



Northeast Region  
Boston Support Office

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## Martin Van Buren National Historic Site

*Boundary Study  
Environmental Assessment  
2003*

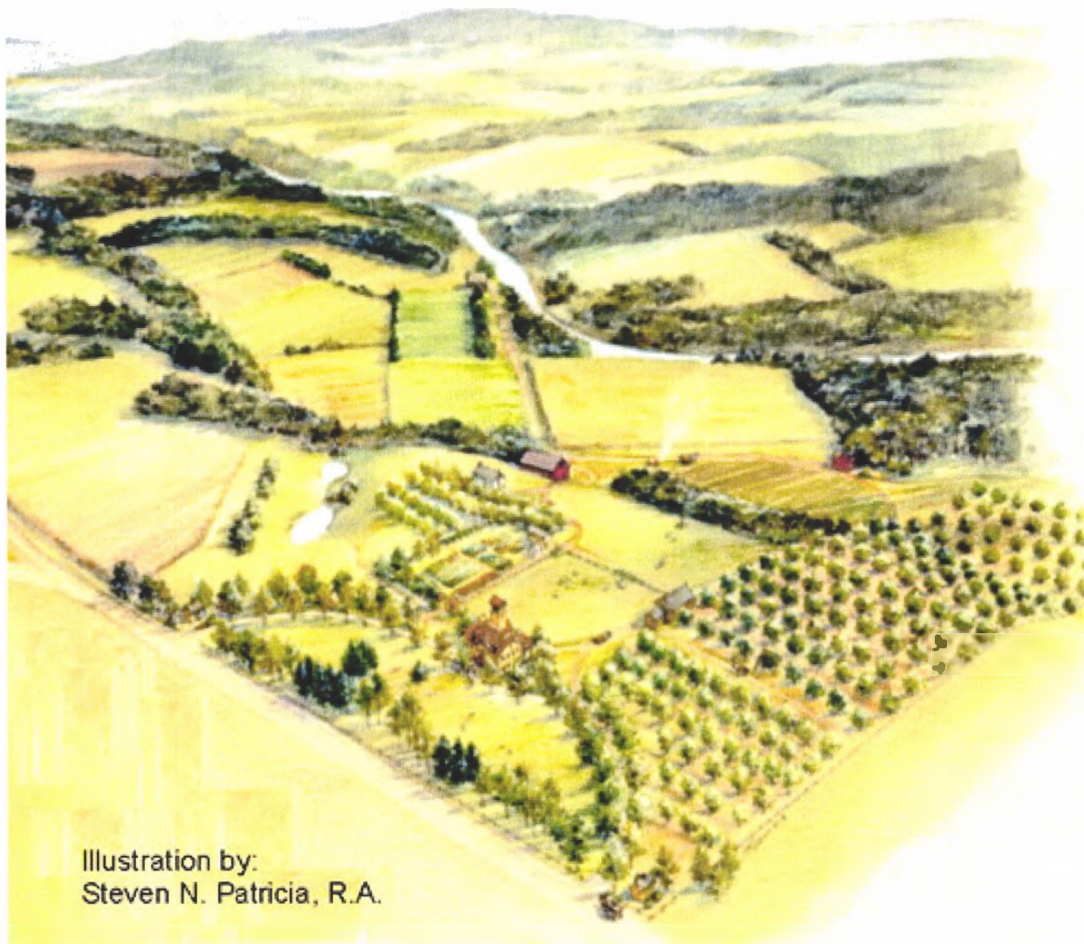


Illustration by:  
Steven N. Patricia, R.A.

"A more estimable class of men  
than the farmers and planters of the United States  
is not to be found in the world."

--Martin Van Buren  
*Inquiry into the Origin and Course of Political Parties  
In the United States*  
Published posthumously  
1867

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# **Martin Van Buren National Historic Site**

*Boundary Study  
Environmental Assessment*

Prepared by:  
Boston Support Office  
Northeast Region  
National Park Service  
2003

## Executive Summary

Recent planning efforts indicate that the boundary of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site may no longer adequately protect the Site's resources and values. The National Park Service undertook this boundary study / environmental assessment for Martin Van Buren National Historic Site to evaluate the adequacy of the Site's current boundary and to develop alternative boundary configurations that would better protect the Site's cultural, natural, and scenic resources.

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site was established by an Act of Congress (Public Law 93- 486) on October 26, 1974. The Site is located in the Hudson River Valley, in Kinderhook, New York. It embraces 38.6 acres within its authorized boundary: 20.3 acres held in fee and an additional 18.3 acres protected through conservation easements.

The purpose of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site is to preserve and interpret the landscape, structures, and collections of "Lindenwald," the Kinderhook farm owned by Martin Van Buren, the eighth President of the United States (1837- 1841) from 1839 to his death in 1862. The National Historic Site is significant for its association with Martin Van Buren, who retreated to this place after his election defeat in 1840, becoming, like most of the presidents before him, a statesman farmer.

Van Buren saw farming as the occupation of "honest and virtuous" men, and, shying away from the urban "seats of political and Bank corruption," he made Lindenwald the center of his life and year- round residence. In an era in which most people earned their livelihoods from farming, Van Buren, as a Jeffersonian and Jacksonian, favored less rather than more government, and in principle, opposed linking urban financial interests, the "money power," with government. He represented and articulated

a belief in an American democracy based on a citizenry working the land.

Martin Van Buren's use of Lindenwald was influenced by its topography. Van Buren divided the property into two distinct sectors: the formal house lot on the first (or upper) terrace and the working agricultural lands on the second (or lower) terrace. Essentially, the National Park Service owns the "house lot" of the original 221- acre property. Although agrarian beliefs formed a central theme of Van Buren's political philosophy, the agricultural components of his own Lindenwald are neither protected nor available for interpretation.

After conducting an analysis of relevant resource data, the study team concluded that:

- Numerous resources that contribute to the significance of the National Historic Site exist on properties outside of the Site boundary. Many of these resources—found on four parcels of land in private ownership—remain unprotected from compromise or loss and unavailable for educational purposes. The National Park Service ownership of Van Buren's "house lot" inevitably shifts the Site's interpretive focus to the house, its furnishings, and other objects therein. Interpretation of the larger context of Van Buren's agricultural/political ideals, and his own agricultural pursuits, although possible within that setting, is severely constrained by the domestic realm in which the themes are articulated. While it is not essential for the National Park Service to own and operate all remaining lands of Lindenwald, it is vital to the accurate portrayal of Lindenwald and the broader interpretation of Martin Van Buren that these lands remain in agriculture, with allowances made for public access to key resources for educational purposes. It is also essential that these lands be farmed in ways that protect the remaining historic landscape features from the Van Buren era and are

compatible with the public use of the adjacent National Historic Site.

- Review of the Congressional Record reveals that protection of the historic setting was an important consideration in the establishment of the National Historic Site. Views from two key vantage points within the National Historic Site are essential components of the visitor experience. The team defined the historic setting as being composed, largely, of four adjacent properties visible within the key viewsheds. Development on these parcels would have a negative influence on the visitor experience and would distort visitor understanding of the historic agricultural milieu of the Site. Changing land use and population trends have steadily increased residential development pressure on farmland surrounding the National Historic Site. In fact, two of the four properties considered to compose the historic setting may soon be sold for residential development. The Site's conservation easements as adopted in the 1970s to protect the historic setting from commercial strip development—the main threat to the historic setting at that time—are too narrowly configured to screen lands effectively, should they be developed for residential purposes.

The study team developed three alternatives for boundary modifications that protect the Site's cultural, natural, and scenic resources to varying degrees.

Under Alternative A, "Current Boundary," the National Historic Site boundary would remain unchanged. It would continue to include 38.6 acres in total, with 20.3 acres held in full fee and 18.3 acres protected through conservation easement. This alternative provides no additional resource protection. It is included as a baseline against which to measure the other alternatives.

Under Alternative B, "Protect Historic Farm," the National Historic Site boundary would be modified to include the lands (167 acres) north of Route 9H that were part of the historic farm. The National Park Service would acquire these parcels via donation or purchase with private or federal funds. The land would be acquired in fee and less-than-fee ownership, subject to negotiations with landowners. The National Park Service conservation easements along the north boundary of the National Historic Site and along Route 9H would remain unchanged. This alternative protects all of the remaining resources contributing to the significance of Lindenwald, although it provides no additional protection for the Site's historic setting.

Under the preferred alternative, Alternative C, "Protect Historic Farm and Setting," the National Historic Site boundary would be modified to include the lands (167 acres) north of Route 9H that were part of the historic farm. The National Park Service would acquire these parcels via donation or purchase with private or federal funds. The land would be acquired in fee and less-than-fee ownership, subject to negotiations with landowners. The National Park Service conservation easements along the north boundary of the National Historic Site and along Route 9H would be expanded by approximately 160 acres to embrace the four parcels that are critical to the historic setting. The easements would largely prohibit development and convey the right to farm on these parcels.

Both alternatives B and C would have the following advantages: They would protect the remaining contributing resources significant to the National Historic Site from loss. They would present a more accurate portrayal of Van Buren's Lindenwald to the visitor by reuniting all remaining agricultural lands with the house lot. Finally, they would enhance interpretation of Van Buren's broader political/agrarian beliefs by enabling public access to key historic agricultural

resources. Expanded to something approximating its historic limits, Lindenwald offers the National Park Service a window, apparently not available elsewhere in the national park system, to discuss two main (Jeffersonian or Hamiltonian, Republican or Federalist) streams of American political thought, which arose in the first years of the Republic and were solidified under Van Buren's guidance in the decades before the Civil War. The National Park Service chose Alternative C as the preferred option because, in addition to the above, it fulfills the Congressional intent to protect the Site's historic setting from development, enhances visitor understanding of the historic agricultural milieu of the Site, and helps maintain the long-standing agricultural tradition of Kinderhook into which Martin Van Buren was born.

The National Park Service distributed a draft of the Boundary Study / Environmental Assessment for public review and comment in June and July 2002. The draft study outlined the three potential alternatives and identified Alternative C: "Protect the Historic Farm and Setting" as the National Park Service's preferred alternative.

A public meeting was held on June 26, 2002, in the Village of Valatie, New York. Twelve people attended the meeting. Of the two participants who expressed a preference for an alternative, one stated support for Alternative A and one stated support for Alternative C. Other meeting participants raised questions about the boundary proposal and discussed the National Park Service's past stewardship of the Site. A summary of the public meeting is located in the "Consultation and Coordination" section and a list of public meeting participants is located in Appendix C.

A total of 18 written comments were received during the public review period. Copies of the written comments are located in Appendix D. The overwhelming majority of written comments (16 out of 18) state support

for Alternative C. Subsequent to the public review period, the Town and Village of Kinderhook and the Village of Valatie endorsed Alternative C.

Overall, the public comment supports Alternative C as the preferred boundary configuration for Martin Van Buren National Historic Site.

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## Part One: Background



Portrait of Martin Van Buren by Henry Inman,  
circa 1835.  
From the Collection of Martin Van Buren  
National Historic Site.





## *Introduction*

Recent planning efforts indicate that the boundary of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site may no longer adequately protect the Site's resources and values. The National Park Service undertook this boundary study for Martin Van Buren National Historic Site to evaluate the Site's current boundary and to develop alternatives that would protect its cultural, natural, and scenic resources.

## *Martin Van Buren National Historic Site*

### Location and Description

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site was established by an Act of Congress (Public Law 93- 486) on October 26, 1974. The Site is in the Hudson River Valley, in the northwestern part of Columbia County, New York. It is located in the town of Kinderhook, between the villages of Kinderhook and Stuyvesant Falls, about 20 miles from the state capital of Albany. The Site sits on a terrace above Kinderhook Creek, near the intersection of New York State Route 9H and County Route 25 .

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site embraces 38.6 acres within its authorized boundary: 20.3 acres held in fee and an additional 18.3 acres protected through conservation easements. Of the 20.3 acres owned by the National Park Service, 14 were part of the original Van Buren farm. (See Figure 1.) Essentially, the National Park Service lands encompass Lindenwald's "house lot," and a ¾- mile remnant of the historic Old Post Road—the original route connecting Albany to New York City prior to the construction of Route 9H—which runs in front of the main house.

The primary historic resources associated with the Site are: a 36- room brick house (originally built in 1797, with an addition and alterations constructed in 1849- 1850), a small 19th- century frame gatehouse at the southern entrance to the grounds, and a portion of the Van Buren- associated cultural landscape and archeological sites. The Site also includes a large collection of furnishings, personal effects, and documents linked to Martin Van Buren and his family.

The Site's rural setting is reminiscent of the agricultural landscape of Van Buren's time. Some of the late- 17<sup>th</sup>- century property boundaries are still evident as hedgerows and tree lines that define the extent of neighboring farm fields. The area has remained generally in agricultural use, with some development along Route 9H, now a 55- mile- an- hour highway.

### Site Purpose and Significance

The purpose of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site is to preserve and interpret the landscape, structures, and collections of "Lindenwald," the Kinderhook, New York, farm owned by Martin Van Buren, the eighth President of the United States (1837- 1841) from 1839 to his death in 1862. The National Historic Site is significant for its association with Martin Van Buren, who lived at Lindenwald from 1841 to 1862.

Van Buren was instrumental to the creation of the modern two- party system and a key strategist of Jacksonian democracy, and he remained an influential and politically active figure well after his retirement from the presidency. From the 1820s onward, Van Buren helped pioneer a new politics which replaced leadership by gentlemen of "property and standing" with an electoral politics based on party organization, grassroots organizing, and popular appeals.

In an era in which most people earned their livelihoods from farming, Van Buren, as a Jeffersonian and Jacksonian, favored less rather than more government, and in principle, opposed linking urban financial interests, the “money power,” with government. He sought to establish an independent treasury system to replace the Bank of the United States and refused support for internal improvements, such as roads, at national expense. This was in contrast to the Whigs. As a supporter of States’ rights, Van Buren opposed interfering with slavery in those states where it existed, but came to oppose the extension of slavery to the territories.

Van Buren was the first professional politician to achieve the presidency. By training a lawyer, he lived from his earliest adulthood by politics and led the emerging Democratic Party at a time that saw the institution of white manhood suffrage and the rise of a national two- party system. He represented and articulated a belief in an American democracy based on a citizenry working the land.

Van Buren’s long political career began in New York State where in 1812 he was first elected to office as a state senator. He subsequently served as the state’s Attorney General and then as United States Senator. Elected to the governorship in 1828, he shortly thereafter resigned to become a member of Andrew Jackson’s administration, serving initially as Secretary of State (1829-1831) and subsequently as Vice- President (1833- 37).

In 1839, Van Buren purchased a farm in his native town of Kinderhook, New York. Naming it “Lindenwald,” he retreated to this place after his election defeat in 1840, becoming, like most of the presidents before him, a statesman farmer. Van Buren saw farming as the occupation of “honest and virtuous” men, and, shying away from the urban “seats of political and Bank corruption,” he made Lindenwald the center

of his life and year- round residence. Here, Van Buren oversaw a profit- making farm, studied and corresponded, and entertained political friends and luminaries. From here, he pursued the hotly contested Democratic nomination for president in 1844, and ran for president again in 1848 as the Free Soil candidate.

## *Historical Overview*

### **Dutch Heritage**

When Van Buren was born, the Hudson Valley Dutch tradition, which he would come to represent, was nearly two centuries old. It had its origins in 1609, when Henry Hudson, an English navigator in Dutch service, explored the river that now bears his name. Hudson bestowed names on many places or features he observed, including Kinderhook.

The Dutch influence in the Hudson Valley endured even after the British conquered the province in 1664. In Kinderhook for example, the Van Alen House was built in distinctively Dutch style in 1737, more than 70 years after the British conquest.

Dutch interest in the region was based initially on the fur trade, but agricultural settlement was soon encouraged. Since the town’s beginnings in the 1660s until recently, agriculture was the leading industry in Kinderhook. Livestock and crops were the main agricultural products. River sloops regularly carried wheat to New York City for milling as early as 1670. When the waterpower of Kinderhook Creek was harnessed, sawmills and, soon after, gristmills, were developed. Up to the early 1800s, livestock and crops continued to be the mainstays of farming in Kinderhook, but by 1850 many farms had introduced fruit trees, especially apples.

