

DEVILS TOWER

NATIONAL

MONUMENT

INTERPRETIVE

OCTOBER 1979

PROSPECTUS

(APPROVED BY ACTING REGIONAL DIRECTOR, RMR, RICHARD A. STRAIT, BY MEMORANDUM OF OCTOBER 4, 1979)

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COVER PHOTO BY ALAN M. SICKS GILLETTE, WYOMING

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

(No. 658 -- Sept. 24, 1906 -- 34 Stat. 3236)

WHEREAS, It is provided by section two of the Act of Congress, approved June 8, 1906, entitled, "An act for the Preservation of American Antiquities," "That the President of the United States is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be National Monuments, and may reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected;"

AND WHEREAS, the lofty and isolated rock in the State of Wyoming, known as the "Devils Tower," situated upon the public lands owned and controlled by the United States is such an extraordinary example of the effect of erosion in the higher mountains as to be a natural wonder and an object of historic and great scientific interest and it appears that the public good would be promoted by reserving this tower as a National Monument with as much land as may be necessary for the proper protection thereof;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the power in me vested by section two of the aforesaid Act of Congress, do hereby set aside as the Devils Tower National Monument, the lofty and isolated rock situated in Crook County, Wyoming . . .

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixt.

DONE at the City of Washington, this 24th day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and six and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and thirtyfirst.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT



THE PARK STORY

"According to (the Cheyenne) legend, there were seven brothers. When the wife of the oldest brother went out to fix the smoke wings of her tipi, a big bear carried her away to his cave. Her husband mourned her loss deeply and would go out and cry defiantly to the bear. The youngest of the brothers was a medicine man and had great powers. He told the oldest one to go out and make a bow and four blunt arrows. Two arrows were to be painted red and set with eagle feathers; the other two were to be painted black and set with buzzard feathers. The youngest brother then took the bow and small arrows, told the older brothers to fill their quivers with arrows and they all went out after the big bear. At the entrance of the cave, the younger brother told the others to sit down and wait. He then turned himself into a gopher and dug a big hole in the bear's den. When he crawled in he found the bear lying with his head on the woman's lap. He then put the bear to sleep and changed himself back into an Indian. He then had the woman crawl back to the entrance where the six brothers were waiting. Then the hole closed up. After the Indians hurried away, the bear awoke. He started after them taking all the bears of which he was the leader.

"The Indians finally came to the place where Devils Tower now stands. The youngest boy always carried a small rock in his hand. He told his six brothers and the woman to close their eyes. He sand a song. When he had finished the rock had grown. He sang four times and when he had finished singing the rock was just as high as it is today. When the bears reached the Tower, the brothers killed all of the bears except the leader, who kept jumping against the rock. His claws made the marks that are on the rock today. The youngest brother then shot two black arrows and a red arrow without effect. His last arrow killed the bear. The youngest brother then made a noise like a bald eagle. Four eagles came. They took hold of the eagles' legs and were carried to the ground."

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-- Ray H. Mattison, 1973, <u>Devils Tower National</u> <u>Monument - A History</u>, <u>Devils Tower Natural</u> History Association The prominent landmark was of great interest to the white explorers and settlers who entered the region in the late 1800s. Colonel Richard I. Dodge accompanied a U.S. Geological Survey party to the Black Hills in 1875, and in 1876 he named Devils Tower. By 1890, the General Land Office had taken steps to protect the tower from speculation and support was growing for a national or state park.

In 1906 landmark legislation -- the Antiquities Act -- was passed. This act allowed the President to provide protection for objects of scientific or historical importance by proclamation, creating national monuments. On September 24, 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed "the lofty and isolated rock" as the first national monument.

Interest in Devils Tower as a scenic wonder, and as a challenge to be overcome, has increased through the years. Even before establishment of the monument, the tower was a favorite spot for picnicking and camping. The tower was first climbed in 1893, when William Rogers and Willard Ripley constructed a ladder to the top. On July 4 of that year, about 1,000 people attended a gala celebration to watch the two make their formal climb. The ladder continued to be used until 1927 and a portion of it still clings to the southeast face.

