability of encountering other visitors. Visitor experiences would include museum exhibits, information desk, sales areas, and visitor facilities. The design of the east façade of the HHPL would represent a significant cultural resource as a tangible connection to President Hoover. The intensively designed and maintained buildings would provide safe and aesthetic work environments for staff.

The Recreation Zone would provide visitors and local residents with facilities and opportunities for safe recreational activities that do not relate to the commemoration of President Hoover. Activities would include picnicking, cross-country skiing, and recreational walking. This zone would include a designated public assembly area for First Amendment activities. Social and group activities would result in a moderate degree of contact with other visitors. Visitors would have a high degree of contact with other visitors during special

events and First Amendment activities. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance and protection functions. Visitors would have safe, accessible, and enjoyable experiences. They would have a low opportunity for solitude. No significant cultural resources would occur in this zone. Natural resources would remain in a highly designed and manipulated condition. Vegetation would include non-native species. Facilities would include picnic shelters and tables, restrooms, drinking fountains, paved sidewalks, and a parking area.

Alternatives:

Alternative E is the no-action, or status quo, alternative. This alternative would have restricted the Site in achieving its mission; however, it does provide a baseline for comparison of the other alternatives. This alternative called for the continuation of current levels and patterns of National Park Service stewardship and management with regard to natural, historic, and cultural resources at the Site and left critical operational facilities within the 5 year floodplain.

Each of the following action alternatives were designed to achieve all desired futures for the Site, including those related to natural, historic, and cultural resources enhancement and protection, and visitor experiences. The principle difference between alternatives is the location of the primary visitor orientation center.

Alternative B proposed that a new orientation center be constructed between the Isaac Miles Farm and the administrative building for the HPLA and additional parking and circulation roads to the Site. The Site's natural, historic, and cultural resources would have remained generally as they are now. The proposed location for the new orientation center would impact the HPLA and create a disjointed parking system for large recreation vehicles and buses.

Alternative C proposed restoration of the natural areas and emphasized preservation and protection of natural resources and processes over interpretation and public use. Flooding would be managed through natural processes and additional means to protect historic resources would not be implemented. Interpretation would focus on natural and cultural resources and the environment and not on the legislated mission of the park which is to ... "preserve in public ownership historically significant properties associated with the life of Herbert Hoover". It changes the focus from Herbert Hoover and how the park resources influenced his life to preservation of the resources regardless of any association with Hoover.

Alternative D represents significant changes to the physical arrangement and operational functions of the Site. This alternative is focused on interpretation and public use over resource protection and preservation of historic resources. Reconstruction of historic elements that no longer exist would be implemented along with construction of an expanded orientation center to house interpretive displays, public facilities, and interpretive offices. The existing visitor center would have been adaptively reused for special events and offices.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative:

The environmentally preferable alternative, Alternative A, is defined as "the alternative or alternatives that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This means the alternative that causes least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources." ("Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) National Environmental Policy Act Regulations," 1981). This alternative best meets the full range of national environmental policy goals as stated in NEPA's Section 101. The alternative 1)

fulfills the responsibilities as trustee of resources for future generations; 2) provides a safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing setting; 3) maximizes protection of natural and cultural resources while maintaining a wide range of neutral and beneficial uses of the environment without degradation; 4) maintains an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice; 5) achieves a balance between human population and resource use; and 6) improves resource sustainability.

Alternative A emphasizes the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. Natural and cultural resources would serve as symbols of significant events and influences on the character and career of this great American. The preservation of the cultural landscape, as identified by President Hoover, and associated historic structures maintains and provides an appropriate and safe setting for the public to understand and appreciate his birthplace. The interpretation program would provide the public with opportunities to use the historic site's tangible resources to make personal connections to the significance of the Hoover story and heritage of the area. The landscape and visitor facilities would support a commemorative-like atmosphere with opportunities for the public to spend time reflecting upon the life and significance of Herbert Hoover. Restoration of the native prairie and removal of modern facilities from the floodplain will preserve important aspects of both natural and cultural resources while providing a wide choice of activities in a protected environment. These activities will ensure the continued existence and access to important historical and natural resources for many generations to come. Management zones: Commemorative; Natural; Maintenance; Orientation; Open Space; Special Use; and Recreation, will provide guidance for managing specific areas for desired visitor experience and resource conditions.

The Alternative would manage resources and provide visitor experiences to emphasize the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS would preserve, protect, and maintain cultural resources in good condition with a rehabilitation treatment. A highly designed setting for the resources would encourage personal reflection on the meaning of Hoover's life. Visitors would consider cultural resources as symbols of the various influences of Hoover's childhood upon his character and public accomplishments. Visitors would have a high probability of encountering staff in the Birthplace Cottage. Although visitors would have a high probability of encountering many other visitors, opportunities would exist for personal contemplation and solitude. Pedestrian and vehicular facilities would provide visitor access to cultural resources. Special events supporting the commemoration of Herbert Hoover would take place only in areas that do not jeopardize natural or cultural resources, especially the dignity of the Birthplace Cottage and the Gravesite.