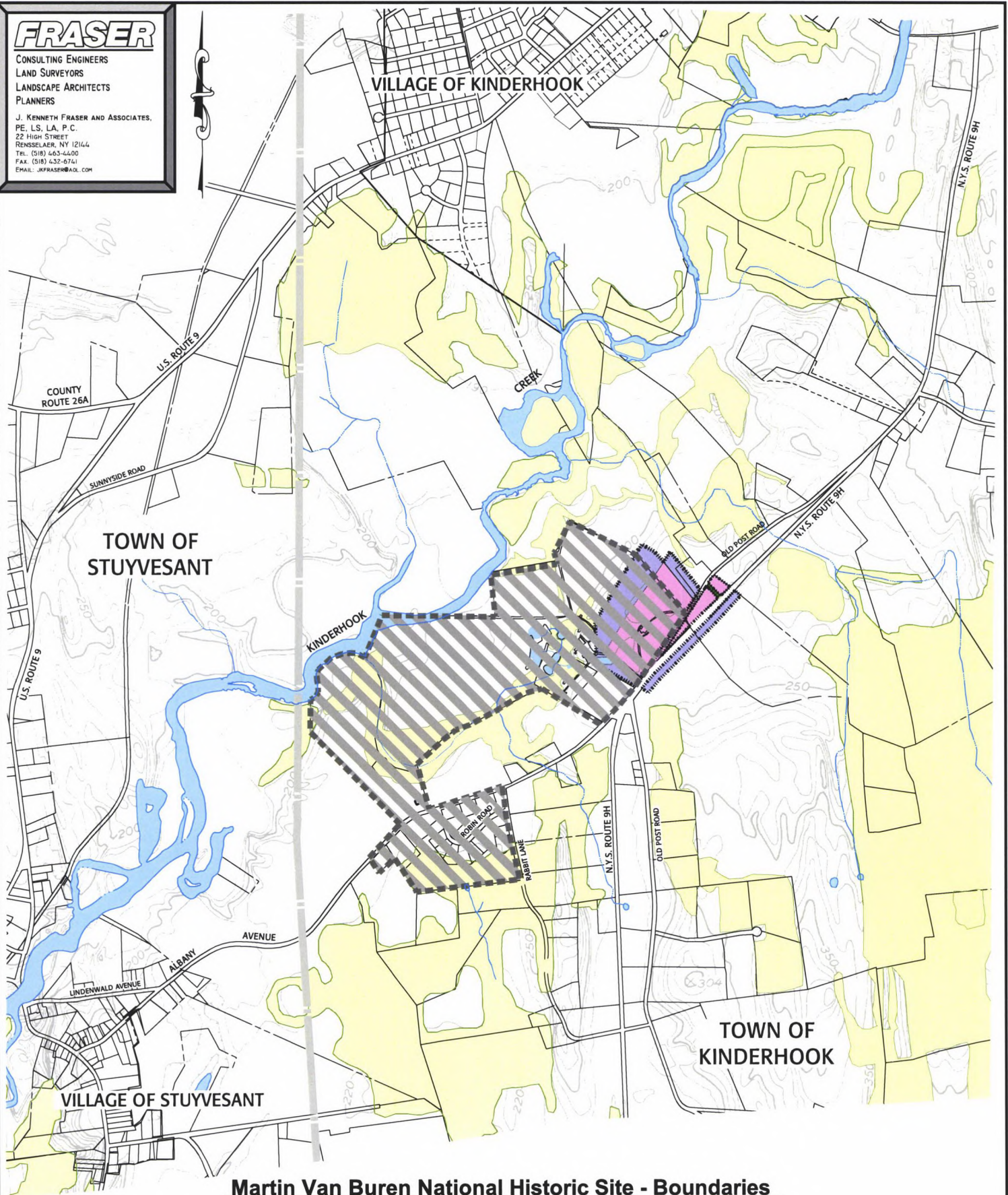
Early land use followed a characteristic pattern. Before the Dutch habitation, Native Americans of the Mohican tribe occupied the



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### Martin Van Buren National Historic Site - Boundaries

#### Key

- Boundary of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site
- NPS Ownership
- NPS Easements

- Historic Farm Boundary
- Town Land
- River/Stream or Pond

- Minor Stream/Drainage Course
- Wooded Vegetation
- Lot Boundary

**Figure 1**



creek flats. Land along Kinderhook Creek rises in gradual terraces, 70 feet on the west bank and 100 feet on the eastern side. The lower terraces provided prime farmland. Much had been cleared by the Indians, and, as was true elsewhere, was the first to be occupied by European settlers. Later, these prized lower terraces sometimes changed hands at high prices while the upper terraces remained the property of the original owners. As a result, Dutch farm fields followed the contour of the terraces, rather than the strip fields more typical of Europe or the rectangular land divisions common elsewhere in the present United States.

Martin Van Buren was born in 1782 into this agricultural milieu. Although his family's primary livelihood was earned by keeping a tavern, they owned a small farm.

### The Meaning of the Lindenwald Farm to Van Buren

Until Martin Van Buren purchased the property that became Lindenwald in 1839, when he was in the third year of his term as president, he had never owned a home of his own. He returned to Kinderhook, the village in which he had been born and raised, because it represented a return to meaningful roots and associations. Lindenwald itself, as Van Buren noted in his *Autobiography*, "was originally settled by a family who were relations of my father."<sup>1</sup> It had once been owned by the Van Alstyne family; the first Van Alstyne—who settled in America in 1633—was said to have been the president's great-great-grandfather.<sup>2</sup>

By Van Buren's time, the property had passed out of Van Alstyne family ownership. In 1780, two years before Van Buren's birth, the Van Alstynes sold the property to Judge Peter Van Ness; and in 1797 Van Ness built a mansion called "Kleinrood." In Van Buren's youth this house, though not in the class of a manor house, served as a constant reminder of his relatively humble origins as the son of a

tavern keeper and embodied his aspirations. Van Buren visited the house, although not always under welcome circumstances—early in his career, he and the Van Nesses had a political falling out. In his *Autobiography*, Van Buren recounts how, "In the many alterations and improvements I have made in the house I have preserved the old double-door, and its knocker, as interesting memorials of my last interview with its original owner" (Judge Van Ness).<sup>3</sup> In acquiring this property, Van Buren showed that he had overcome his handicaps, had become a squire (and more), and had displaced the original squire.

It is mistaken to infer that Van Buren's return to Kinderhook was a sentimental homecoming to childhood scenes after a long absence. More accurately, his return renewed a connection that had been interrupted only briefly and temporarily. He had opened his first law practice in Kinderhook in 1803, when he was 21. Before that, away from home for the first time while working in New York City in 1801-02, he returned regularly to Kinderhook.<sup>4</sup> He moved to nearby Hudson, NY, in 1808 because of greater opportunities there. In 1816 he relocated to Albany, where he set up his famous political organization, the "Regency." Fortunately, the state capital was near his birthplace, so he never faced a decision about moving far away. It is noteworthy, however, that Van Buren apparently never considered taking up residence in New York City, which he could have done easily while holding state-wide office or to advance his law practice. He seems not to have been attracted to a city that had already become symbolic of urban noise and confusion.

Van Buren did not leave Albany for an extended period until he went to Washington in 1829 to serve as Secretary of State in Andrew Jackson's cabinet. He was then 46 years old. His first travel outside the United States did not occur until he was named (but not confirmed) as Minister to Great Britain in 1831, although at that time foreign travel was



still uncommon, even among political leaders. Thus, when Van Buren purchased the Kinderhook property in 1839, it was after a partial absence of only ten years and constituted a renewal of ties that had never truly been severed.

The heritage to which Van Buren reconnected was Dutch, and this was a factor of great importance to the president. He was the first “ethnic” president of the United States (one whose ancestry was not in Great Britain), and there have been few since. He was proud when the marriage of his eldest son completed six generations of unbroken Dutch ancestry in America. Van Buren learned Dutch in childhood and never forgot the language. On visits to Holland in his retirement, he looked up family records in the state archives and visited the town of Buren, reading and conversing in fluent Dutch.<sup>5</sup> Albany, where the language was spoken into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, remained a center of Dutch culture, only gradually yielding to the overwhelming pressure of the larger society.

Related to the concept of Lindenwald as an expression of attainment of gentry status, Van Buren probably viewed the estate as a means of conducting the kind of retirement that had become expected of ex-presidents. His seven predecessors—the two Adamses to a lesser degree—had adopted the lifestyle of country gentlemen after returning to private life. In this sense Van Buren was following established example, much as he emulated the dress and manners of the upper class when he began to develop his political identity.

Some of the former chief executives, notably Washington and Jefferson, already owned plantations when they took office. There was no realistic precedent for any other course of action. Honorific advisory positions were few; it would have appeared demeaning to return to private employment, such as the law, or to accept a less powerful or subordinate office—only John Quincy Adams

followed this course, and he was hardly a suitable model for Van Buren.

While Van Buren presumably looked forward to an honorable twilight as the “Sage of Lindenwald,”<sup>6</sup> that consideration could not have been uppermost in his mind in 1839. He was still in his late fifties and, although his administration had not been a rousing success, he foresaw reasonable prospects of re-election. As it turned out, his margin of defeat in 1840, though substantial in the Electoral College, was not overwhelming in the popular vote. Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., calculated that a shift of 8184 votes in four key states (New York among them) could have given Van Buren victory, although he would have been a minority president.<sup>7</sup>

Subsequently, Van Buren was still seen as the leader of his party and the likely Democratic candidate in 1844, with good reason to anticipate victory. Party stalwarts believed that the working people, misled by glib slogans, had temporarily strayed in 1840 and would return to their natural allegiance. Leading on the first ballot of his party convention in 1844, Van Buren was unable to secure the needed 2/3 vote, so James K. Polk garnered the nomination and the victory that otherwise would have been expected to fall to the New Yorker. (The convention became deadlocked so that Polk eventually garnered the nomination on the 68<sup>th</sup> ballot.) Van Buren’s campaign on the Free Soil ticket in 1848 was more a case of principle and political loyalty, and he probably harbored no illusions of winning.

Van Buren’s earliest serious biographer, Edward M. Shepard, acknowledges that, “in secret he probably hoped the American people would come to group [Lindenwald] with Monticello, Montpelier, and the Hermitage.” That this did not come to pass was surely disappointing, but in 1839 such expectations were premature. As Shepard concludes, “Van Buren had served but half the presidential term of honor. He was not a

sage, but still a candidate for the presidency.”<sup>8</sup>

For Martin Van Buren the purchase, occupancy, and development of Lindenwald represented an expression on the land of his deepest political convictions. However much they differ in interpreting this period, most historians concur in describing Van Buren as a confirmed Jeffersonian. Van Buren portrayed himself as such in his Autobiography, and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in his seminal work on the Jacksonian era, agrees that, “In public office Van Buren pursued a steady Jeffersonian policy.”<sup>9</sup> Writing in 1889, Shepard asserts that “More than any other American, Martin Van Buren had succeeded to the preaching of Jefferson’s political doctrines, and to his political power as well . . . .”<sup>10</sup>

This identification lies at the core of Van Buren’s career, and indeed of his entire personality. It is central to the violent disagreements about him that raged in his own time and have continued, little diminished, among later historians. To his political enemies, Van Buren was nothing more than a cunning, unscrupulous political manipulator, the Little Magician, the Red Fox. Since his foes were often men of substance, this opinion has remained potent. As early as 1889 Shepard observed that “Perhaps for no other period in our history has irresponsible and unverified campaign literature of the time so largely become authority to serious writers; and for no other period does truth more strongly require a judgment upon well established results.”<sup>11</sup>

Some of the unfavorable perceptions undoubtedly originate in enduring puzzlement over Van Buren’s behavior. Invariably polite, he was capable of exchanging pleasantries and sharing snuff with his harshest critics. In a time of violent rhetoric and personal vilification, Van Buren usually spoke of issues and refrained in public from personal slander. His wonderment over the animosity he inspired

may have been genuine.<sup>12</sup> Affable, physically unprepossessing, charming to women, with the manners and dandy attire he had adopted as his persona from upper- class models, Van Buren struck his numerous adversaries as slippery, insincere and untrustworthy.

Van Buren was also accused of concealing his feelings and position behind obscure verbosity. Insofar as this was thought to exceed normal political discourse, it may be the result of his deficient formal education and his persistent feelings of inadequacy. More likely, concealing his position in a dense thicket of verbiage was a tactic he employed until he had formulated an opinion. Once he adopted a stance, he generally stayed with it. Andrew Jackson, who placed enormous value on personal honor and loyalty, learned to respect Van Buren and had trouble understanding his reputation for evasiveness.

There is no doubt that Van Buren was a masterful politician, wily and calculating in his methods. He was also highly partisan, placing party cohesion above most other considerations until late in his life. However the emphasis on Van Buren as a political operator, as well as the persistent assaults on his character and manners, overlook a remarkable philosophical consistency. In an age of constantly shifting alliances, unprincipled deals, when factions coalesced and disintegrated almost weekly and party names and identities changed fundamentally, Van Buren remained true to the principles of his childhood. He had absorbed Jeffersonian Republican ideas as part of his family background, in the tavern kept by his father, and he never wavered. His biographer Shepard captured this consistency, writing that Jefferson’s doctrines inspired “an enthusiasm which in Van Buren was to be so enduring a force, and to which sixty years later he was still as loyal as he had been in the hot disputes on the sanded floors of the village store or tavern.”<sup>13</sup>



Van Buren endured considerable anguish in adhering to these principles. The leading figures of Columbia County, including his patrons the Van Nesses, were Federalists. In identifying with the Jeffersonian stream of American political thought, Van Buren alienated these powerful supporters and consigned himself to a permanent minority position in his home county. It was assuredly not a course an aspiring politician would have pursued for reasons of expediency. Additionally, Van Buren maintained a firm anti-extension stance regarding Texas, even though it lost him the 1844 nomination.

Most of the Jacksonians, although they accepted and expanded Jeffersonian doctrine, adopted it indirectly.<sup>14</sup> Van Buren was an exception. In 1824 he made a lengthy visit to Monticello to absorb the wisdom of its aged master, “a man whom he considered the real founder of the Republic, the philosopher who had devised what Van Buren felt was the most perfect system of politics ever conceived.”<sup>15</sup> There was little discernible political advantage to this journey, and it is best understood as a personal pilgrimage.

Indeed, Van Buren may have been a stricter Jeffersonian than Jefferson, as followers are often unwilling to alter doctrines laid down by thinkers whose own beliefs were continually evolving. Schlesinger has noted this tendency, observing that “[Van Buren’s] lack of intellectual confidence made him tame and unoriginal as a political thinker. A pious Jeffersonian, he rarely ventured to do more than annotate the gospel. . . . He more than once counseled new kinds of governmental action, but he justified them always in terms of the sacred texts.”<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Van Buren vowed in 1835 that he would “endeavor to tread gently in the footsteps of President Jackson—happy if I shall be able to perfect the work he has so gloriously begun.”<sup>17</sup> After moving to Lindenwald, Van Buren displayed portraits of Jefferson and Jackson in prominent locations.<sup>18</sup>

Jefferson’s most unequivocal and unmistakable expression of the agrarianism that is a core element of his philosophy is contained in his Notes on the State of Virginia: “Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people, whose breasts He has made His peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. . . . Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example.” In case any doubt remained, Jefferson went on to express the explicit corollary: “The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body.”<sup>19</sup>

Van Buren’s writings apparently do not contain similarly powerful celebrations of rusticity, but by then the dogma was firmly established and no longer needed repetition. The Jacksonians, as influenced by Van Buren, expanded the Jeffersonian creed to embrace white northern workingmen, but there was no dilution of the agrarian component of the doctrine. Van Buren, by all evidence, was fully sympathetic. In the early stages of his law practice, many of his cases were in defense of the interests of small farmers and tenants in what was arguably the most hierarchical, gentry-dominated county in the state.<sup>20</sup> For similar reasons, he strongly opposed the practice of imprisonment for debt. Van Buren stated, “It can only be when the agriculturalists abandon the implements and the field of their labor...that the Republic will be brought in danger of the money power.”<sup>21</sup>

For the devout Jeffersonian, advocacy of the independent small farmer was not merely desirable economic policy but a manifestation of virtue, one of the characteristics that distinguished the promise of America from the corrupt systems of Europe. After retirement to Lindenwald, Van Buren endorsed this sentiment in its pure form, advising a longtime friend, “Why can’t you decide upon becoming an honest and

virtuous man, and plant yourself in my neighborhood upon a good farm[?]"<sup>22</sup>

Van Buren's early experience with farm chores, more "hands-on" than Jefferson's, probably convinced him that farming was drudgery. Nevertheless, he made sure to boast in his autobiography that his ancestors in America had all been farmers. He was a philosophical agrarian who escaped agricultural life at the earliest opportunity. On the other hand, although a highly urbane person, Van Buren retained something of the Jeffersonian suspicion of the urban workingman he represented in politics. The lifestyle he conducted at Lindenwald was thus, to some degree, an acquired taste and one that expressed his political values. (He apparently saw no contradiction in becoming a prominent landowner who employed agricultural labor, although his adversaries certainly noted the paradox.)

The ex-president may have been pleasantly surprised at how much he actually enjoyed farming. Having consciously emulated Jackson's "Hermitage," Van Buren was pleased to report to his former chief that, "My farming operations for the present season [1843] have been very successful. I am just getting my farm in good order. My hay crop is, to the surprise of those who could not or would not believe that I could turn my mind to the subject, larger than a single one of my neighbors."<sup>23</sup> After losing the 1844 nomination, he consoled himself in another letter to Jackson: "You have no idea of the interest I take in farming or the satisfaction I derive from it. The Whigs would hardly believe that a much larger portion of my time is taken up with devising ways and means to multiply the quantity and improve the quality of manure than in forming political plans."<sup>24</sup>

Van Buren sought to improve upon Jefferson's Monticello by making Lindenwald profitable. He approached this task with the same careful planning that had characterized his political career. Between 1843 and 1845 Van Buren acquired additional

parcels, forming a 221-acre farm that remained intact until 1874. On this land he grew cereal grains, including rye, corn, and oats, and kept livestock for subsistence. He boasted of the potato crop and researched scientific methods for cultivating the fruit orchards and grapevines he established. Much of the hay and potatoes was grown on bog land, part of the tracts he had added to his original holdings and "reclaimed."<sup>25</sup> As an active farmer, Van Buren flourished in a rural context whose rhythms were determined by agriculture. Nearly all land that possessed agricultural value was used for that purpose. Lindenwald was within the size range of family farms in the area. From there the president could look out over his own acres, mostly cleared or cultivated, and beyond to similar farms, divided by hedgerows and groves, with the creeks easily traceable as ribbons of dense vegetation. The village of Kinderhook, incorporated in 1838, provided necessary services but blended harmoniously into a rural landscape. The Hudson River provided convenient access to expanding urban markets for his products, and the former president assessed these markets with the same shrewdness he applied to calculating votes.

## *The Boundary Study*

### **Purpose and Need**

The need to reconsider the boundary for Martin Van Buren became apparent during the National Park Service's development concept planning of 2000. During this process, National Park Service staff came to recognize that:

- Resources contributing to the significance of the National Historic Site existed on lands outside of the boundary, diminishing their protection and interpretation.
- The conservation easements Congress established to preserve the Site's key agricultural views no longer offer

adequate protection, given contemporary conditions.

During the public involvement phase of the Development Concept Plan, interested parties, such as the Columbia Land Conservancy, the Town of Kinderhook, the Open Space Institute, and others expressed their concerns about the loss of the region's agricultural heritage and changing land use trends. The parties discussed potential roles for the National Park Service and others in preserving lands containing Van Buren-related resources and in protecting the Site's key agricultural views. The Open Space Institute expressed its intent to seek a long-term landowner for an adjacent 126-acre property that was historically part of Lindenwald. The Open Space Institute purchased this parcel to retain the agricultural use of the property, although no restrictions, easements, or provisions are currently in place on this parcel. This parcel is now potentially available to the National Park Service, given necessary legislative authority. Also, during the course of this project, owners of lands within key viewsheds that maintain the character and the quality of the Site's historic setting expressed their intent to sell properties for residential development.