The first technical ascent was made in 1937. In 1941 the expertise of technical climbers was required to effect the rescue of a daredevil who had parachuted to the top, losing his descent rope in the jump.

By 1979 over 7,000 climbers had ascended Devils Tower. Today, one of the highlights of the visitor experience is watching climbers, sometimes as many as fifty in one day, making their way up or down by over forty different routes.

Before World War II, about 10,000 visitors came to Devils Tower each year. The numbers increased almost every year after 1946, reaching 300,000 in 1978. They have come to see a scenic wonder, and to take a few photographs for the home folks. But for many this is not enough; it is the human condition to want to know -- and at Devils Tower there is much to know.

The geological story is surprisingly simple. During the Mesozoic Era, ending about 70 million years ago, a thick sequence of sedimentary rocks was deposited on the midsection of North America. About 65 million years ago, the uplift of the ancestral Rocky Mountains began, accompanied by uplift of the Black Hills. Igneous rock masses were emplaced to the northwest of the main mass of the Black Hills, as molten rock was forcefully intruded into the older sedimentary layers.

The magma cooled underground and froze into solid rock. The polygonal columns that are characteristic of Devils Tower were formed as the magma cooled. As the rock cooled, its volume was reduced by recrystallization of minerals and by loss of liquids and gases into the surrounding rocks. As the volume was reduced, cracks formed to compensate, separating the rock mass into vertical columns.

Through the millions of years since then a tremendous volume of sedimentary rock has been eroded away, exposing igneous rocks in the center of the Black Hills uplift, at the Missouri Buttes of northeastern Wyoming, and at Devils Tower, genetically a part of the Missouri Buttes. The crystalline rock is much more resistant to erosion than the sedimentary layers, so it remains in place as erosion lowers the elevation of the surrounding terrain. Today, Devils Tower stands 865 feet above its base and 1,280 feet above the nearby Belle FourcheRiver.

Devils Tower is set in a land of diversity and exceptional beauty. The boulder field around the base of the tower is almost devoid of vegetation, except for lichens that are beginning the task of converting rock to soil and a few pines that have found enough soil and water for survival. Across the rest of the monument, and across the countryside to the horizon, short-grass prairie alternates with ponderosa pine and aspen in apparently random patterns. Cutting across the southeast corner of the monument, the Belle Fourche River provides a distinctive riparian habitat. Red beds outcrop on the east boundary, where erosion of the red clay forms a small but visually exciting badland.

These habitats are home for a variety of wildlife, but the only creatures that every visitor is certain to see are the prairie dogs. They inhabit a 40-acre "town" along the park entrance road. For many, the prairie dogs are a highlight of their visit. This town is

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one of the remnant protected populations. Today it is difficult to imagine the billions of prairie dogs and the millions of towns that once covered the western prairies.

Devils Tower is small, only about two square miles, but it contains a rich diversity of interpretive resources. These can be used to enhance the visitor experience and to provide understanding and appreciation for Devils Tower, its history, and its environment.

INTERPRETIVE OBJECTIVES

From Devils Tower National Monument - Statement for Management, 1976:

- To identify, evaluate, protect, and interpret the park's natural and cultural resources on a year-round basis.
- To foster appreciation and understanding of geological resources and to provide supplemental interpretation of cultural and other natural resources.
- To increase visitor awareness of the inherent hazards associated with climbing and other activities within the monument, and to provide for the fullest possible visitor safety.

PROBLEMS

Each facet of the visitor experience at Devils Tower can be better handled by interpretive media than at present. Interpretive themes need to be balanced according to their relative importance and exhibits and audiovisual presentations must be upgraded.

As visitors approach the monument, Devils Tower is the obvious center of attention. It dominates the view from the state highway from at least ten miles away. A TIS radio audiostation provides visitors with essential information before they enter the park, but the information is diluted by the length of the message.

Immediately inside the park prairie dogs bring traffic to a halt. Visitors feed them creating an unhealthy situation from the wild animals and a potentially dangerous hazard for visitors (bites, fleas, rattlesnakes). Existing wayside exhibits are ineffective in alerting visitors to the hazards.