Impacts:

Context: The intensity or severity of impacts resulting from implementation of the Preferred Alternative is evaluated using the ten (10) criteria listed in 40 CFR 1508.27.

(1) Impacts that may have both beneficial and adverse aspects and which on balance may be beneficial, but that may still have significant adverse impacts which require analysis in an EIS.

The Preferred Alternative would involve the development of a new maintenance facility at an existing developed farm site. The temporary impacts from construction would not be significant or adversely affect the historic scene and will not require an EIS.

- (2) The degree to which public health and safety are affected.

Public health and safety would not be adversely affected by implementation of the Preferred Alternative. The construction area for the new maintenance facility is removed from the public use area and access to the area would be restricted and monitored during the construction process.

- (3) Any unique characteristics of the area (proximity to historic or cultural resources, wild and scenic rivers, ecologically critical areas, wetlands or floodplains, and so forth).

The Preferred Alternative recommends the continued use and maintenance of the existing resource. There are no actions involving the historic buildings beyond their current use except the P. T. Smith House in which exhibits would be installed and would not adversely affect the historic character of the building. There is a stream and wetlands on the site, but these would remain in their current condition. If any actions were proposed affecting those resources, a separate planning and review process would be conducted.

- (4) The degree to which impacts are likely to be highly controversial.

There are no highly controversial elements in the Preferred Alternative. The public did not raise any issues during the scoping session that would be considered highly controversial.

- (5) The degree to which the potential impacts are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The implementation of the GMP and the Preferred Alternative does not involve any highly uncertain projects with unique risks.

- (6) Whether the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The determination to move the maintenance facility from the flood plan to the existing Thompson Farm is the only predetermined action in the plan. This does not set a precedent for future actions with significant effects.

- (7) Whether the action is related to other actions that may have individual insignificant impacts but cumulatively significant effects. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or breaking it down into small component parts.

The Preferred Alternative does not contemplate additional actions that taken in part or as a whole would be classified as cumulatively significant effects.

- (8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect historic properties in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other significant scientific, archeological, or cultural resources.

The Preferred Alternative maintains protection and preservation of all historic resources currently listed or eligible for the National Register and does not propose any actions that would affect scientific, archeological or cultural resources.

(9) The degree to which an action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat.

Compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act has been completed and there are no known listed or threaten species in the park.

(10) Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

There are no actions that threaten to violate federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Mitigation:

All practicable measures to avoid or minimize environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the selected action have been identified and incorporated into the selected action. They are presented in detail in the FGMP/EA. The FGMP/EA has been prepared and submitted for consultation to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act, specifically Sections 7 and 106 respectively. However, due to the programmatic nature of the general management plan, specific implementation projects will be reviewed as necessary for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and other applicable federal and state laws and regulations prior to project clearance and implementation. Specific measures to minimize environmental harm also will be included in implementation plans called for by the FGMP/EA. These plans include, but are not limited to, Long-Range Interpretation Plan, Wayside Exhibit Plan, Historic Resource Study, Cultural Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan, resource management plans, land protection plans, historic structure reports, and schematic design documents.

Consultation and Coordination:

The NPS has taken a comprehensive approach to public involvement during the development of this GMP during a 7-year planning and public participation process. The public participated in the scoping and alternatives development phases through a public meeting and presentation in 1999. Ongoing consultations and briefings have occurred regularly with Iowa SHPO, Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, Hoover Library Association, U.S. Corps of Engineers, USGS, park neighbors, local politicians, and business leaders. The plan has been covered by the local print media and park publications. The plan was placed on thirty (30) day public review with copies placed at six local libraries, posted on the park's website, mailed to partners, Hoover family members and local, state and federal officials, and available by request. The park received one written comment on the plan which did not suggest or request any major changes to the plan.

Finding of No Significant Impact and No Impairment:

Based on my review of the facts and analysis contained in the EA, I conclude that the Preferred Alternative regarding the General Management Plan for Herbert Hoover National Historic Site would not have a significant impact either by itself or cumulatively with any other known past or future actions. Accordingly, the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, regulations promulgated by the President's Council on

Environmental Quality, and provisions of National Park Service (NPS) Director's Order-12 and Handbook (Conservation Planning and Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision-Making) have been fulfilled. Furthermore, the Preferred Alternative selected for implementation would not impair park resources or values and would not violate the NPS Organic Act. The Preferred Alternative supports the enabling legislation through which the park was established as a unit of the National Park Service. An environmental impact statement is not required and will not be prepared for implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

The above factors and considerations justify the selection of the final plan, as described as Alternative A, in the Final Environmental Assessment. The Final General Management Plan is hereby approved.

Recommended for Approval:

Bruce D. McKeen

Superintendent

7-8-04

Date

Approved:

James A. Duntana

Regional Director

7-23-04

Date

- = Commemorative Zone
- = Natural Zone
- = Maintenance Zone
- = Open Space Zone
- = Special Use Zone
- = Recreation Zone
- = Orientation Zone