As a result of these developments, the draft Development Concept Plan included alternatives that involved expansion of the Site's boundary. Any substantial expansion of the Site's boundary would require legislative action. Under National Park Service guidelines, the level of planning necessary to support a legislative action is a general management plan or a boundary study, not a development concept plan. Because of the expressed interest in re-examining the Site's legislated boundary, the Northeast Region of the National Park Service decided to suspend development concept planning, and undertake a boundary study to examine the adequacy of the present boundary and to consider appropriate alternatives. In addition, rather

than resuming development concept planning, the National Park Service will undertake a general management plan for the Site.

## Methodology

The boundary study process involved the following steps:

- Review of the Site's enabling legislation and re-evaluation of the Site's purpose and significance.
- Identification of the Martin Van Buren-related resources and of areas within key viewsheds that define the Site's historic setting.
- Review of demographics, land use trends, neighboring land uses, and land use regulations to determine the level of development pressure on lands containing Van Buren-related resources and those within key viewsheds.
- Evaluation of the ability of the current boundary to protect and preserve the cultural, natural, and scenic resources integral to the Site.
- Development of alternatives for boundary modifications.
- Application of the criteria for boundary adjustments for each of the alternatives.
- Assessment of the potential impacts on cultural and natural resources associated with the alternatives considered.

## Relationship of the Boundary Study to other Studies and Plans in Effect

### Studies and Plans by the National Park Service

The National Park Service has undertaken several plans and studies since the National Historic Site was established. They are summarized below.

## 1970 Master Plan

The 1970 Master Plan was prepared four years before establishment of the Site and before archaeological and historical research findings were available. This plan outlined the management objectives for the Site and called for a preferred treatment for the restoration and rehabilitation of the historic buildings and grounds. The 1970 Master Plan for the Site was approved by National Park Service as the Site's General Management Plan in 1978. In the decade following approval of the Master Plan as the Site's General Management Plan, National Park Service policies on preservation changed and many of the recommendations in the 1970 plan became obsolete.

## Development Concept Plan of 1986 and Amendment of 1990

The National Park Service prepared an implementation plan to the Master Plan, the Development Concept Plan, in 1986 and this plan was amended in 1990 to consider additional alternatives that had not been examined in 1986. The 1990 Amendment is the Site's current development document. It reiterates the goals of the 1986 Development Concept Plan by calling for the construction of a visitor center and parking area on non-historic property. The 1990 Plan Amendment also supports the landscape restoration called for in both the 1970 Master Plan and the 1986 Development Concept Plan.

## 1990 Adjacent Lands Resource Analysis

The National Park Service examined the Site's boundary in 1990 in a study that analyzed development pressures and their potential effect on the historic setting. The team found that Kinderhook Creek, with its associated wetlands and floodplain, deters development in its vicinity, but that topography and soils provide opportunities for development of road frontage. The team also found that although suburbanization was

taking place in the Town of Kinderhook, the heaviest development pressure, at that time, was occurring in the north-central portions of town, not within view of the Site. The study recommended National Park Service purchase of conservation easements on the former Meyer Farm (Property A) and limited development with accompanying restrictions on the open portions. The study also recommended cooperative approaches to management of development on lands surrounding the Site, such as supporting cluster zoning and encouraging strict interpretation of existing zoning.

## 1995 Cultural Landscape Report for Martin Van Buren National Historic Site

The Cultural Landscape Report provides a basis for preservation treatment and management for the National Historic Site. It documents the evolution of Lindenwald from the time it was first established as a farm, circa 1780, until conditions as they existed in 1993. The report examines and illustrates five periods in the Site's history: the Van Ness period (1780- 1839), the Van Buren period (1839- 1864), the Wagoner period (1864- 1917), the deProsse period (1917- 1973), and the National Park Service period (1973- 1993). Based on this documentation, the report analyzes the lands that composed Lindenwald to determine their level of integrity and recommends appropriate preservation treatments for the National Historic Site.

## 2000 Draft Development Concept Plan

The National Park Service undertook implementation planning again in 2000 to consider new factors that had arisen in the previous decade, including completion of the Town of Kinderhook's Comprehensive Plan, the publication of the Site's Cultural Landscape Report and Treatment Plan, plans for the new entrance road, and the sale of a large portion of the historic Van Buren farmland to an interim land-owner. As mentioned earlier, it became apparent during

the development concept planning process that reconsideration of the Site's boundary was needed and that a boundary study should be initiated.

2001 Draft Special History Study: The "Little Magician" after the Show: Martin Van Buren, Country Gentleman and Progressive Farmer, 1841- 1863.

The draft Special History Study by Dr. John Huston provides an analysis of Martin Van Buren's agricultural activities at Lindenwald.

2002 Draft A Farmer in His Native Town: Cultural Landscape Report for the Martin Van Buren Farmland

The draft Cultural Landscape Report traces the physical history of Lindenwald and evaluates its significance and integrity.

### Plans by Others

Town of Kinderhook Comprehensive Plan of 2000

The comprehensive plan provides the legal basis for developing and implementing the Town's land use regulations. It serves as a long- range guide that will influence land use decisions for the next 15 years. The plan describes the current conditions in the Town, identifies issues, and offers goals and recommendations. The plan articulates the following vision for Kinderhook:

"We must preserve and maintain the Town of Kinderhook's unique historic, agricultural, and rural character. We must guide growth to meet the economic, social, and recreational needs of all residents, while controlling the location of commercial development and ensuring that the design and architecture reflects the town's heritage. We must foster a unified community tied together with roadways, sidewalks, biking, and hiking paths while maintaining the ambiance of a small

rural town with a uniqueness that is Kinderhook."

The comprehensive plan lays out a "smart growth" strategy to achieve the goals and vision of the Town. According to the plan, these strategies do not stop growth, but offer ways to accommodate growth so that it preserves the rural character of the community, protects the environment, and enhances economic vitality.

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area: Management Plan of 2001

The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area was established in 1996 to "preserve and interpret the environmental and historic heritage of the Hudson River Valley, and encourage consistency between protection of this Heritage and economic development." The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area comprises the counties of Albany, Rensselaer, Columbia, Greene, Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Westchester, and Rockland, and the Village of Waterford in Saratoga County. The management plan outlines three main objectives:

- Conserve the natural environment and heritage of the Hudson River Valley by supporting existing and new collaborative conservation initiatives among the Valley's many partners.
- Tell the important stories of the Hudson River Valley by supporting and promoting Heritage Trails based around the region's most popular destinations.
- Encourage tourism, agriculture, and appropriate economic development consistent with conserving and interpreting Hudson River Valley Heritage, while providing for sustainable economic growth.

## Kinderhook Creek Conservation and Heritage Corridor Concept

The Columbia Land Conservancy has designated the lands surrounding Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, situated between the villages of Kinderhook and Stuyvesant Falls and bounded by Routes 9 and 9H, the "Kinderhook Creek Conservation and Heritage Corridor." The Columbia Land Conservancy and the Open Space Institute are working in this corridor to maintain the historic agricultural landscape, protect it from undesirable development, and create a public trail along the Kinderhook Creek.

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<sup>1</sup> John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., Autobiography of Martin Van Buren (Washington: USGPO, 1920), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Townsend Booth, Country Life in America as Lived by Ten Presidents of the United States (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 138.

<sup>3</sup> Autobiography, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Donald B. Cole, Martin Van Buren and the American Political System (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 17.

<sup>5</sup> Autobiography, 10. Apparently the Hudson Valley Dutch he spoke, though it had branched off more than two centuries earlier, was readily intelligible.

<sup>6</sup> Edward M. Shepard, Martin Van Buren (Boston: Riverside Press, 1899, reprint AMS Press, 1972), 398. In his retirement, Jefferson was already referred to as "the Sage of Monticello."

<sup>7</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little, Brown, 1945), 305.

<sup>8</sup> Shepard, Martin Van Buren, 398.

<sup>9</sup> Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 48.

<sup>10</sup> Shepard, Martin Van Buren, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Shepard, Martin Van Buren, 178.

<sup>12</sup> John Niven, The Romantic Age of American Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 121.

<sup>13</sup> Shepard, Martin Van Buren, 40.

<sup>14</sup> Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 308.

<sup>15</sup> Niven, Romantic Age, 147.

<sup>16</sup> Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 50.

<sup>17</sup> Niven, Romantic Age, 397.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 485.

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<sup>19</sup> Adrienne Koch and William Peden, eds., The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson (New York: Modern Library, 1944), 280.

<sup>20</sup> Niven, Romantic Age, 19-21. Van Buren took a less favorable view of the anti-rent agitators of the 1840s because they resorted to violence. By then he was himself a large landowner (Cole, 408).

<sup>21</sup> Martin Van Buren, Inquiry into the Origin and Course of Political Parties in the United States (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1867), 431.

<sup>22</sup> Van Buren to Gorham Worth, April 9, 1849, Van Buren Papers, cited in John Huston, "The 'Little Magician' after the Show: Martin Van Buren, Country Gentleman and Progressive Farmer, 1841-1863," draft National Park Service Special History Study, 2001, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Booth, Country Life, 142.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 144.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 142.





## Part Two: Resource Description and Adjacent Lands Analysis



Carriage Barn just prior to being torn down, 1937.





## ***Resource Description***

### **Current Ownership of Lindenwald**

Martin Van Buren established his home in Kinderhook as an experimental and working farm and managed it for 23 years. Only a fraction of the historic farm's original 221-acres is under National Park Service ownership: 14.3 acres in full fee with 10.6 acres under conservation easement. (The park includes some lands that were not part of the historic farm and totals 38.6 acres.) The National Park Service owns essentially the "house lot" of the estate.

The majority of the historic farm remains in private hands, divided among several owners. Over 40 acres of Lindenwald, the lands south of Albany Avenue, were developed in the 1950s and '60s as a residential subdivision. No known Van Buren- related resources remain on these properties. The non-National Park Service acreage north of Route 9H is divided into four parcels, all of which contain resources contributing to Martin Van Buren's tenure at Lindenwald (see Figure 2).

The four parcels are:

- Property A: This 126- acre parcel southwest of the Van Buren house lot was purchased by the Open Space Institute (a non- profit organization concerned with assisting citizens in protecting the environment of New York State) for the purpose of retaining its agricultural use. The lands are currently leased to the Roxbury Farm, one of the
- largest community- supported agriculture (CSA) farms in the Northeast. Several modern farm structures exist on the property, including a large barn, several garages and sheds, a hothouse, and a greenhouse. The Open Space Institute is seeking a long- term landowner for this parcel, which is potentially available to the National Park Service, subject to legislative authority. While it might appear that this parcel is protected simply because it will remain in agricultural use, upon closer examination this is not the case. There are no assurances in place that would compel the long- term landowner to operate the farm in ways that would be consistent with public use of the adjacent National Historic Site, would protect the contributing historic Van Buren- related features, or would allow public access to portions of the property for educational purposes.
- Property B: This approximately 8- acre parcel is located south of the Property A farm structures and used for residential purposes.
- Property C: This approximately 27- acre parcel is located to the south of Property A and remains in field crops.
- Property D: This approximately 6- acre parcel is located to the south of Property A and is used for residential purposes.

## Contributing Resources from the Martin Van Buren Period

Lindenwald was designated a National Historic Landmark in the 1960s prior to its establishment as a National Historic Site. Lindenwald is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is included within the Old Post Road historic district, which has been determined to be eligible for National Register listing by the New York State Historic Preservation Office.

The historically significant time period for Lindenwald began in the spring of 1839, with Van Buren's first land purchase, and ended in 1862 with his death. Numerous "contributing" features from this era remain. (A contributing feature is one that was present during the period of significance, and possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time, or is capable of yielding important information about that period.) Lindenwald's contributing features from the Martin Van Buren period are described below.

### Topography

Lindenwald's topography consisted of two main terraces, the first (upper) and the second (lower), separated by a transition slope. Each terrace had a gentle, westerly slope toward Kinderhook Creek. Due to the fact that most of the land has remained in agricultural use since Van Buren's tenure, the overall topography of Lindenwald is unchanged. All properties north of Route 9H that were part of the historic farm still retain the two terraces and continue to slope toward Kinderhook Creek.

### Spatial Organization

Van Buren developed Lindenwald to reflect its topography. The house lot, which was located on the first terrace, faced the Post

Road and gave the front of the property a formal character. Van Buren placed a cluster of support facilities directly behind the main house, including the garden, farm buildings and structures, orchards, and pastures. Van Buren devoted the remainder of the first terrace and the entire second terrace to agricultural fields. This arrangement presented a formal character to passersby, while shielding the operational functions from view.

The historic spatial organization of Lindenwald remains generally intact. The layout of the agricultural fields on the private lands is virtually identical to that of Van Buren's tenure, with remnants of original hedgerows still intact.

The farm's support activities are still located in the same general area as they were historically, near the former Van Buren farm cottage on Property A. The character of the activity and the farm structures themselves are more contemporary.

The National Park Service property encompasses the front portion of the house lot. The loss of the garden and orchards on what is now Property A has given the area behind the main house a more open character.

The Site's Cultural Landscape Report states that, "Although the spatial organization is intact, it is threatened by potential development of the agricultural lands surrounding the Site. Therefore it is a priority for preservation treatment."

### Hydrology and Water Features

Although many small alterations have been made, the overall hydrology of the properties that once comprised Lindenwald north of Route 9H continues to reflect the historic character. The hydrology of Lindenwald consisted of a drainage pattern, toward Kinderhook Creek, with two natural springs and a wetland. One spring was located on



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TOWN OF STUYVESANT

KINDERHOOK  
CREEK




OLD POST ROAD

N.Y.S. ROUTE 9H

TOWN OF  
KINDERHOOK**Martin Van Buren National Historic Site - Historic Farm Properties****Key**

-  Boundary of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site
-  NPS Ownership
-  NPS Easements

-  Historic Farm Boundary
-  Historic Farm Property
-  Town Land

-  Minor Stream/Drainage Course
-  Wooded Vegetation
-  River/Stream or Pond

-  Lot Boundary

**Figure 2**



the house lot (now the National Park Service property), south of the main house. It drained through the ravine on the house lot, feeding two artificial ponds constructed by Martin Van Buren on the first terrace. The upper fishpond was located directly below the spring, at the south edge of the garden. The upper fishpond still exists on what is Property A. Further down the ravine was the lower fishpond. After draining through the ponds, the water continued to the wetland at the ravine's base, on the second terrace on Property A. This wetland was traversed by a series of ditches that allowed it to drain into Kinderhook Creek via a small ravine. Remnants of the historic drainage ditches remain on all the properties north of Route 9H.

### **Buildings and Structures**

Van Buren- associated structures within the current boundary of the Site include the main house and the south gatehouse. The Van Buren's farm cottage, a small, one and one-half story Federal style building built by Van Buren about 1843 is located on Property A. Situated on the edge of the first terrace, the farm cottage has been extensively altered on both the exterior and interior. The farm cottage was a substantial building for a 19th-century farm employee residence. Its interpretation is integral to understanding the farm's importance to Van Buren. Despite the extensive changes the farm cottage has undergone, the location and spatial mass of the building still contribute to the historic character of the property.

### **Archeological Sites**

The National Historic Site includes the sites of the carriage barn, the stables, and wood house, and the foundations of the north gatehouse and the farm office. The foundation of the red hillside barn, and the sites of the black hay barn and the stone house are found on Property A.

### **Circulation**

Several roads and paths accessed different areas of Lindenwald. In addition to the semi- circular drive on what is now National Park Service property, two roads extended from the south portion of the entry drive to the farm cottage and then to the stone house on the second terrace on Property A and Property B.

### **Vegetation**

The front lawn during the Van Buren era encompassed the area defined by the entry drive and Post Road. A row of Eastern White Pines stood between the front lawn and the Post Road. The overall expanse and extent of the front lawn and the existing (and volunteer) plants in the Pine Row have been maintained.

The entire second terrace and portions of the first terrace were maintained as fields for a variety of crops. Most of the second terrace and the portions of the first terrace behind the main house and at the southern end of Lindenwald are still maintained as agricultural fields, which retain the original Van Buren field patterns. Non- agricultural development on these lands, or agricultural practices that do not respect the original field patterns and hedgerows, would diminish this contributing feature.

### **The Historic Setting of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site**

Review of the Site's legislative history reveals that protection of the historic setting was an important consideration in the establishment of the National Historic Site. One of the original bills (S. 1426) directed the Secretary to acquire adjacent or related lands as necessary for the establishment of the Site.<sup>1</sup> When asked at a hearing before the Subcommittee on Interior and Insular Affairs (February 1972) to explain the rationale for acquiring the recommended acreage—42



acres, 22 in full fee and 20 under conservation easement—National Park Service Director George B. Hartzog explained that the National Park Service was “trying to maintain the visual integrity of the site” and “trying to prevent adverse use along Route 9H.”<sup>2</sup> In debate the following year, the importance of the Site’s setting was further underscored by Senator Jacob Javits, who stressed the need for comprehensive planning “to insure the protection of the setting of Lindenwald.”<sup>3</sup> In 1974, “adverse use along Route 9H” meant commercial strip development, the major threat to the Site’s setting at that time.

Views to open, agricultural lands from critical vantage points within the National Historic Site are considered resources related to the Site’s historic setting and remain important components of the visitor experience. Views to agricultural lands are evident from the Site’s entry and from the rear of the main house, which are two of the most visited locations on the Site’s grounds. Extensive development on lands visible from these locations would have a negative influence on the visitor experience and would diminish visitor understanding of the historic agricultural milieu of the Site.

The team identified three vantage points based on their interpretive value (see Figure 3) and determined the extent of the viewsheds from those points. The team originally located vantage point 2 at the southern corner of the Site, near the pond. Because the view from this location was completely truncated by vegetation and structures, the team moved the vantage point to the center of Property A to determine the extent of the viewshed from that point. Although vantage point 2 provides useful information, the study is mainly concerned with vantage points 1 and 3 because they are within the National Historic Site.