The park road continues past park headquarters to the visitor center near the west base of the tower. In the visitor center, climbing exhibits are dominant, overshadowing natural history and cultural themes. On busy days congestion is a problem, compounded by exhibits crowded into a small room with the information, climber registration, sales desk.

Tower Trail circles the base of Devils Tower from the visitor center.

There are many wayside exhibits along the traii, but they are deficient in content or design or both.

The park is open year-round; the visitor center is closed half the year. During the winter, park headquarters serves as the visitor contact station. Interpretation for winter visitors needs to be improved.

Devils Tower interpretive hardware dates from several periods. The visitor center, still a fine building, was constructed in the 1930s; some exhibits were installed as recently as 1978. Each generation of interpretive media has been superimposed on its predecessors, resulting in a quaintly different but ineffective interpretive character.

These are the problems to be addressed by this prospectus.

INTERPRETIVE PLAN

TIS RADIO AUDIOSTATION

The radio message is available to park visitors approaching in their automobiles and works extremely well. However, it is too long. The park staff should examine each of the seasonal scripts, determine which information is essential, and cut the rest. In several cases, messages may be shortened by providing less information when the message is readily available in other locations.

VISITOR CENTER



VISITOR CENTER

The visitor center is a historic building constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. Its exterior will remain unchanged. The interior will be stripped of all existing exhibits and furnishings and will be redone completely.

The entrance to the visitor center is unsafe for elderly and handicapped visitors. Handicapped access to the rest rooms is impossible. Presently, handicapped visitors must return to park headquarters for rest room facilities. Both problems need professional study for possible solutions.

The interpreters' office will remain in its present location in the southwest corner of the visitor center. It will be separated from the visitor use area by a solid wall with access through a door. For times of low visitation, the entrance door of the visitor center should be equipped with a device to alert park personnel in the office to entering visitors. It can be turned off when an employee is assigned full time to the information desk.

The main floor has two rooms, the smaller south room and the north room with the entrance door located near the center of the building. When visitors enter, the first thing they will see will be the information desk opposite the entrance. Exhibits covering biological and cultural themes will be to the right; an audiovisual room with geological exhibits will be to the left.

Information

The information counter, also used for climber registration and cooperating association sales, will be large enough to be manned by two people, small enough for one. There will be space for dispensing free informational materials. On the wall behind the counter, a bulletin board will display weather, advertise interpretive programs, and provide other necessary information. There should be a telephone and a park radio microphone and speaker at the information desk. The transmitter and receiver will be in the office.

Cooperating Association Sales

A moderate-sized cooperating association sales area will be included within the information area. The sales area must include as much storage space as possible, certainly no less than is presently available. This is important because bulk storage is located in the basement with access through the interpreters' office.

Window and Fireplace

The north room is dominated by a large picture window framing Devils Tower and by a large fireplace. The picture window is divided into three panels by two vertical supports. It should be restored to its historical configuration which consisted of three vertical supports and three horizontal supports, maintaining the historical integrity of the exterior.

The fireplace is not used. It may be covered with an interior exhibit wall or left exposed as part of the interior decor.

Audiovisual

The south room will provide audiovisual and exhibit interpretation of the geological story. A television monitor, visitor-activated, will display a 6- to 8-minute color/sound videotape of the geological story and provide views of the tower unavailable to almost all visitors. The videotape playback unit will be located in the office.

Random seating, including floor seating on carpet, will be part of the decor. The room will require some combination of sound absorbing baffles, fabric, and carpeting. It may be advantageous and feasible to have two monitors located at two different levels. The lower one can be used by children and adults who may wish to be seated on the carpeted floor.

Exhibits

As exhibits are planned and designed, it is important to allow much of the log wall interior to remain visible and to design exhibits in harmony with the rustic building. Noise is a problem. Some combination of sound absorbing fabric, baffles, and carpet will be necessary, especially in the audiovisual room. Portions of exhibits may be positioned at lower levels with materials suitable for young people. Exhibits should not be confined to perimeter walls. Curved surfaces coming out from the walls and free-standing exhibits add visual excitement.