All areas visible from these points are shown in light green. The light green areas extend all the way to the Village of Kinderhook, north to Route 9, and south along Route 9H.

Because protection of all areas indicated in green would be infeasible, the team identified specific parcels within the green areas where development would have the greatest impact on the National Historic Site. The team identified four parcels within the viewsheds considered to be most critical to protect in order to maintain the character and quality of the Site’s historic setting. These parcels are visible from key interpretive points and are adjacent to the Site.

Viewshed 1 overlooks agricultural lands that extend to the north of the Site, across the Kinderhook Creek to the Village of Kinderhook. The most visible parcel within this viewshed is an approximately 62- acre parcel of private land in agricultural use, Property E. (See view “E” on page 35.)

The view from the front portion of the National Historic Site, or viewshed 3, is a key view both from an historic and contemporary perspective. It includes the Old Post Road, the properties across from the Site, and extends all the way to the south along Route 9H. One property clearly within viewshed 3 is an approximately 33- acre parcel across 9H, which is in agricultural use, Property F. (See view “F” on page 35.) Another parcel visible through a narrow vegetative screen of spruce trees within viewshed 3 is the front 30 or so acres of an approximately 200- acre horse farm that is visible to the top of a ridgeline, Property G. (See view “G” on page 36.) The extreme southwestern portion of viewshed 3 includes the northern portion of an approximately 39- acre parcel that is currently in agricultural use, Property H. (See views “H1” and “H2” on pages 36 and 37.)

<sup>1</sup> Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Congress, Volume 117—Part 2, February 2, 1971 to February 11, 1971.

<sup>2</sup> Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Interior and Insular Affairs, U.S. Senate, 92<sup>nd</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session on S.1426, February 15, 1972.

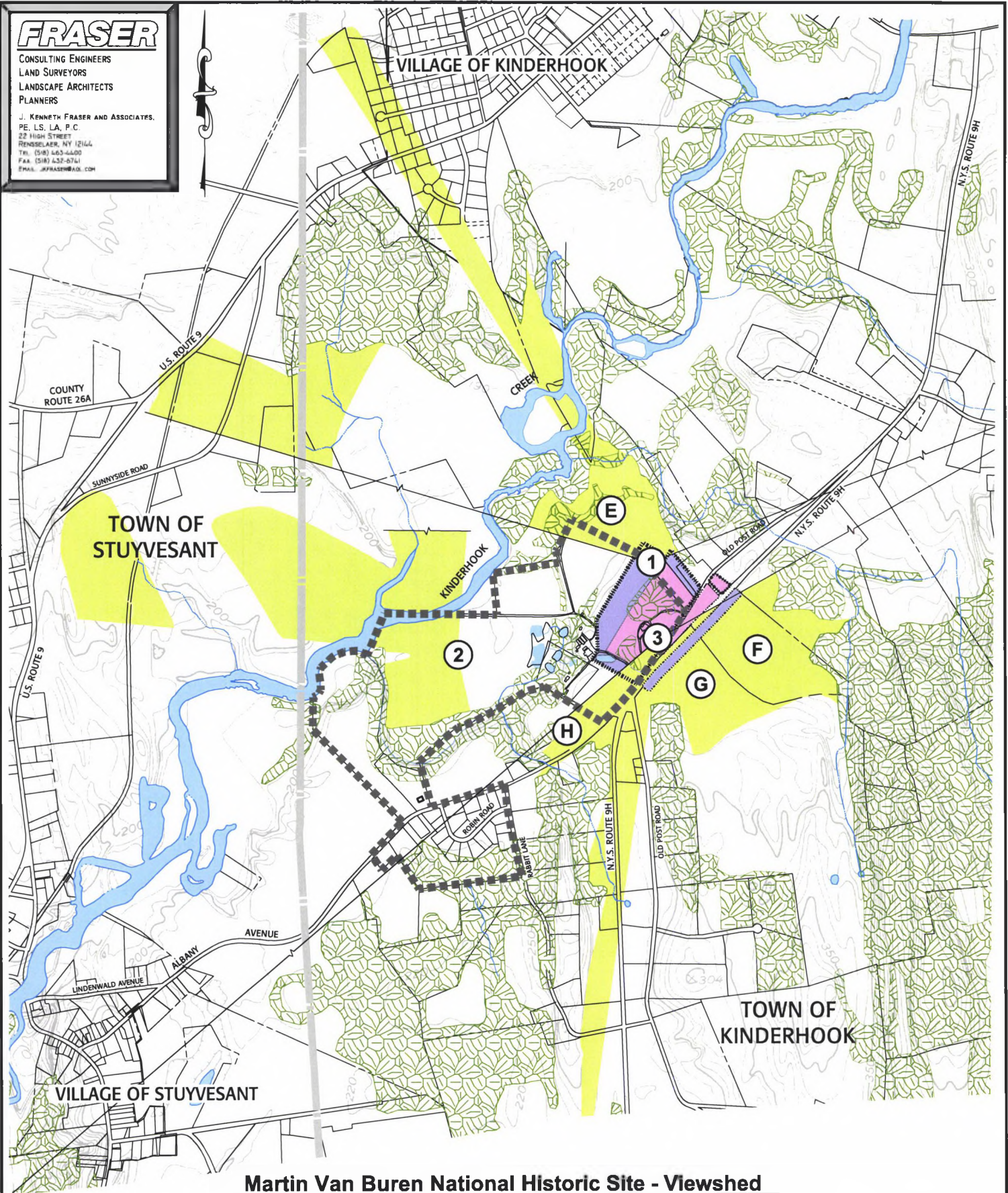
<sup>3</sup> Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Congress, Volume 119—Part 9, April 3, 1973 to April 11, 1973.



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## Martin Van Buren National Historic Site - Viewshed

- Boundary of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site
- NPS Ownership
- NPS Easements
- Historic Farm Boundary

### Key

- River/Stream or Pond
- Minor Stream/Drainage Course
- Lot Boundary

- Area Showing Wooded Vegetation
- Viewshed
- Viewshed Vantage Point
- Historic Setting Property







*View E. Overlooking Property E from the northeastern corner of the Site.*



*View F. Overlooking Property F from the National Historic Site parking area with Route 9H in the foreground.*



*View G. Overlooking the front of Property G through a narrow vegetative screen. Photo by J. Kenneth Fraser and Associates.*



*View H1. Overlooking a portion of Property A from the south gatehouse, with Property H in the background.*





*View H2. Looking northeast toward the National Historic Site from Property H. The south gatehouse is visible at right/center of the photo.*



## *Adjacent Lands Analysis*

The study team reviewed demographics, land use trends, neighboring land uses, and land use regulations to determine if the contributing resources and the parcels within key viewsheds are afforded adequate protection or threatened by development.

### Land Use Trends

#### Population

The Town of Kinderhook, despite its modest size (32.2 square miles), is one of Columbia County's most populous towns. Its population in 2000 was 8,296<sup>1</sup> and is relatively dense in the town's two incorporated villages, Kinderhook and Valatie, which have retained their compact 19<sup>th</sup> century residential and commercial cores.

Between 1980 and 1990, the Town of Kinderhook's overall population increased about 6%. However, the growth was uneven, as population in the villages decreased (by - 0.3% for Valatie and by - 6.5% for Kinderhook) while the numbers outside of the villages increased about 12%. Population projections indicate that this trend will continue. The overall town population will increase at a slow but steady pace, with modest population increases within the villages accompanied by more dramatic population increases in the outlying wooded and agricultural areas.<sup>2</sup>

#### Agricultural Use

Columbia is one of New York's leading agricultural counties. This is evident in the Town of Kinderhook, where 26% of the town's acreage is devoted to agriculture<sup>3</sup>. However, since the 1960s the land devoted to agriculture in Columbia County has been steadily decreasing. Between 1964 and 1981, farmland acreage in Columbia County

decreased by 30%<sup>4</sup>. According to the 1992 Agriculture Census for Columbia County, there were 484 farms, and 111,974 acres of land in farms. That represents a 19% decrease in the number of farms, and a decrease in almost 27% in farmland acres between 1982 and 1992. In 1992, 79,378 acres of farmland was croplands, of which 60,244 acres was actually harvested. This represents about a 20% decline in the decade.<sup>5</sup>

### Development

Between 1970 and 1980, 1,034 new housing units were constructed in the Town of Kinderhook, an increase of over 150%. Though its magnitude has leveled off since the 1970s, development pressure still exists. Since 1980, there has been a 12.6% increase in the number of housing units in the town (twice as high as the town-wide population increase). This increase in development is reflected in land use changes. Several major and numerous minor subdivisions of former agricultural parcels have been scattered throughout the town, not focused in the villages of Kinderhook or Valatie. The increase in housing units included a large number of mobile homes (28%) in the town, so that about 4.8% of all housing units in the town are now mobile homes.<sup>6</sup>

Commercial and industrial development in Kinderhook has been limited, mainly due to lack of municipal water and sewer facilities. Commercial development is most robust at the intersection of Route 9 and Route 9H.

Land use in the town in terms of parcels, can be summarized as follows: Nearly 73 % of all parcels is used for residential purposes. Vacant lands account for an additional nearly 18%, and parcels assessed as agricultural account for just over 4%.<sup>7</sup>

Demographics indicate that Kinderhook's long-standing rural character is changing. This is evidenced by:

- A decrease in farm / labor workers with an increase in professional and technical

workers. The dominant occupations in Kinderhook are in administrative support, and in professional and executive positions.<sup>8</sup>

- An increase in average family income. The median family income has doubled in the town since 1980, and the poverty rate has fallen.<sup>9</sup>
- A large percentage of workers commuting outside the county for employment. Although Kinderhook saw an 8% increase in workers who work within county between 1980 and 1990, roughly half of the town's workers work outside of the county.<sup>10</sup>
- An increase in the number of housing units. With the increased population, Kinderhook has a corresponding increase in the number of housing units, most of which have been built on former farmland, not within existing villages or built up areas".

## Neighboring Lands

The lands surrounding Lindenwald display a mix of agricultural, residential, and commercial uses. Some of the neighboring lands have protection mechanisms in place, or are under public ownership (see Figure 4).

The lands to the southwest of the National Historic Site on properties that were part of the historic farm (north of Route 9H) are in agricultural use. The larger parcel (126 acres) that was part of the historic farm is under interim ownership by the Open Space Institute.

Properties to the south of 9H that were part of the historic farm are used for residential purposes. Bordering the historic farm to the southwest is a 182.3- acre parcel that is commercially farmed and under an agricultural easement.

Across Route 9H from the Site, at the intersection of Route 9H and Albany Avenue

where the road turns to the southeast, is an auto repair shop, a pre- existing non-conforming use. Directly across Route 9H from the Site, as mentioned previously, are two parcels, the larger is a private horse farm and the smaller is open and planted with corn. To the north of the corn field, less than a mile north on Route 9H, is the Martin Van Buren County Park, which contains nature trails and a Department of Public Works maintenance outpost.

Immediately to the north of the National Historic Site are four private residences along the Old Post Road, ranging from an 18<sup>th</sup>- century structure to a contemporary structure. To the north of the residential properties, near the northern intersection of the Old Post Road and Route 9H, are two parcels that are also part of the Roxbury Farm (the CSA that is currently the leasing Property A). These parcels are owned by the Equity Trust (a non- profit organization located in Voluntown, Connecticut). The parcels are under conservation easements held by the Open Space Institute, and under a long- term lease to the Roxbury Farm.

About two miles north of the Site is the Van Alen House, a National Historic Landmark owned and operated by the Columbia County Historical Society. A mobile home park and a small commercial area are located near the Van Alen House.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, [www.quickfacts.census.gov](http://www.quickfacts.census.gov).

<sup>2</sup> Town of Kinderhook "Comprehensive Plan," August 2000, 18-21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 63.

<sup>4</sup> National Park Service, "Martin Van Buren National Historic Site: Adjacent Lands Resource Analysis," September 1990, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Town of Kinderhook, "Comprehensive Plan," 62.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 23-24.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 69.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 29.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 22.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 31.

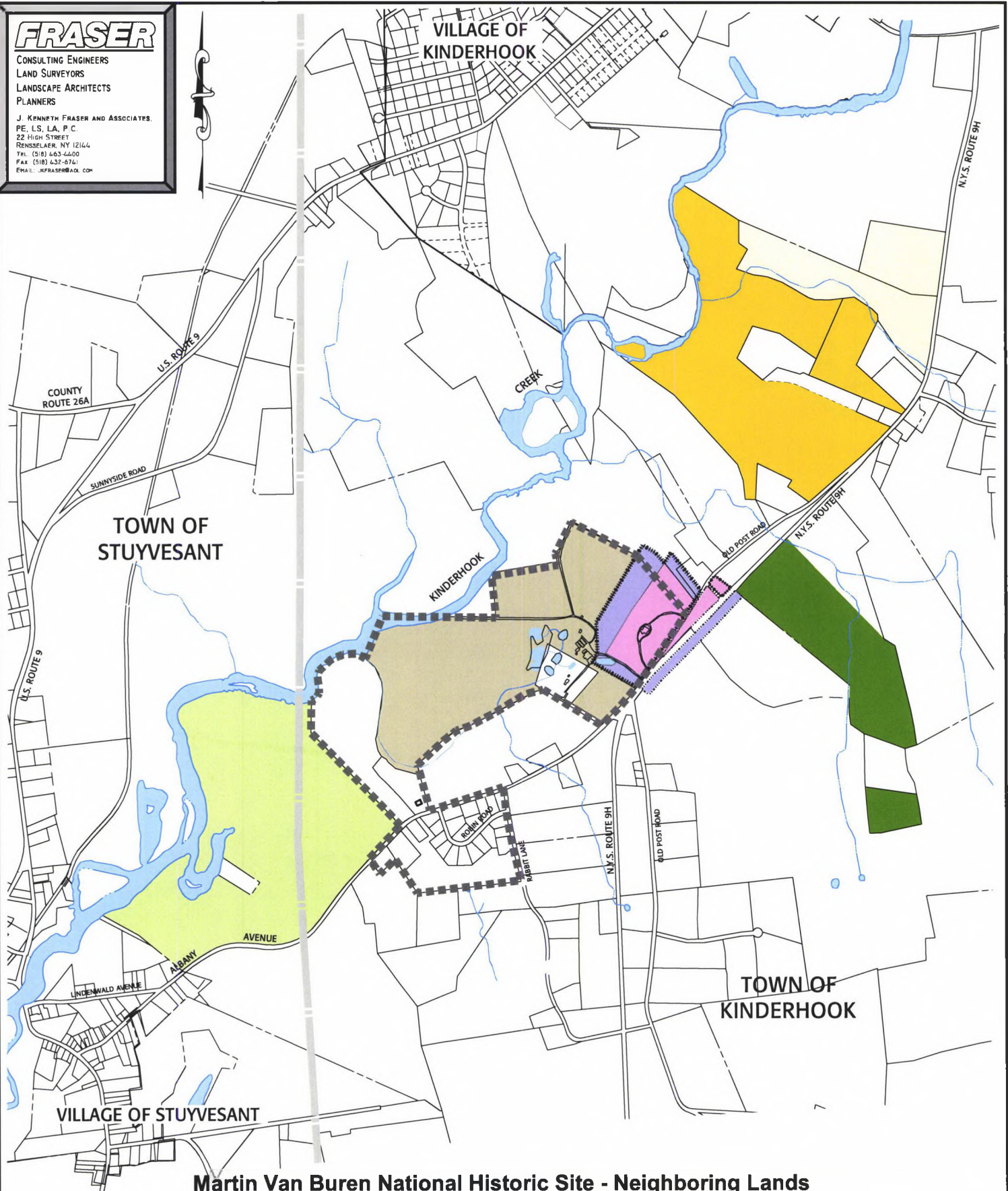
<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 23.



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**Martin Van Buren National Historic Site - Neighboring Lands**

Boundary of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site	River/Stream or Pond	Under Interim Ownership (Open Space Institute)
NPS Ownership	Minor Stream/Drainage Course	County Park
NPS Easements	Lot Boundary	Agricultural Easement
Historic Farm Boundary	Equity Trust	Van Alen House

Figure 4





## Land Use Regulation

### Zoning Districts

There are several zoning districts in the Town of Kinderhook: Agricultural / Residential (minimum residential lot area of 5 acres), Residential- 2 (minimum lot area 2 acres), Hamlet (1 dwelling per 20,000 square feet), Floodplain (non- residential, minimum lot size 40,000 square feet), and Mobile Home Parks (minimum are 350,000 square feet).

Zoning surrounding the Site is primarily, the AR (Agricultural / Residential) and the FP (or Floodplain) designations. (See Figure 5. Please note that Figure 5 was developed prior to adoption of the Town of Kinderhook's Comprehensive Plan, which renamed the "Resource Conservation" designation as "Agricultural / Residential.") North on Route 9H near the Van Alen House (a National Historic Landmark) is a small mobile home park district and a B- 1 General Business District, which allows for a wide variety of business uses.

The AR designation allows construction of one residence per five acres and limits building heights to 35 feet. There is also a cluster development provision, which requires a minimum of 25 acres. Under this provision, 75% of the property would be dedicated permanently as open space. It allows for 1 or 1.5 dwelling units per five acres on 0.5 or 0.75- acre- lots, depending on water and sewage disposal.

Extensive acreage along Kinderhook Creek is subject to flooding every spring. The floodplain corresponds generally to the 190-foot elevation contour. The flood- prone areas have been mapped by the U.S. Department of Interior, Geological Survey, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Insurance Administration. The floodplain

corresponds to the Town's FP zoning designation, and generally permits use for agriculture, and public parks and playgrounds. While it might appear that this designation provides adequate protection, in fact, the floodplain designation allows for certain conditional uses through permit that would not be compatible with preservation of the Site's agricultural setting. Such conditional uses include a nonprofit club or recreation use, golf course with country club, structures and buildings used by public utilities, and extractive operation and soil mining.