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The following exhibit themes are recommended:

South room:

Geology -- Exhibits will provide stills directly related to the videotape presentation. These will provide some additional geological information and will allow visitors to obtain clarification of geological information that may have gone by too rapidly on the monitor. Associated with these exhibits will be hands-on fragments of Devils Tower rock. The number and size of these fragments will be limited by the load-bearing strength of the floor.

North room:

Legends of Devils Tower -- An existing painting of the Cheyenne Indian legend concerning the origin of Devils Tower will be used as the centerpiece for an exhibit on Devils Tower Indian legends.

Climbing history -- This exhibit will interpret highlights of the climbing history of Devils Tower. If it can be obtained from the tower, a 6 to 10 foot section of the Rogers-Ripley ladder will be used in the exhibit. Photographs and/or art work can interpret the 4th of July, 1893, celebration at which Rogers and Ripley planted their flag on top, the last ascent of the ladder in 1927, and the 1941 rescue of the parachutist.

Environment -- A photo essay can interpret the Devils Tower environment, linking basic climatic conditions with the short-grass

prairie and ponderosa habitats and focusing on some of the plants and animals living in this biologically rich area.

First National Monument -- This exhibit will interpret Devils as the first national monument, using graphics of President Theodore Roosevelt, the Proclamation, and the significance of the Antiquities Act.

PARK HEADQUARTERS

The park headquarters building is located on the entrance road just west of the prairie dog town. It serves as a year-round information station and as the visitor center for six months of the year.

The lobby should be completely redecorated.

The large relief model of Devils Tower presently in the visitor center should be moved to park headquarters. The existing plastic covering should be replaced with a bubble-type covering without seams. The model should be lowered so that its base is only one or two feet above the floor. The model is an ideal vehicle for personal services interpretation. This kind of interpretation is not suitable in the congested environment of the visitor center but will work extremely well in the off-season at park headquarters.

The information counter should be redesigned with space for a small cooperating association sales area that can be removed in the summer when the visitor center is open.

A screen is needed between the information counter area and the administrative work space behind, however, employees in the work space need to be able to see into the lobby. Possible solutions include a one-way mirror or vertical louvers.

The entrance door should be provided with a device to alert park employees to entering visitors.

An information board should be located outside near the entrance door. This board will display opening and closing times of the visitor center, interpretive program schedules, parkwide hazard warnings, campground information, and firearms, pet, and climbing regulations. It will include a dispenser for park folders.

WAYSIDE EXHIBITS

Prairie Dog Town

The prairie dog town is the first feature encountered inside the entrance station. Visitors park along the entrance road for the entire length of the town. Existing interpretation is ineffective because visitors would rather walk directly into the town from their parking places rather than diverting to look at the wayside exhibits.

The interpretive problem can be somewhat alleviated by the addition of one parking area and two loop trails into the town. The parking area will be located on the northeast side of the town between the Belle Fourche River highway bridge and the town. One loop trail will enter the town from the parking area; the other will start at the picnic area along the campground access road on the southwest side of the town. Use of the parking area and trails will be encouraged by appropriate signing. Existing wayside exhibits along the entrance road will be retained.

Identical wayside exhibits will be provided for both trails. The following exhibits are recommended:

- 1. Visitor safety and the well being of the animals
- 2. The life and dwellings of the town residents
- The former significance of prairie dogs on the western prairies

Trailhead markers will identify the trails, prohibit feeding, and warn of the rattlesnake danger.

To avoid over-long use of the parking area on the northeast side of the town, the parking area and the trail into the town should not connect up with the Valley View Trail that originates on the opposite side of the town and circles it.

In the event that the construction program will not allow two such installations access should be provided from the picnic area on the southwest side. Use of this site will remove potential congestion from the entrance road and also facilitate resource management practices in connection with the prairie dog town.

Picnic Area

A wayside exhibit is recommended for the picnic area near the entrance to the campground. The view of the tower from this point is inspiring and provides a good place to reinforce the significance of Devils Tower as America's first national monument.

Tower Trail

As at present, wayside interpretation will be concentrated along the 14-mile Tower Trail. Subject matter for exhibits and markers will be essentially the same as at present: plants and animals, ecosystems, fire ecology, and climbing. We recommend the following:

1. Kiosk -- An interpretive kiosk should be constructed in the center island of the visitor center parking area. This location is directly between the visitor center and the beginning of the Tower Trail.

The kiosk will be circular and will include three of the climbing exhibits (suitably weatherproofed) presently in the visitor center. The kiosk will be roofed; exhibits will face out from the center of the structure. Branch of Wayside Exhibits, Harpers Ferry Center, has existing plans for a suitable structure.

Exhibits will have no label copy. A visitor-activated audio message with speakers located in the kiosk ceiling will provide interpretation of the climbing story along with some necessary information (hazards and permit requirements).

Around the perimeter of the kiosk, fragments of rock columns of various sizes and in various attitudes will provide a visually interesting setting.

The audio message repeater will be deactivated in the winter when the visitor center is closed. In the future, if visitation warrants, the repeater can be weatherproofed for year-round operation.

2. Interpretive markers -- A number of interpretive markers covering various subjects will be located along the trail. They will be less wordy and more contemporary in design than the existing markers.

3. Trailhead marker -- A marker located at the beginning of the trail should identify the trail, give its length, provide warnings of grades and slippery sections, poison ivy, rattlesnakes, and rockscrambling, and remind visitors of the registration requirement for climbing.

4. Wayside exhibits -- Four or five waysides to be located around the tower on the trail will show the climbing routes visible from each location. Visitors will be able to look at the exhibit and the tower, pick out various routes, and perhaps find climbers using them. Label copy can provide minimal historical information.

5. Benches -- The benches located at intervals along the Tower Trail are inviting. One does not have to be tired to want to sit and talk about the tower and the features along the trail. A wayside marker or exhibit should be provided for each bench. For more effective interpretation, some benches will have to be relocated. Climbing route exhibits would be particularly appropriate in conjunction with seating; it takes a little time to find the routes and the climbers.

6. Binoculars -- The pair of binoculars located south of the tower on a spur off the trail should be replaced with one or more pairs that can be focused and aimed. The guide that assists visitors in picking out the old ladder should be replaced by one that matches the interpretive design along the trail.

7. Boulder field -- The chain link fence at the boulder field overlook should be replaced with a masonry wall, metal railing, or a row of rock fragments about three feet high.

8. Trail design -- The trail should be widened and, in some cases, redesigned or rerouted so that it can be used by visitors in wheelchairs. Some grades are excessively steep for elderly or handicapped visitors; these grades become slippery as leaves and pine needles accumulate.

9. Replacement -- All existing wayside exhibits and markers should be removed as new ones are installed.

Trail Signing

Formal interpretation is not recommended for other trails (except the Valley View Trail). They have significant value as discovery experiences. Each trail should have a trailhead marker with name of trail, map, distances, and hazards (poison ivy, rattlesnakes, other). A roadside directional sign is needed for the Joyner Ridge Trail.

PUBLICATIONS

The following are recommended:

1. Prairie dogs -- Publications having to do with prairie dogs are well written but need to be revised in format. Essential information needs to be highlighted by means of different type faces and sizes, and by repositioning of information within the texts. With each publication, the park staff must decide what is the most important message and display it accordingly.

2. Valley View Trail -- An interpretive leaflet should be prepared to interpret the riparian and other habitats found along the trail.

3. History and geology booklets -- These two publications need to be redesigned with new covers and more use of photographs.

4. Handbook -- A general publication dealing with all of the Devils Tower themes is being prepared by the Division of Publications, Harpers Ferry Center.