The Town of Kinderhook's recently adopted Comprehensive Plan created overlay zones for agriculture, environmental protection, and historic preservation. A Prime Farmland Overlay zone was created to promote agricultural uses, protect prime production soils, and to discourage non- agrarian uses from negatively impacting continuation of farming as the primary use. Mandatory clustering or use of conservation subdivisions is the preferred zoning tools in this overlay zone. An Environmental Overlay zone was created to protect important environmental areas in the town, including aquifer recharge and wellhead locations, wetlands less than 12.4 acres, or other identified areas. Use of mandatory clustering, conservation subdivisions, buffering, designated setbacks and requiring alternative septic system design is the preferred zoning tools in this overlay zone. A Heritage Overlay zone was created to protect important historical areas of the town, including the Old Post Road South (from the Route 9H and Route 21 intersection, following the Old Post Road to the southerly town line). Development guidelines influence construction activity in these areas to prevent the loss of historical characteristics.

### Agricultural Districts

The State of New York, to mitigate loss of farmland and to increase viability of commercial farms, instituted an agricultural

districting program. It provides for special assessment, in the form of property tax reductions, on productive commercial farms within the district. Commercial farms are included in the assessment program via a petition by the landowner and approval by a county agricultural districting advisory committee. The farm located to the south of the historic Van Buren farm is included within this program. In addition, the State of New York purchased the development rights on this property and it is now held under conservation easement by the Columbia Land Conservancy. The district creates a disincentive for the use of farmland for purposes other than agriculture by requiring a penalty payment for such development.

### **National Historic Register Properties**

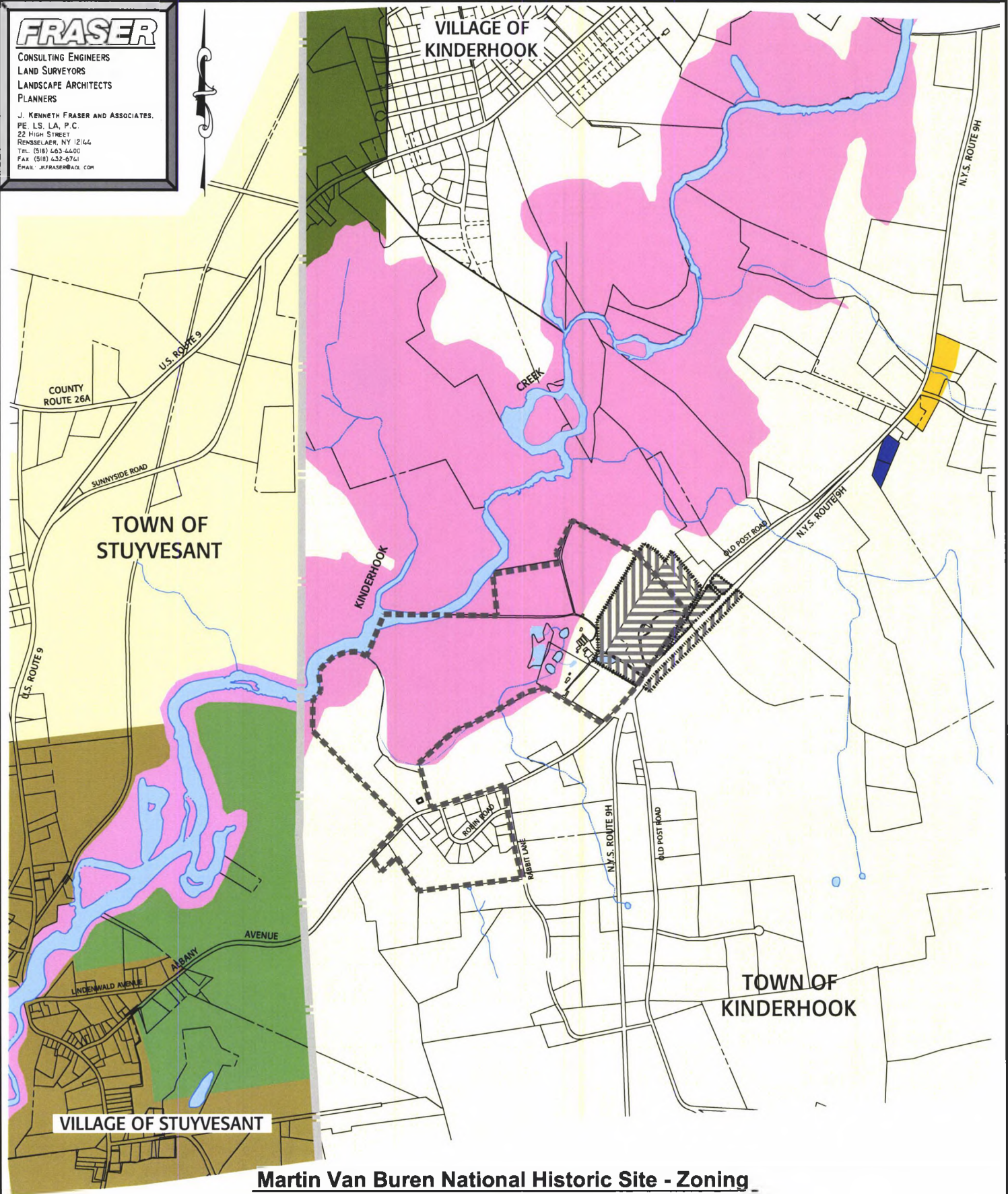
Four areas in Kinderhook are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, the Van Alen House (both National Historic Landmarks), Crow Hill, and the Kinderhook Village District. The primary value of this designation is that it requires consultation with the state regarding development proposals. For federally owned sites, and for federally funded, licensed or permitted projects, compliance with Section 106 of the National Preservation Act is required. For National Register sites not involving a federal interest or funds, the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law, Section 14.09 requires consultation with the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for state licensed, funded, or permitted undertakings.

### **Wetlands**

Sixty- six wetlands have been delineated in the Town of Kinderhook. Thirty- one of these are 12.4 acres in size or larger and are therefore regulated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for the purposes of preserving,

protecting and conserving freshwater wetlands and the benefits derived from them. A permit process, designed to minimize impacts on regulated wetlands, requires activities in or adjacent to regulated wetlands to be reviewed by DEC prior to commencing work. Activities in and around wetlands are also regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which regulates activities related to all navigable waters of the United States, including adjacent wetlands. For wetlands less than 12.4 acres, many development activities are allowed under a nationwide permit. Wetland- related activities that are not covered under a nationwide permit need U.S. Army Corps of Engineers review and permits prior to construction. There are freshwater wetlands near the National Historic Site on the properties that were part of the historic farm along Kinderhook Creek, and along 9H south of the Old Post Road intersection (see Figure 6).



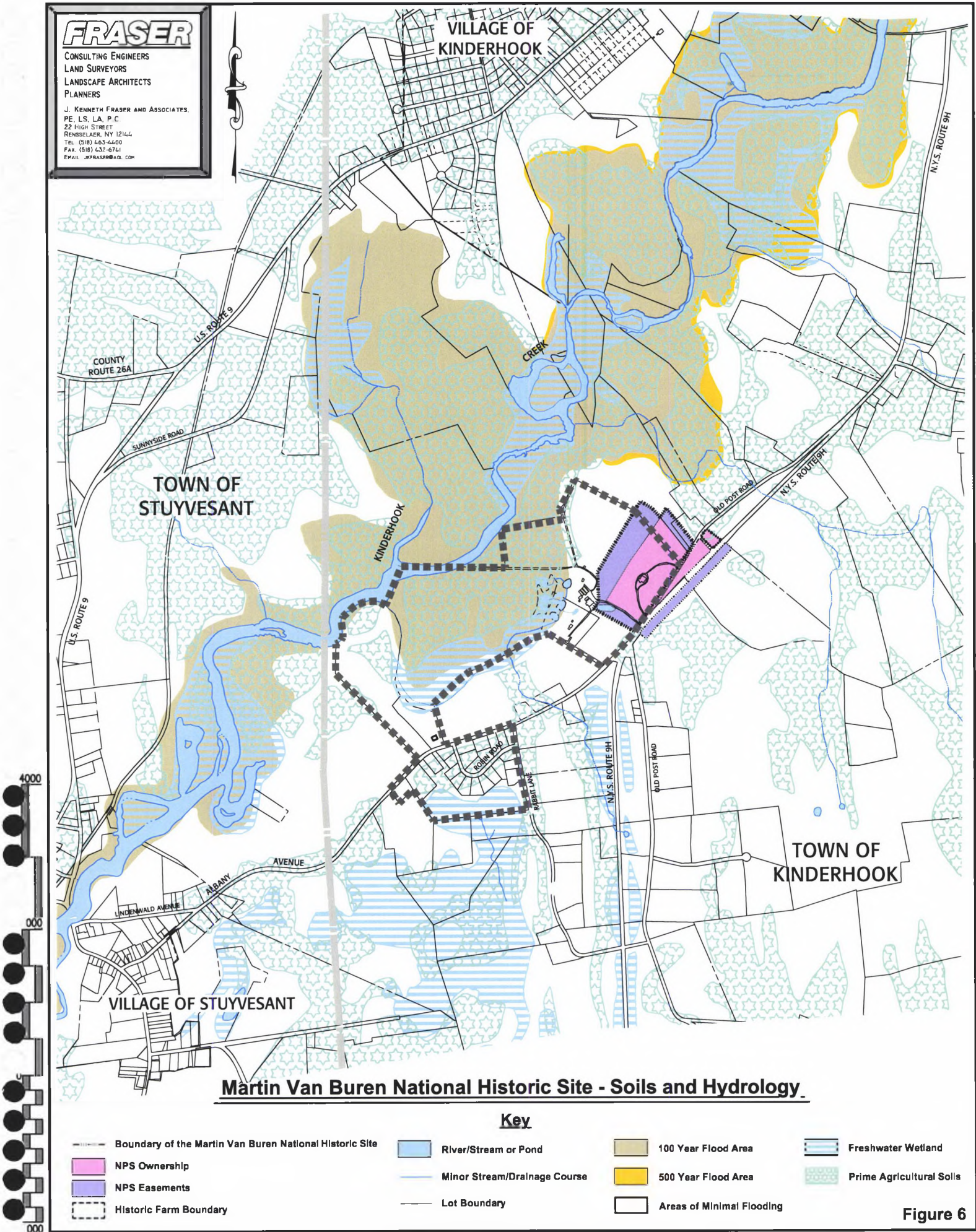
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- |   |                              |   |                                       |
|---|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Boundary of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site | Minor Stream/Drainage Course | Stuyvesant - Medium Density Residential | Kinderhook - Agricultural/Residential |
| NPS Ownership   | Lot Boundary                 | Stuyvesant - Rural Residential          | Kinderhook - Mobile Home Park         |
| NPS Easements   | Stuyvesant - Conservation    | Kinderhook - Resource Conservation      | Kinderhook - B-1 Business             |
| Historic Farm Boundary                                  | Stuyvesant - Agricultural    | Kinderhook - Flood Plain                |                                       |
| River/Stream or Pond                                    |                              |   |                                       |

**Figure 5**





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**Table 1: Summary of Historic Farm Properties**

The following chart summarizes the remaining properties that contain resources contributing to the significance of the National Historic Site.

Ownership	Approx. Acreage	Assessed Value *	Land Use	Soils and Hydrology	Zoning	Resource Value
<b>Property A</b>  Property currently available to the National Park Service, given necessary legislative authority	126	\$278,000	Agricultural and residential.	Contains prime agricultural soils, floodplain, wetlands.	Floodplain** and Agricultural / Residential***	Property has remained in continuous agricultural use since Van Buren tenure; in addition to retaining overall topography, hydrology; spatial organization from the period of significance, the property also contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remnants of historic drainage system</li> <li>• Van Buren's upper fish pond</li> <li>• Remnants of original hedgerows</li> <li>• Fields continuously in production since the Van Buren era</li> <li>• Historic road structures</li> <li>• Historic farm cottage (although substantially modified, retains spatial mass and features of original)</li> <li>• Archeological sites relating to the red hillside barn, the black hay barn and the stone house</li> </ul>
<b>Property B</b>	8	\$180,000	Residential	Contains floodplain, wetlands.	Floodplain and Agricultural / Residential	In addition to retaining overall topography, hydrology; spatial organization from the period of significance, property also contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remnants of historic drainage systems</li> <li>• Historic road structures</li> </ul>
<b>Property C</b>	27	\$42,000	Field crops	Contains prime agricultural soils, floodplain, wetlands.	Floodplain and Agricultural / Residential	Property has remained in continuous agricultural use since Van Buren tenure; in addition to retaining overall topography, hydrology; spatial organization from the period of significance, the property also contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remnants of historic drainage systems</li> <li>• Remnants of original hedgerows</li> <li>• Fields continuously in production since the Van Buren era</li> </ul>
<b>Property D</b>	6	\$124,000	Residential	Contains wetlands.	Agricultural / Residential	In addition to retaining overall topography, hydrology; spatial organization from the period of significance, property also contains remnants of historic drainage systems

\* The assessed value can range from approximately 50% to 150% of market value.

\*\* Floodplain Zone allows for development of park-related structures, such as golf club houses, stables, public parking lots, athletic fields and bleachers, bath houses.

\*\*\*Agricultural / Residential Zone allows for development of one residence every five acres.

**Table 2: Summary of Historic Setting Properties**

The following chart summarizes the properties that the team identified as being major components of the Site's historic setting.

Ownership	Approx. Acreage	Assessed Value *	Land Use	Soils and Hydrology	Zoning	Resource Value
<b>Property E</b>	62	\$89,000	Hay	Contains prime agricultural soils, floodplain, wetlands.	Floodplain** and Agricultural / Residential***	Adjacent property. Is clearly visible from the rear of the main house (viewshed 1). Agricultural character of property provides compatible historic setting for Site.
<b>Property F (May soon be sold for residential development)</b>	33	\$49,000	Hay	Contains prime agricultural soils.	Agricultural / Residential	Adjacent property. Is clearly visible from front of main house (viewshed 3). Agricultural character of property provides compatible historic setting for Site
<b>Property G</b>	Front 30 acres within viewshed from NHS. Property totals about 200 Acres.	\$200,000 (estimate for front 30 acres)  (assessed value for 200 acres is \$1,135,000)	Horse farm (with residence in rear)	Contains prime agricultural soils.	Agricultural / Residential	Adjacent property. Is clearly visible through narrow screen of spruce trees from front of main house (viewshed 3). Agricultural character of property provides compatible historic setting for Site.
<b>Property H (May soon be sold for residential development)</b>	39	\$69,000	Field crops	Contains prime agricultural soils and wetlands.	Agricultural / Residential	Adjacent property. Is clearly visible from front of main house (viewshed 3). Agricultural character of property provides compatible historic setting for Site.

\* The assessed value can range from approximately 50% to 150% of market value.

\*\* Floodplain Zone allows for development of park-related structures, such as golf club houses, stables, public parking lots, athletic fields and bleachers, bath houses.

\*\*\* Agricultural / Residential Zone allows for development of one residence every five acres

## *Conclusions*

### Protection of the Historic Farm

The purpose of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site is to preserve and interpret the landscape, structures, and collections of "Lindenwald," the Kinderhook, New York farm owned by Martin Van Buren, the eighth President of the United States (1837- 1841) from 1839 to his death in 1862. The National Historic Site is significant for its association with Martin Van Buren, who retreated to this place after his election defeat in 1840, becoming, like most of the presidents before him, a statesman farmer.

Van Buren saw farming as the occupation of "honest and virtuous" men, and, shying away from the urban "seats of political and Bank corruption," he made Lindenwald both his residence and the center of his life. Van Buren considered himself a Jeffersonian and Jacksonian. He represented and articulated a belief in an American democracy based on a citizenry working the land. In settling in Kinderhook, the former president was demonstrably shaping his farm as a lasting and meaningful expression of his values.

Although agrarian ideals formed a central theme of Van Buren's political philosophy, the agricultural components of his own Lindenwald are neither protected nor available for interpretation. The present situation, in which the Site consists of a large, ornate mansion surrounded by a relatively small tract of land, seems inevitably to result in a focus on the house and furnishings. The appeal and meaning of Lindenwald would be much richer in its proper cultural landscape context.

An expansion of the Site boundary to something approximating the extent of the farm during Van Buren's ownership, accompanied by an active agricultural program and preservation of key agricultural vistas, could correct the present disparity in interpretation. Such an enlargement would

automatically shift attention to the farm and the larger meanings it represents in Van Buren's career. Although the farm is interesting for the way Van Buren developed it into a profitable enterprise, including his exploitation of what would today be considered wetland, its larger significance for later generations derives from Van Buren's use of it to express his agrarian political philosophy.

Van Buren's importance in American history lies not so much in his relatively undistinguished one- term presidency, nor in his conventional retirement as a country gentleman. Like their author, his greatest achievements are more subtle. More than any other man of his time, he redefined a party that represented Jeffersonian ideas. (In the process of shaping a permanent two- party system, he of course defined the opposition.) Expanded to something approximating its historic limits, Lindenwald offers the National Park Service a window, apparently not available elsewhere in the system, to discuss two main (Jeffersonian or Hamiltonian, Republican or Federalist) streams of American political thought, which arose in the first years of the Republic and were solidified under Van Buren's guidance in the decades before the Civil War.

While it is not essential for the National Park Service to own and operate all remaining lands of Lindenwald, it is essential to the broader interpretation of Martin Van Buren that these lands remain in agriculture, with allowances made for public access to key resources for educational purposes. It is also vital that these lands be farmed in ways that protect the remaining contributing historic features from loss and in ways that are compatible with the public use of the adjacent National Historic Site.

While it might appear that the majority of the historic farmlands—Property A—is afforded adequate protection because these lands will remain in agriculture, upon closer examination, this is not the case. No provisions are in place to ensure the

preservation of Property A's Van Buren-related contributing resources from loss. Without a National Park Service interest in this property, there are no assurances that the property's long-term owner will operate the property in ways that respect the historic fields, hedgerows, drainage systems, structures, foundations, and other contributing landscape features. Without a National Park Service interest in this property, there are no assurances that the property's long-term owner will allow public access to any portion of it for educational purposes. Finally, without a National Park Service interest in the property, there is no assurance that the long-term landowner will operate the farm in ways that are consistent with public use of the adjacent National Historic Site.