SUMMARY

PRIORITIES -- INTERPRETIVE MEDIA -- COST ESTIMATES

		Cost Estimates	
Priorities	Interpretive Media	Planning	Production
	DIVISION OF AUDIOVISUA	L ARTS	
1 WAYSID	EEXHIBIT		
p Su	ower Trail kiosk. Audiotape, layback unit, backup. ubject: climbing at Devils ower. (p. 18)		hardware \$ 5,300 production 2,200
2 VISITO	R CENTER	•	
V	- to 8-minute color/sound ideotape. Television onitor(s), playback unit,		hardware 18,000
ar	nd backup. Subject: geology f Devils Tower. (p. 12)	\$ 6,000	production 45,000
TOTAL, DIVISI	ION OF AUDIOVISUAL ARTS	\$ 6,000	\$70,500

Prior	ities	Interprétivé Média	Cost Es Planning	timates Production
		DIVISION OF EXHIBI BRANCH OF EXHIBIT PLANNING BRANCH OF EXHIBIT PROD	AND DESIGN	
2	VISI	TOR CENTER		
		Interior decor, furnishings, and acoustics. (pp. 10-14)		
		Museum exhibits. Geology, legends of Devils Tower, climbing history, environment, and first national monument. (pp. 13-14)		
		Total visitor center	\$37,500	\$165,000
3	PARK	HEADQUARTERS		
· · ·		Interior decor and furnishings (p. 15)		
		New case and base for relief model. (p. 15)		
		Exterior information board. (p. 16)		
		Total park headquarters	7,500	30,000
	•	NCHES OF EXHIBIT PLANNING AND EXHIBIT PRODUCTION	\$45,000	\$195,000

		Cost Es	timates
Priorities	Interpretive Media	Planning	Production
	DIVISION OF EXHIB BRANCH OF WAYSIDE EX		
I WAYSID	E EXHIBITS		
t s 2 d	rairie dog town. Two sets of hree exhibits each: 1) visito afety and well-being of anima) life and dwellings of prair logs, and 3) former significant f prairie dogs. (pp. 17-18)	ls, ie	\$ 13,500
	icnic area. First national conument. (p. 18)		3,750
. т	ower Trail. Kiosk, climbing story Approx. 25 interpretive markers 4 or 5 wayside exhibits,		11,250 28,500
	climbing routes Binoculars and pointer for historic ladder		15,000
P	lanning	\$18,000	
TOTAL, BRANC	H OF WAYSIDE EXHIBITS	\$18,000	\$ 75,000

LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

All action proposed in this plan must comply with the provisions of Section 106 of the 1966 Historic Preservation Act and Executive Order 11593 as codified in the <u>Procedures</u> of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 CFR Part 800). Prior to a decision to implement any provisions of this plan, these procedures require that all cultural resources in or near the project areas must be identified and evaluated in terms of the National Register Criteria of Eligibility. The evaluation must be done by the Regional Director in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer. Additionally, the Criteria for Adverse Effect (36 CFR Part 800.8 and 800.9) must be applied by the Regional Director in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council Procedures completed as appropriate.

TEAM MEMBERS

Elvin Aaberg

William Clark

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Homer Robinson

John Mangimeli

Raymond Price

Staff

Chief Ranger, Devils Tower National Monument

Interpretive Planner, Harpers Ferry Center

Staff Curator, Branch of Exhibit Planning and Design, Harpers Ferry Center

Audiovisual Production Specialist, Division of Audiovisual Arts, Harpers Ferry Center

Interpretive Planner, Rocky Mountain Regional Office

Superintendent, Devils Tower National Monument

CONSULTANTS

Seasonal Park Technician, Devils Tower National Monument

Chief, Branch of Wayside Exhibits, Harpers Ferry Center

Devils Tower National Monument



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE **ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL OFFICE** 655 Parfet Street P.O. Box 25287 Denver, Colorado 80225

IN REPLY REFER TO: K1817 (RMR)MI

OCT/1 1979

Memorandum

Superintendent, Devils Tower National Monument To: Actine Regional Director, Rocky Mountain Region From:

Subject: Devils Tower Interpretive Plan

The subject document has been reviewed and appears to be a well balanced plan for the development of interpretive media for the monument.

The plan is approved for implementation.

/sgd/ Richard A. Strait

cc:

w/cp4 Branch of Interpretive Planning, HFC Branch of Museum Exhibit Planning & Design, HFC Branch of Wayside Exhibits, HFC



Save Energy and You Serve America!