## Protection of the Historic Setting

Protection of the historic setting was an important consideration in the establishment of the National Historic Site. In the early 1970s when the Site was established, commercial development along Route 9H was perceived to be the major threat to the setting. In response, Congress established long, narrow conservation easements along 9H and along the perimeter of the house lot to restrict commercial development and protect key views. Today, current land use trends indicate that residential, not commercial development is the main threat to the Site's historic setting. This pressure is being felt specifically on two of the four parcels that have been identified as key components of the Site's historic setting. The owner/heir of the 33-acre and the 39-acre parcels (Properties F and H) has publicly stated the intent to sell the parcels for residential development.

Residential development surrounding the Site would diminish visitor understanding of the historic agricultural nature of Lindenwald and have a negative impact on the visitor experience. The Site's current

conservation easements as adopted in the 1970s to protect the historic setting from commercial strip development are too narrowly configured to screen lands effectively, should they be developed for residential purposes.

While it might appear that the floodplain zone adequately protects the northern viewshed—the majority of Property E property is within floodplain designation—in fact, this zone would allow for development that is not consistent with the character and quality of the historic setting. Although floodplain designation does not allow for residential development, it does allow for certain conditional uses through permit including, club houses, stables, public parking lots, structures and buildings used by public utilities, and extractive operation and soil mining. Zoning designation for the other parcels within the viewsheds would permit residential development of one dwelling per five acres. This land use is also not consistent with the character and quality of the historic agricultural setting.

In summary, the team concluded that the current boundary of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site does not adequately protect the resources and values for which the Site was established. The Site's present configuration constricts interpretation of the larger significance of Van Buren. Research efforts completed within the last decade, such as the Cultural Landscape Report and the draft Special History Study, help us better understand Van Buren's use and development of Lindenwald, reinforcing the importance of the farm lands in interpreting the political philosophy he espoused. If the boundaries of the Site were to be drawn today, with the benefit of the current information, they would include additional lands. The following section of this document outlines two alternative boundary configurations (plus a no-action alternative) that more adequately embrace and protect the resources and values associated with Lindenwald.

### **Part Three: Alternatives and Application of National Park Service Criteria for Boundary Adjustments**



View overlooking lower terrace of Property A.





### *Alternative A: Current Boundary*

Under this alternative, the National Historic Site boundary would remain unchanged. It would continue to include 38.6 acres in total, with 20.3 acres held in full fee and 18.3 acres protected through conservation easement (see Figure 7).

Property A would remain in agriculture and would ultimately be transferred to a permanent landowner other than the National Park Service. Public access to this property would, most likely, continue to be prohibited. The contemporary farm structures would be used and modified as needed. Van Buren's farm cottage would be removed or used for contemporary agricultural purposes and modified as needed. Van Buren agricultural fields would continue to be farmed, with hedgerows, tree

lines and drainage systems modified as needed for contemporary agricultural purposes.

The three other parcels to the north of Route 9H that were part of the historic farm would remain in private ownership. Property B, the 8- acre flag- shaped lot near the Property A farm structures would continue to be used for residential purposes, as would Property D, the 6- acre residential lot to the south Property A. Property C, the 27- acre parcel that marks the southern boundary of the historic farm would remain in private hands and would either continue to be farmed or be developed for residential purposes. The contributing resources on these lands would continue to be subject to loss. Properties within key viewsheds would remain in private ownership, with properties F and H most likely developed for residential purposes in the near future.



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**Martin Van Buren National Historic Site - Alternative A**

**Key**



Boundary of the Martin Van Buren  
National Historic Site

Historic Farm Boundary



Minor Stream/Drainage Course

River/Stream or Pond



Lot Boundary

**Figure 7**





### ***Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm***

Under this alternative, the National Historic Site boundary would be modified to include the four parcels north of Route 9H that were part of the historic farm (see Figure 9). The National Park Service would acquire these parcels via donation or purchase with private or federal funds. The land would be acquired in full- fee and in less- than- fee ownership, subject to negotiations with landowners. The four parcels include:

- Property A: the 126- acre agricultural property adjacent to the Site
- Property B: the approximately 8- acre residential parcel adjacent to the Site
- Property C: the approximately 27- acre agricultural parcel that marks the southern boundary of the historic farm
- Property D: the approximately 6- acre residential lot adjacent to Property C.

Portions of the historic farm would be open to public access for purposes of interpretation and education. The Van Buren agricultural fields on the first and second terrace would be leased to a farmer, with agreements in place to protect the Van

Buren- era farm fields, hedgerows, drainage patterns, foundations, and other contributing features from loss.

As in Alternative A, the properties within key viewsheds would remain in private ownership. The National Park Service would encourage the Town of Kinderhook to consider taking regulatory action that would place restrictions on development on these key parcels. Should regulatory action not be possible, the National Park Service would encourage partners, such as the Open Space Institute, the Columbia Land Conservancy, the Equity Trust, the State of New York, and others to purchase development rights, secure conservation easements, or pursue other mechanisms to keep these parcels in agricultural use.

Costs incurred by the National Park Service would involve those associated with land acquisition, plus, those associated with the operation and maintenance of the property over the long term. A legislative cost estimate will be prepared to determine the costs associated with acquisition of land by the National Park Service.

The costs break down as follows:

<b>Capital and Operations Cost Estimates</b>		
Capital Costs (Land Acquisition)	\$624,000- \$1,872,000	A legislative cost estimate, which estimates the costs to the NPS associated with acquiring land is unavailable at this time. The figures presented are a range based on the assessed value.
Total Annual Operations Increase	\$142,000	This figure represents two additional Maintenance Workers and two additional Visitor Use Assistants.



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**Martin Van Buren National Historic Site - Alternative B**

**Key**

-  Proposed Boundary of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site
-  Historic Farm Boundary

-  Minor Stream/Drainage Course
-  River/Stream or Pond

-  Lot Boundary

**Figure 8**





### ***Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (the Proposed Boundary Concept)***

Under this alternative, as in Alternative B, the National Historic Site boundary would be modified to include the four parcels north of Route 9H that were part of the historic farm (properties A, B, C and D). The National Park Service would acquire these parcels via donation or purchase with private or federal funds. The land would be acquired in full-fee and in less- than- fee ownership, subject to negotiations with landowners.

Portions of the historic farm would be open to public access for purposes of interpretation and education. The Van Buren agricultural fields on the first and second terrace would be leased to a farmer, with agreements in place to protect the Van Buren- era farm fields, hedgerows, drainage patterns, foundations, and other contributing features from loss.

Also under this alternative, the National Park Service boundary to the north, and along Route 9H and Albany Avenue would be expanded to protect the historic setting from residential development (see Figure 9). The National Park Service would seek conservation easements on the following lands:

- Property E: the approximately 62- acre parcel located to the north of the Site
- Property F: the approximately 33- acre parcel located across Route 9H south of the county park
- Property G: an approximately 30- acre portion—from the road to the ridge line—of the 200- acre parcel across Route 9H
- Property H: the approximately 39- acre parcel located to the north of Route 9H

The objective for expanding the Site's boundary to embrace these properties would be to protect the agricultural character and quality of the historic setting, not to recreate the Van Buren- era scene. To encourage continued agricultural use of these properties, the National Park Service could acquire easements (if research confirms that they were farmed during Van Buren's tenure) that convey the right, but not the obligation to farm the properties. (In order to allow maximum flexibility in negotiation, however, authority to acquire the historic viewshed properties in full- fee will be sought.)

Costs incurred by the National Park Service would involve those associated with land acquisition, plus, those associated with the operation and maintenance of the property over the long term. A legislative cost estimate will be prepared to determine the costs associated with acquisition of land by the National Park Service.

The costs break down as follows:

<b>Capital and Operations Cost Estimates</b>		
Capital Costs (Land Acquisition)	\$1,031,000- \$3,093,000	A legislative cost estimate, which estimates the costs to the NPS associated with acquiring land is unavailable at this time. The figures presented are a range based on the assessed value.
Total Annual Operations Increase	\$142,000	This figure represents two additional Maintenance Workers and two additional Visitor Use Assistants.

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**Martin Van Buren National Historic Site - Alternative C**

**Key**

- Proposed Boundary of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site
- Historic Farm Boundary

- Minor Stream/Drainage Course
- River/Stream or Pond

- Lot Boundary

**Figure 9**





### *Alternatives Considered but Rejected*

This boundary study is an outgrowth of the development concept planning process of 2000. The draft Development Concept Plan presented three alternatives, all of which included boundary modifications. Alternative One included modifying the Site's boundary to include only Property A, the largest parcel north of Albany Avenue/Route 9H that was part of the historic farm. The draft Development Concept Plan's alternatives Two and Three both put forth a boundary proposal that expanded the Site boundary to include approximately 780 acres of land in full- fee and less- than- fee (see Appendix B for map).

The team considered creating two additional alternatives for this study, which would have been modeled after the boundary proposals in the draft Development Concept Plan. The first would have modified the Site's boundary to include Property A, as in the draft Development Concept Plan's Alternative One. Although this boundary proposal was included in the draft Development Concept Plan (and in earlier renditions of this study), after further examination and extensive consideration, the study team removed this alternative from further evaluation. The team had difficulty justifying the inclusion of only one of the four historic farm properties over the other three, which also contain resources contributing to the significance of the National Historic Site. Although these properties vary in size, they share similar resource value, and together, offer the most historically accurate portrayal of Lindenwald's configuration as possible, given the loss of the historic farm acreage south of Albany Avenue/Route 9H to residential development. Including only one of the four properties—albeit the largest—would not adequately protect all known remaining contributing resources from potential loss. Nor would this alternative have adequately

retained intact the remaining acreage of Lindenwald north of Albany Avenue/Route 9H.

The team also considered creating an alternative in this study, which would have been modeled after the boundary proposal of Alternatives Two and Three in the Development Concept Plan. This alternative would have expanded the Site's boundary to embrace the following lands in both full- fee and less- than- fee, subject to negotiations with landowners:

- the four historic farm properties north of Albany Avenue/Route 9H and the four historic setting properties, as in this document's Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting
- a corridor along the Kinderhook Creek from Route 9 to Albany Road
- properties to the north of the Site that lie along the Old Post Road
- the auto repair shop property (a pre-existing non- conforming use) located to the south of the Site at the intersection of the Old Post Road and Route 9H
- four parcels to the southwest of the auto repair shop at the intersection of Route 9H and Albany Avenue
- the Van Alen House property (a National Historic Landmark)
- the Martin Van Buren County Park

Although this boundary proposal was included in the draft Development Concept Plan, after further examination and consideration, the study team removed it from further evaluation. The team concluded that, with the information currently available, it could not adequately justify a boundary expansion beyond what is being considered in Alternative C for the following reasons.

The corridor along the Kinderhook Creek from Route 9 to Albany Road would have been included within the boundary to enable the National Park Service to develop, maintain, and police a creek- side trail. Although the National Park Service supports



the concept of developing a trail along Kinderhook Creek, the team concluded that a boundary expansion specifically for the purpose of developing and maintaining a recreation trail could not be justified.

The properties to the north of the Site that lie along the Old Post Road would have been included within the boundary to protect the view to the north of the Site during the winter months when the trees are not in leaf. Portions of these three properties are visible (within viewshed 1) during the winter months. The great majority of visitors to the Site, however, come to Lindenwald in the summer months when vegetation largely screens views beyond Property E. Therefore the team concluded that protection of the summer views would be sufficient and that this could best be achieved by seeking conservation easements on Property E, as outlined in this document's Alternative C.

Similarly, the auto repair shop and four parcels to its southwest would have been included within the boundary to protect the view to the south of the Site during the winter months. Portions of these properties are visible (viewshed 3) during the winter months. As described above, the team concluded that protection of the summer views would be sufficient and that this could best be achieved by seeking conservation

easements on properties F, G, and H, as outlined in this document's Alternative C.

The Van Alen House and the Martin Van Buren County Park would have been included within the boundary to enable the National Park Service to collaborate more closely with Columbia County on interpretation and maintenance of these sites. This arrangement would have permitted the National Park Service a greater role in interpreting the region's Dutch heritage at the Van Alen House (a National Historic Landmark) and in maintaining and policing the county park. The team concluded that these sites are already protected from development and are generally being operated in ways consistent with the use of the National Historic Site. The team concluded that although closer collaboration with the County is worthwhile, collaborative efforts could advance through mechanisms other than boundary modification.

It is possible that additional research (to be undertaken in preparation for the General Management Plan) may reveal new information that would cause reconsideration of these properties. With the information available at this time, however, the team concluded that it could not justify presenting this alternative as a feasible option in this study.

## ***Application of Criteria for Boundary Adjustments***

National Park Service management policies provided guidance for this study. National Park Service policies list the following conditions or reasons as criteria under which the National Park Service may recommend boundary revisions:

- To include significant resources or opportunities for public enjoyment related to the purposes of the park.
- To address operational and management issues, such as access and boundary identification by topographic or other natural features or roads.
- To protect resources that are critical to fulfilling the park's purposes.

Recommendations to expand park boundaries will be preceded by determinations that:

- The added lands will be feasible to administer considering size, configuration, ownership, costs, and other factors.

The following section applies these criteria to the proposals in Alternative B and Alternative C.

### **Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm**

#### **Do these properties include significant resources or opportunities for public enjoyment related to the purposes of the park?**

Van Buren use of Lindenwald was guided by its topography. The property was physically divided into two terraces separated by a wooded slope. The house lot was located on the first terrace, with the remainder of the first terrace and the entire second terrace devoted to agricultural fields. The National Park Service owns the formal house lot, and presents to the visitor a large, ornate mansion

surrounded by a relatively small tract of land—essentially a restored furnished house museum. Including all the remaining historic farm properties within the boundary would restore, to the greatest degree possible, the original character of the property and its meaning to Van Buren. This would reunite all remaining Lindenwald farmlands with the formal house lot and most accurately portray to the visitor the historic configuration of Lindenwald.

Inclusion of these properties would protect all remaining contributing resources from the Van Buren era. These lands have largely remained in continuous agricultural use since that time. In addition to retaining overall topography, hydrology, and spatial organization from the period of significance, the properties contain the following resources that contribute to the significance of the National Historic Site:

- remnants of historic drainage system
- Van Buren's upper and lower fish ponds
- remnants of original hedgerows
- fields continuously in production since the Van Buren era
- historic road structures
- historic farm cottage (although substantially modified, retains spatial mass and some features of the original)
- archeological sites relating to the red hillside barn, the black hay barn and the stone house

#### **Can the properties address operational and management issues, such as access and boundary identification by topographic or other natural features or roads?**

Under this alternative, a large part of the Site's northwestern boundary would follow Kinderhook Creek the most conspicuous natural feature in the area. A large portion of the Site's southeastern boundary would follow a main road, Route 9H.

The Open Space Institute is an interim landowner for the 126- acre farm adjacent to the National Historic Site. The Open Space Institute purchased this property with the intent to retain its agricultural use and is seeking a long- term landowner for the property. Although this property will remain in agricultural use, there are no provisions in place to ensure that the property will be operated in a manner consistent with public use of the adjacent National Historic Site. For example, without any safeguards, the property could be converted to a industrial-scale poultry or hog production operation, modern farm structures could be developed in locations that intrude in the historic scene, fencing could be installed on the entire perimeter of the property closing the farmlands off from the house lot, or large machinery and maintenance operations could be developed within visitor's view and directly adjacent to the current boundary. Inclusion of Property A within the boundary would allow the National Park Service to influence the farm operation to ensure compatibility with public use of the adjacent National Historic Site.

Likewise, inclusion of the 27- acre Property C would allow the National Park Service to ensure that this property remained in agricultural use and that it continues to be operated in ways that ensure compatibility with public use of the National Historic Site, as well.

### **Does inclusion of these properties protect resources that are critical to fulfilling the park's purposes?**

The purpose of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site is to preserve and interpret the landscape, structures, and collections of "Lindenwald," the Kinderhook, New York farm owned by Martin Van Buren, the eighth President of the United States (1837- 1841) from 1839 to his death in 1862. The National Historic Site is significant for its association with Martin Van Buren, who returned to this place after his election defeat in 1840,

becoming, like most of the presidents before him, a statesman farmer.

Although agrarian beliefs formed a central theme of Van Buren's political philosophy, the agricultural components of his own Lindenwald are neither protected nor available for interpretation. The present situation, in which the Site consists of a large, ornate mansion surrounded by a relatively small tract of land, seems inevitably to result in a focus on the house and furnishings. The appeal and meaning of Lindenwald would be much richer in its proper cultural landscape context.

An expansion of the boundary to more accurately reflect the farm's configuration during Van Buren's ownership would shift attention to the farm and the larger meanings it represents in Van Buren's career and his role in the development of the American political system. Although interesting for the way Van Buren developed it into a profitable enterprise, including his exploitation of what would today be considered wetland, the farms main significance for later generations derives from Van Buren's use of it to express his agrarian political philosophy.

Expanded to a configuration reflective of its historic limits, Lindenwald would offer the National Park Service a window, apparently not available elsewhere in the system, to discuss the two main (Jeffersonian or Hamiltonian, Republican or Federalist) streams of American political thought, which arose in the first years of the Republic and were solidified under Van Buren's guidance in the decades before the Civil War.

Inclusion of the four remaining historic farm properties within the boundary would: provide as accurate a portrayal of Lindenwald under Van Buren's ownership as possible, vastly improve interpretation of Van Buren's agricultural/political ideals by allowing public access to farmlands, and ensure that ongoing farming practices preserve all of the remaining features that

contribute to the significance of the National Historic Site.

Put most simply, in 1839 Van Buren bought a farm that included a house. That relationship is not readily evident to the present visitor. Implementing this alternative would help rectify this situation.

### **Are the added lands feasible to administer considering size, configuration, ownership, costs, and other factors?**

The added lands would be feasible to administer. They would be contiguous to the existing National Historic Site, and not fractured by inholdings. Route 9H would continue to be the only public road traversing the site. The costs incurred by the National Park Service would be those associated with land acquisition and those associated with long-term maintenance and operations. A legislative cost estimate will be prepared to determine the costs associated with acquisition of land by the National Park Service.

The costs break down as follows:

<b>Capital and Operations Cost Estimates</b>		
Capital Costs (Land Acquisition)	\$624,000- \$1,872,000	A legislative cost estimate, which estimates the costs to the NPS associated with acquiring land is unavailable at this time. The figures presented are a range based on the assessed value.
Total Annual Operations Increase	\$142,000	This figure represents two additional Maintenance Workers and two additional Visitor Use Assistants.

## Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (The Proposed Boundary Concept)

The following section applies the five criteria for boundary adjustments to the eight properties proposed for inclusion within the boundary in Alternative C. For the sake of brevity, these properties will be considered in two groups: the historic farm properties and the properties that define the historic setting. The four historic farm properties will be considered together (as opposed to individually) because they share similar contributing resources. They vary mainly in size. Likewise, all four properties that the team identified as being the key components of the Site's historic setting will be considered together because they share similar resource value.

### **Do these properties include significant resources or opportunities for public enjoyment related to the purposes of the park?**

#### **Historic Farm Properties**

As mentioned earlier, Van Buren's use of Lindenwald was guided by its topography. It was divided into two terraces that were separated by a wooded slope. The house lot was located on the first terrace, with the remainder of the first terrace and the entire second terrace devoted to agricultural fields. The National Park Service owns the formal house lot, and presents to the visitor a large, ornate mansion surrounded by a relatively small tract of land—essentially a restored furnished house museum. Including all the remaining historic farm properties within the boundary would restore, to the greatest degree possible, the original character of the property. This would reunite all remaining Lindenwald farmlands with the formal house lot and most accurately portray to the visitor the historic configuration of Lindenwald.

Inclusion of these properties would protect all remaining contributing resources from the Van Buren era. These lands have largely remained in continuous agricultural use since that time. In addition to retaining overall topography, hydrology, and spatial organization from the period of significance, the properties contain the following resources that contribute to the significance of the National Historic Site:

- remnants of historic drainage system
- Van Buren's upper and lower fish ponds
- remnants of original hedgerows
- fields continuously in production since the Van Buren era
- historic road structures
- historic farm cottage (although substantially modified, retains spatial mass and some features of the original)
- archeological sites relating to the red hillside barn, the black hay barn and the stone house

#### **Historic Setting Properties**

Protection of the historic setting was an important consideration in the establishment of the National Historic Site. The agricultural character of key views from the Site is an important component of the visitor experience. When the Site was established in the early 1970s, commercial development along Route 9H was perceived to be the major threat to the setting. In response, Congress established long, narrow conservation easements along Route 9H and along the perimeter of the house lot to protect key views. Today, residential development is the main threat to the Site's historic setting. Two of the four properties the team identified as largely composing the historic setting may soon be sold for residential development, according to public statements by the property owner/heir. Extensive residential development on any of the four parcels would have a negative influence on the visitor experience and would distort visitor understanding of the historic agricultural milieu of Lindenwald.



Including these lands within the Site boundary would protect major components of key views and retain the quality and the character of the Site's historic setting.

**Can these properties address operational and management issues, such as access and boundary identification by topographic or other natural features or roads?**

**Historic Farm Properties**

As mentioned earlier, inclusion of Property A within the boundary would allow the National Park Service to influence the farm operations to ensure compatibility with public use of the adjacent National Historic Site. Likewise, inclusion of the 27-acre Property C would allow the National Park Service to ensure that this property remained in agricultural use and that it continues to be operated in ways that ensure compatibility with public use of the National Historic Site, as well.

**Historic Farm and Historic Setting Properties**

Under this alternative, the Site's northwestern boundary would follow Kinderhook Creek the most conspicuous natural feature in the area and a large section of the southeastern boundary would follow the crest of a ridgeline.

**Does inclusion of these properties protect resources that are critical to fulfilling the park's purposes?**

**Historic Farm Properties**

As mentioned previously, the purpose of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site is to preserve and interpret the landscape, structures, and collections of "Lindenwald," the Kinderhook, New York farm owned by Martin Van Buren, the eighth President of the United States (1837- 1841) from 1839 to his

death in 1862. The National Historic Site is significant for its association with Martin Van Buren, who returned to this place after his election defeat in 1840, becoming, like most of the presidents before him, a statesman farmer.

Although agrarian beliefs formed a central theme of Van Buren's political philosophy, the agricultural components of his own Lindenwald are neither protected nor available for interpretation. The present situation, in which the Site consists of a large, ornate mansion surrounded by a relatively small tract of land, seems inevitably to result in a focus on the house and furnishings. The appeal and meaning of Lindenwald would be much richer in its proper cultural landscape context.

An expansion of the boundary to more accurately reflect the farm's configuration during Van Buren's ownership would shift attention to the farm and the larger meanings it represents in Van Buren's career and his role in the development of the American political system. Although interesting for the way Van Buren developed it into a profitable enterprise, including his exploitation of what would today be considered wetland, the farm's main significance for later generations derives from Van Buren's use of it to express his agrarian political philosophy.

Expanded to a configuration reflective of its historic limits, Lindenwald would offer the National Park Service a window, apparently not available elsewhere in the system, to discuss the two main (Jeffersonian or Hamiltonian, Republican or Federalist) streams of American political thought, which arose in the first years of the Republic and were solidified under Van Buren's guidance in the decades before the Civil War.

Inclusion of the four remaining historic farm properties within the boundary would: provide as accurate a portrayal of Lindenwald under Van Buren's ownership as possible, vastly improve interpretation of

Van Buren's agricultural/political ideals by allowing public access to farmlands, and ensure that ongoing farming practices preserve all of the remaining features that contribute to the significance of the National Historic Site.

Put most simply, in 1839 Van Buren bought a farm that included a house. That relationship is not readily evident to the present visitor. Implementing this alternative would help rectify this situation.

### Historic Setting Properties

National Park Service easements on these properties would fulfill the Congressional intent to preserve the Site's agricultural setting from development.

### Are the added lands feasible to administer considering size, configuration, ownership, costs, and other factors?

The added lands (eight additional parcels) would be feasible to administer. They would be contiguous to the existing National Historic Site, and not fractured by inholdings. Route 9H would continue to be the only public road to traverse the properties within the boundary. The land acquisition intent for the four historic setting properties would be in less- than- fee. The land acquisition intent for the four historic farm properties would be in full- fee and less- than- fee, subject to negotiations with landowners.

Costs incurred by the National Park Service would involve those associated with land acquisition, plus, those associated with the operation and maintenance of the property over the long term. A legislative cost estimate will be prepared to determine the costs associated with acquisition of land by the National Park Service.

The costs break down as follows:

Capital and Operations Cost Estimates		
Capital Costs (Land Acquisition)	\$1,031,000- \$3,093,000	A legislative cost estimate, which estimates the costs to the NPS associated with acquiring land is unavailable at this time. The figures presented are a range based on the assessed value.
Total Annual Operations Increase	\$142,000	This figure represents two additional Maintenance Workers and two additional Visitor Use Assistants.

## Part Four: Environmental Assessment of Alternatives



View overlooking Property G through narrow vegetative screen. Photo by J. Kenneth Fraser and Associates.





## *Affected Environment*

The following section describes the resources within the National Historic Site for the purposes of providing base information for the environmental assessment of the alternatives.

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site occupies the second terrace above Kinderhook Creek, about 1000 feet east of the Creek's bank. The Site contains five historically significant contributing buildings and structures, and numerous cultural landscape features.

### Cultural Resources

The focus of the property is the 36- room brick main house. The original house was erected in 1797 in Federal style with finely executed interior woodwork, mantels, and trim. Additions and alterations to the structure were made in 1849- 50.

South of the main house are remains of the farm office built in 1800. The 11- foot square, one- story building was part of the garden that was significant to the Van Buren period, but was removed in 1960. At the southern entrance to the grounds, a small, one and one- half- story frame gatehouse with a full basement, built in 1849, was used as a residence for Lindenwald employees. The gatehouse was restored to its 1850s appearance but retains several details from past renovations. The stone foundation of the gatehouse at the northern entrance is all that remains of this structure, which provided symmetry to the front of the property.

The Van Ness grave marker, placed at the edge of the first terrace behind the house in 1847, is located on lands under easement. It contributes to the historic character of the property and underscores Lindenwald's Dutch heritage.

The National Historic Site also contains many archeological features associated with the Martin Van Buren and a collection of period furnishings, personal effects, and documents, associated with Van Buren and his family.

The Site contains numerous cultural landscape features, including the front lawn, the semicircular entry drive, and the upper fishpond, which although altered by intrusive vegetation and silting, is approximately the same shape as during Van Buren's time. Over 30 specimen/ornamental trees are found on the property, some of which date to the Van Buren period. The ¾- mile remnant of the Old Post Road, which the New York State Historic Preservation Office has determined is eligible for listing on the National Register as part of a district, runs directly in front of the main house.

### Natural Resources

Most of the Site is about 250 feet above sea level. Surface water resources include the upper fishpond adjacent to the Property A access drive. The pond, fed by a natural spring on the National Historic Site property, is currently used for irrigation by the farm operation on Property A. On the other side of the access drive is a small pond that was created when the access drive was built. A culvert runs under the access drive connecting the small pond with the upper fishpond.

Over 30 vegetative species have been identified on the Site. Tree species include: black locust, eastern red cedar, eastern white pine, black cherry, mazzard cherry, red maple, American linden, littleleaf linden, bitternut, butternut, American elm, white mulberry, horse chestnut, common honey locust, Douglas fir, crack willow, flowering dogwood, sycamore, American larch, and white spruce. Shrubs and ground cover include common lilac, virginian mock- orange,

forsythia, common hop, trillium, and Virginia creeper. A portion of the lawn is maintained in a "rustic" fashion, mowed infrequently to a height of about six inches.

Common wildlife species include deer, woodchucks, rabbits, bats, raccoons, squirrels, and chipmunks. Bald eagles, coyotes, wild turkeys, and red and gray foxes are also found in the region. Birds frequently seen on the Site include European starlings, red-tailed hawks, black-capped chickadees, Canada geese and American goldfinches.

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, there are no Federally or State-listed

endangered or threatened species known to exist in the project area.

According to the county soil survey, soil types in the area include silty and sandy loams, among them the highly fertile soils typical of river valleys. The north-central portions of town have sandy loam soils, which are conducive to the growing of fruit trees. Prime agricultural soils are prevalent in the Site's immediate area, especially in the Kinderhook Creek floodplain, but generally do not exist on the first terrace where the National Historic Site is situated. Large areas of prime agricultural soils are located across Route 9H on lands directly across from the National Historic Site, and to the north of the Site.

## *Potential Impacts of the Alternatives*

### Summary of the Alternatives

<b>Alternative A: Current Boundary</b>	<b>Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm</b>	<b>Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (the Proposed Boundary Concept)</b>
Confine Site to existing boundary	Establish new legislative boundary to include, in full-fee and less-than-fee, approximately 167 acres that were historically part of Lindenwald	Establish new legislative boundary to include, in full-fee and less-than-fee, approximately 167 acres that were historically part of Lindenwald: and to include conservation easements on approximately 160 acres to protect the historic setting

### Potential Impacts on the Cultural Environment

<b>Alternative A: Current Boundary</b>	<b>Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm</b>	<b>Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (the Proposed Boundary Concept)</b>
NPS would continue to protect Martin Van Buren-related resources within the National Historic Site.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Portions of former Lindenwald outside the NHS boundary and accompanying contributing resources would continue to be unprotected and subject to potential impairment or loss.	NPS would directly protect some 167 acres of Lindenwald and all of the remaining contributing resources from potential impairment or loss.	Same as Alternative B.
126 acres of Lindenwald would remain in agricultural use, but may not be farmed or managed in a manner consistent with preservation of the contributing resources and the historic setting.	Some 167 acres of Lindenwald would remain and/or be restored to agricultural use. NPS would have greater control over management of the property to ensure that it is farmed in a manner consistent with preservation of the contributing resources.	Same as Alternative B
A 27-acre parcel that was part of Lindenwald would remain at	Some 167 acres of Lindenwald would be protected from	Same as Alternative B.

<b>Alternative A: Current Boundary</b>	<b>Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm</b>	<b>Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (the Proposed Boundary Concept)</b>
risk from development pressure. The historic farm fields, hedgerows, drainage systems, and other cultural landscape features on this parcel would be subject to potential impairment and loss.	development pressure and no longer subject to potential impairment and loss.	
The modern structures and contemporary landscape features on parcels that were part of Lindenwald would continue to intrude on the historic scene.	The modern structures and contemporary landscape features on the lands that were part of Lindenwald could be removed and/or screened.	Same as Alternative B.
The character and quality of the Site's agricultural historic setting would remain at risk; the four parcels within key Site viewsheds would be subject to development pressure.	Same as Alternative A.	The character and quality of the Site's agricultural historic setting would be preserved; the four parcels within the key Site viewsheds would be protected from development pressure and would continue to provide a compatible setting for the NHS in perpetuity.

## Potential Impacts on Natural Environment

<b>Alternative A: Current Boundary</b>	<b>Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm</b>	<b>Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (the Proposed Boundary Concept)</b>
No additional prime agricultural soils would be maintained in agriculture and protected from development by the NPS.	Roughly 64 acres of prime agricultural soils would be maintained in agriculture and protected from development by the NPS.	Roughly 124 acres of prime agricultural soils would be maintained in agriculture and protected from development by the NPS.
No additional floodplain would be included within the boundary.	Roughly 81 acres of floodplain would be protected from recreation-related development.	Roughly 125 acres of floodplain would be protected from recreation-related development.
No additional wetlands would be included within the boundary.	Roughly 23 acres of wetlands would be provided additional protection from development, over and above existing land use	Roughly 39 acres of wetlands would be provided additional protection from development, over and above existing land use



<b>Alternative A: Current Boundary</b>	<b>Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm</b>	<b>Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (the Proposed Boundary Concept)</b>
	regulation.	regulation.
No state or federally listed endangered or threatened species occur in the area.	No state or federally listed endangered or threatened species occur in the area.	No state or federally listed endangered or threatened species occur in the area.

### Potential Impacts on Visitor Use and Understanding

<b>Alternative A: Current Boundary</b>	<b>Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm</b>	<b>Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (the Proposed Boundary Concept)</b>
Maintaining the current configuration of the Site would continue to focus Site's interpretation on the main house and constrain the ability of Site staff to interpret Lindenwald as an expression of Van Buren's agrarian political philosophy.	Expansion of the Site boundary to more accurately reflect the historic configuration of Lindenwald would shift interpretive focus to embrace the farm and enhance the ability of Site staff to interpret Lindenwald as an expression of Van Buren's agrarian political philosophy.	Same as Alternative B.
Portions of Lindenwald outside the NHS boundary would continue to be unavailable for interpretation.	NPS would directly protect some 167 acres of Lindenwald and would guarantee public access to portions of these lands for educational purposes.	Same as Alternative B.
Property A would remain in agricultural use, but may not be farmed or managed in a manner consistent with public use of the adjacent NHS.	Some 167 acres of Lindenwald would remain and/or be restored to agricultural use. NPS would have greater control over management of these properties to ensure that they are farmed in a manner consistent with public use of the adjacent NHS.	Same as Alternative B.
If the four properties that compose the agricultural setting of Lindenwald are lost to residential development, visitors may have difficulty understanding the Site's historic agricultural milieu and could	Same as Alternative A.	Because the agricultural setting of Lindenwald would be preserved, visitors would continue to easily understand that Lindenwald was historically part of a larger agricultural community.

<b>Alternative A: Current Boundary</b>	<b>Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm</b>	<b>Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (the Proposed Boundary Concept)</b>
come away thinking that Lindenwald was historically part of a residential suburb.		

## Potential Impacts on Socioeconomic Environment

<b>Alternative A: Current Boundary</b>	<b>Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm</b>	<b>Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (the Proposed Boundary Concept)</b>
NPS would acquire no additional lands outside of the current boundary.	NPS boundary would expand to embrace four properties (some 167 acres) that were part of Lindenwald. The intent of the land acquisition would be in full-fee and in less-than-fee. Should the NPS hold these lands in full-fee, however, they would be removed from the tax rolls, resulting in a decrease of about \$11,679 to the Town of Kinderhook.	NPS boundary would expand to embrace four properties (some 167 acres) that were part of Lindenwald. The intent of the land acquisition would be in full-fee and in less-than-fee. Should the NPS hold these lands in full-fee, however, they would be removed from the tax rolls, resulting in a decrease of about \$11,679 to the Town of Kinderhook. The approximately 160 acres within key viewsheds held in less-than-fee ownership would not be removed from the tax rolls.
The Town of Kinderhook would experience no loss in tax revenues.	The Town of Kinderhook could be partially compensated for losses in property tax revenues by Federal "in-lieu-of-taxes" payments. "Payment in Lieu of Taxes" is Federal payment made to local governments in lieu of taxes for federal land. The program is administered by the Department of Interior through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). There are two types of payments, which are dependent on the interest acquired by the government and whether the land was taxed for five years prior to federal acquisition. BLM's	Same as Alternative B.

Alternative A: Current Boundary	Alternative B: Protect Historic Farm	Alternative C: Protect Historic Farm and Setting (the Proposed Boundary Concept)
<p>Local governments may be subject to an increased need for municipal support services in the areas surrounding the NHS as these lands change from largely agricultural to residential uses.</p>	<p>responsibility is to calculate the payments according to formulas established by law with funds appropriated by Congress for this purpose. This program is not always fully funded.</p> <p>NPS protection of the four historic farm properties would limit future residential development on the portion of Property C that is within the Resource Conservation zoning designation. This would have a very limited impact on the need for increased local government expenditures.</p>	<p>NPS protection of the four historic farm properties and the four historic setting properties would limit future residential development on the portions of properties C and E that are within the Resource Conservation zoning designation; on all of properties F and H, and on an approximately 30 acres portion of Property G (all of which is within the Resource Conservation zoning designation).</p> <p>This would reduce the need for increased local government expenditures on schools, sewers, roads, and other municipal support services.</p>

## ***Consultation and Coordination***

The boundary study is an outgrowth of the development concept planning process begun in 2000, which included proposals for boundary modification. The draft Development Concept Plan presented three alternatives. Alternative One included modifying the Site's boundary to include the 126- acre Property A. Alternatives Two and Three proposed expanding the Site to include approximately 780 acres of additional lands in full- fee and less- than- fee (which exceeds by about 460 acres, the boundary modification recommendations of Alternative C in this document).

Public input for the draft Development Concept Plan included discussion of modification of the Site's boundary. Public involvement was initiated with a public meeting held on March 30, 2000, which was attended by 42 neighbors and interested citizens. At that meeting, the Superintendent described issues facing the Site, including issues regarding the boundary, solicited public input regarding these issues, and asked people to describe their concerns and hopes for the Site. The meeting discussion was generally supportive of a boundary adjustment to the Site.

In addition to the public meeting, the Superintendent distributed letters to Site neighbors explaining the ongoing planning efforts and boundary issues, and invited neighbors to meet with him individually. As a result of this outreach, the Superintendent met with four neighbors to discuss their thoughts on the Site's boundary.

A total of 25 written responses on the draft Development Concept Plan were received. Twenty- one specifically identified boundary preferences. Eighteen favored the maximum boundary expansion proposed in the draft Development Concept Plan's Alternatives Two and Three. Three supported boundary

expansion in the draft Development Concept Plan's Alternative One. The four written comments that did not address boundary issues focused on park- related development.

As mentioned in the "Purpose and Need for the Boundary Study" section of this document, any substantial expansion of the Site's boundary would require legislative action. Under National Park Service guidelines, the level of planning necessary to support a legislative action is a general management plan or a boundary study, not a development concept plan. Because of the expressed interest and public support in re-examining the Site's legislated boundary, the Northeast Region of the National Park Service decided to suspend development concept planning, and undertake a boundary study to examine the adequacy of the present boundary and to consider appropriate alternatives.

After this decision was reached, the Superintendent alerted public officials and key stakeholders about the suspension of the Development Concept Plan and the initiation of the boundary study. As the next step in the public involvement process, the National Park Service distributed the draft Boundary Study / Environmental Assessment for public review and comment for a sixty- day period, during which time the National Park Service accepted written and oral comment (see summary below). At the conclusion of the public review period, the team reviewed all substantive comments, and revised the document as appropriate.

## Summary of Public Comment

The National Park Service distributed a draft of the Boundary Study / Environmental Assessment for public review and comment in June 2002. Due to public request, however, the National Park Service extended the comment period through the month of July.

The following agencies, organizations, and individuals received a copy of the draft document for review and comment.

### Agencies:

Columbia County Historical Society  
Columbia County Planning Department  
Columbia Land Conservancy  
Hudson Valley Greenway  
Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area  
New York State Historic Preservation Office  
Open Space Institute  
Roxbury Farm  
Town of Kinderhook  
Town and Village of Stuyvesant  
Village of Kinderhook  
Village of Valatie

### Individuals:

Forrest Burch  
Leonard Burch  
Margaret and Tredwell Burch  
Angela and Joseph Cutro  
Caryn and Ron Moore  
Ralph Shufelt  
Kevin and Therisa Van Allen  
Henry B. Weil  
Quintina and Robert Worsfold  
Christopher Bortugno, Jr.  
Kenneth Wengler

Over 70 copies of the draft Boundary Study / Environmental Assessment were distributed. As listed above, owners of properties proposed for inclusion within the boundary were sent copies of the draft study. Both hard copies and compact disks of the draft study were made available at the public meeting held June 26 at the Barnwell Health Facility in the Village of Valatie, New York. (See

Appendix C for a list of meeting participants.)

### *Public Meeting*

A public meeting was held on June 26, 2002, at the Barnwell Health Facility in the Village of Valatie, New York. Twelve people attended the meeting. Two of the 12 participants specifically expressed a preference for an alternative. One stated support for Alternative A, but encouraged the National Park Service to develop park operational facilities on Property A. (As was explained at the meeting, the National Park Service could not develop park operational or any type of facilities on Property A unless the boundary was modified to include Property A. Property A is not included in the boundary in Alternative A.) The other person who stated a preference for an alternative stated support for Alternative C. This person cited consistency with the Town of Kinderhook's Comprehensive Plan and felt that Alternative C represented good future planning.

One participant expressed concern about the National Park Service's ability to be a good steward of a larger version of Lindenwald, based on what was considered to be an extremely poor track record on behalf of the National Park Service. Several meeting participants supported this view and expressed frustration with what they considered the National Park Service's poor past stewardship of the property. The run-down, unsightly temporary trailers located directly behind the Main House used by the National Park Service as staff offices for decades was cited as a prime example of the National Park Service's inability to manage the property properly. These participants emphasized that the National Park Service will need to do better in the future to restore their confidence in the agency's stewardship abilities.

A question was asked about the effect of the boundary expansion on private property



rights on lands outside of the boundary. As was explained at the meeting, change in the boundary of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site would not change or effect in any way current laws and regulations in effect outside of the boundary.

Another question was asked about which laws and regulations would effect properties within the boundary. The Superintendent provided a list of the laws the regulations that would effect properties within the boundary that are federally owned, administered by the National Park Service under a written agreement, or subject to a U.S. interest. (See section below regarding the applicability of these laws on properties within the park boundary.)

Several participants suggested that the approximately 40 acres located south of Albany Avenue/Route 9H that were once part of the historic farm be included within the National Historic Site boundary. As was explained at the meeting, because a majority of these lands were developed as a residential subdivision, their integrity has been largely lost. Few Martin Van Buren related resources remain on these lands, which gives them little interpretive value. This finding has been reinforced by the most recent report on the historic landscape of Lindenwald (the June 2002 National Park Service Report, "A Farmer in his Native Town: Cultural Landscape Report for the Martin Van Buren Farmland"). To rehabilitate the cultural landscape on these lands, numerous contemporary structures would need to be purchased and removed or relocated. The team considered that level of effort and cost infeasible.

A question was asked regarding a State law that mandates a buffer zone limiting development within 500 feet of a national or state park. The team has found no indication that such a law exists in New York State.

The operations costs associated with the alternatives were discussed. The operations

cost increase for Alternative C is \$142,000. This sum would support two additional Maintenance Workers and two additional Visitor Use Assistants. The additional staff would support the increased cultural landscape maintenance and increased interpretive programming required by the additional lands.

A participant made an important point regarding the easements on the historic setting properties. This person noted that the conservation easements on the four historic setting properties would limit development, but would not ensure continued agricultural use of these properties. Although desirable in this situation, the National Park Service could not acquire conservation easements that conveyed the obligation to farm the properties. This is because the Department of Justice would forbid land acquisitions with affirmative obligations. It would be possible, however, for the National Park Service to acquire easements on the historic setting properties (if research confirms that they were farmed during Van Buren's tenure) that conveyed the right, but not the obligation to farm. This has been noted in the description of Alternative C.

#### *Questions Regarding Application of Federal Laws*

Subsequent to the public meeting, questions arose regarding the applicability of laws and regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR], Parts 1-5, 7 and 13) on private property. Some residents expressed concern that these laws would be applied to properties within the boundary that were privately owned or under easement.

The following explanation clarifies the application of 36 CFR on properties relating to Martin Van Buren NHS. It is divided into four parts reflecting conditions that exist at Martin Van Buren, or might exist subject to the boundary proposal. Basically, these laws apply only to properties that are federally owned inside the park boundary, not to

private property, and not to private property under easement.

1) Property outside the boundary. 36 CFR **does not apply**.

2) Property inside the boundary and owned “in fee” by the National Park Service.

**36 CFR does apply.**

3) Property inside the boundary and owned in “less than fee” (or under conservation easement) by the National Park Service.

36 CFR applies to the extent necessary to fulfill the purpose of the National Park Service interest. In the case of Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, the current (and proposed) less-than-fee interests control development and as such 36 CFR **does not apply and would not apply under any of the alternatives proposed in this document.**

4) Property inside the boundary and owned by private interests. 36 CFR **does not apply.**

#### *Written Comments*

A total of 18 written comments were received during the public review period (see Appendix D). Of these, 15 came from private individuals, two from nonprofit organizations, and one from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (State Historic Preservation Office).

The overwhelming majority of written comments (16 out of 18) state support for Alternative C. Reasons cited in support of Alternative C include preservation of the town’s historic rural character, increased educational opportunities, and increased tourism opportunities.

Two of the written comments do not specifically address an alternative. Of those, one expresses support for protecting land around Lindenwald and notes the

importance of preserving the setting of historic properties. The other suggests that the National Park Service, due to its poor past stewardship of presently owned properties, concentrate on protective easements for the surrounding views.

#### *Comments Subsequent to Public Review*

Subsequent to the public review period, in September, the Town of Kinderhook wrote a letter to the Superintendent reporting on its endorsement of Alternative C at its regular July meeting. In October 2002 the Town reaffirmed that endorsement.

In September 2002, nineteen neighbors of Lindenwald (including owners of two of the properties proposed for inclusion within the boundary in Alternative C) signed a letter written to the Columbia County Tourism Subcommittee opposing any expansion of the site’s boundary. The letter cited the National Park Service’s poor past stewardship of the property and restrictions of private property rights as being the main reasons for the opposition. (As noted above, the boundary modification would not restrict private property rights; 36 CFR does not apply to private properties within the boundary.)

In December 2002, the Village of Kinderhook’s Board of Trustees endorsed Alternative C. Also in December 2002, the Village of Valatie endorsed Alternative C, under the condition that private individuals, who own land within the boundary not lose their property rights. (These individuals would not lose their property rights. As explained above, CFR Part 36 is not applicable to private properties within the boundary.)

## *Study Team, Advisors, and Consultants*

### National Park Service

*Mike Adlerstein*, Associate Regional Director, Professional Services and Northeast Development Office Director, Northeast Region (former)  
*Steven Beatty*, Superintendent, Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (former)  
*Dale Ditmanson*, Associate Regional Director, Operations and Education, Northeast Region  
*David Funk*, Realty Specialist, Northeast Region Land Resources Program Center  
*Larry Gall*, Team Leader, Stewardship & Partnership, Boston Support Office  
*John Maounis*, Deputy Associate Director of Cultural Resources, Northeast Region  
*Bob McIntosh*, Associate Regional Director, Planning, Resources Stewardship, and Science, Northeast Region  
*Jim McKay*, Chief of Interpretation, Martin Van Buren National Historic Site  
*Rachel McManus*, Land Acquisition Officer, Northeast Region Land Resources Program Center  
*Steven Pendery*, Supervisory Archeologist, Northeast Cultural Resources Center  
*James Pepper*, Assistant Regional Director, Strategic Planning, Northeast Region  
*Sarah Peskin*, Program Manager, Planning and Legislation, Boston Support Office  
*Scott Rector*, Acting Superintendent, Martin Van Buren National Historic Site  
*Stephen Spaulding*, Chief, Building Conservation Branch, Northeast Cultural Resources Center  
*Lisa Sasser*, Project Manager, Building Conservation Branch, Northeast Cultural Resources Center  
*Boyd Sponaugle*, Realty Officer, Northeast Region Land Resources Program Center  
*Marjorie Smith*, Project Manager, Boston Support Office  
*David Uschold*, Landscape Architect, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation  
*Paul Weinbaum*, Program Lead, History, Northeast Region  
*Patricia West*, Curator, Martin Van Buren National Historic Site  
*Janet Wise*, Natural Resource Specialist, Boston Support Office (former)

### Consultants

*Jeffrey F. Budrow*, *C. Howard Johannessen*, *Michael Shave*, J. Kenneth Fraser and Associates, through Einhorn, Yaffe, and Prescott  
*Larry Lowenthal*, through Heritage Partners

## Part Five: Appendices



Portrait of Hannah Hoes Van Buren (Mrs. Van Buren) engraved by John Chester Buttre, circa 1890.  
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.





## Appendix A: Enabling Legislation

Public Law 93- 486  
93rd Congress, H. R. 13157  
October 26, 1974  
**An Act**

To provide for the establishment of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, New York ; and for other purposes. 88 STAT. 1461

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### TITLE I

Historic sites and  
national  
monument.  
Establishment

Sec. 101. (a) Unless otherwise provided hereafter, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") is authorized to acquire by purchase with donated or appropriated funds, donation, exchange, or by transfer from another Federal agency such lands and interests in lands as hereafter provided for establishment as units of the national park system as follows: Land acquisition.

(6) for establishment as the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, New York, those lands depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, New York", numbered NHS-MAVA-91,001 and dated January 1974, which shall include the home of Martin Van Buren, eighth President of the United States. Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, N.Y. 16 USC 461 note.

(b) The Secretary may also acquire personal property associated with the areas referred to in subsection (a) of this section. Lands and interests therein owned by a State or any political subdivision thereof which are acquired for the purposes of subsection (a) of this section may be acquired only by donation. Personal property, acquisition.  
Sec. 102. ( a ) When the Secretary determines that an adequate interest in lands has been acquired to constitute an administrable unit for each of the areas described in section 1 of this Act, he may, after Notice to congressional notifying the Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs of the United States Congress of his intention to committees. do so at least fourteen days in advance, declare the establishment of such unit by publication of a notice Publication in to that effect in the Federal Register. Such notice shall contain a map or other description of the Federal Register. boundaries of the unit, together with an explanation of the interests acquired and the costs incident thereto. The Secretary may refrain from acquiring property for establishment of any unit authorized by this Act where, in his judgement, satisfactory agreements or donations with respect to properties which are needed for the protection and administration of a particular unit have not been consummated with the owners of such properties.

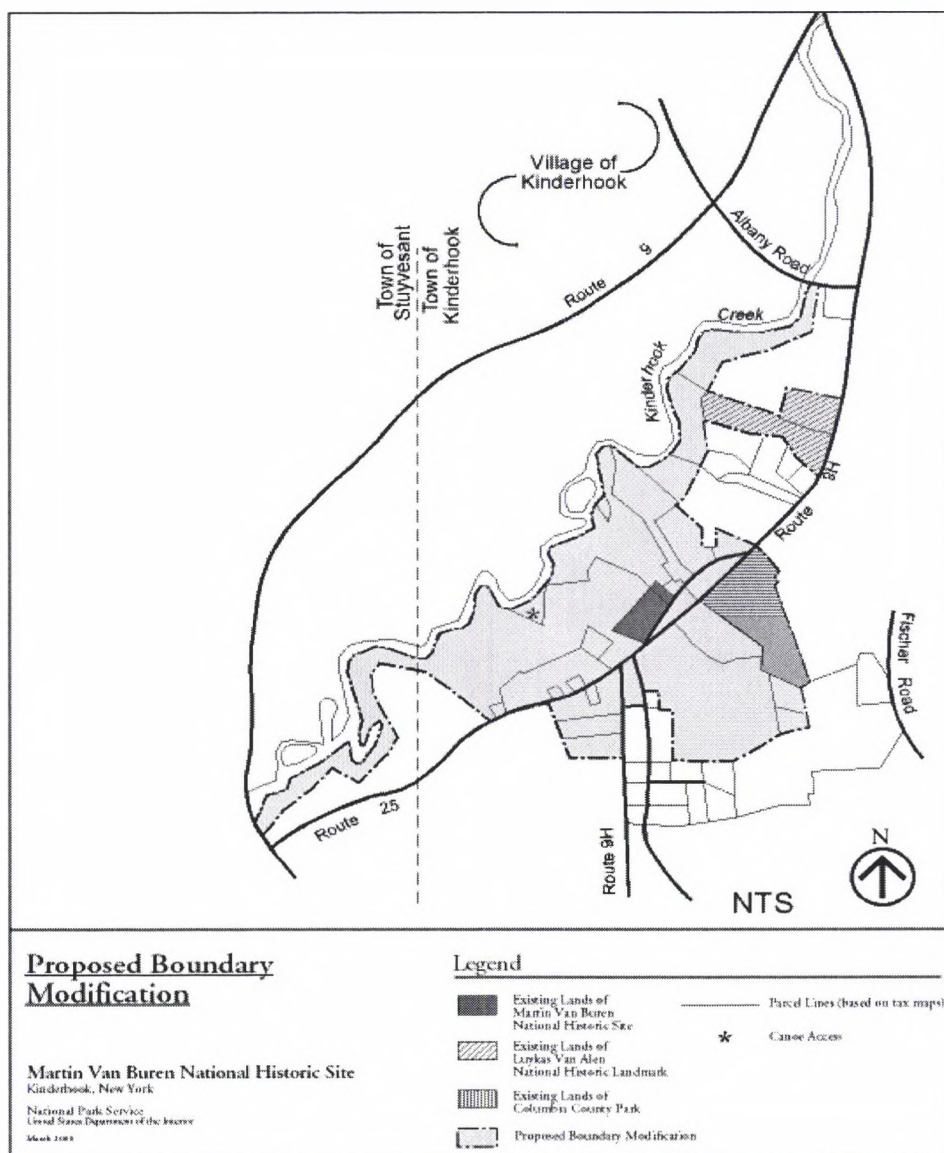
(b) Pending the establishment of each unit and, thereafter, the Secretary shall administer the property Administration. acquired pursuant to this Act in accordance with the provisions of the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 16 USC 1. 535), as amended and supplemented, and, to the extent applicable, the provisions of the Act of August 16 USC 461. 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666), as amended.

Sec. 104. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, not to exceed, however, the following: Appropriation.

(f) Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, \$213,000 for acquisition of lands and interests in lands and \$2,737,000 for development.

Approved October 26, 1974.

*Appendix B: Boundary Proposal from Draft Development Concept Plan*



***Appendix C: List of Public Meeting Participants***

DRAFT BOUNDARY STUDY/ PUBLIC REVIEW

MEETING BARNWELL HEALTH FACILITIES

Wednesday June 26th, 2002

Sign Up Sheet

C. Bortugno III  
Glencadia Farm  
Stuyvesant Falls, NY 12174

Ken Wengler  
Joseph Cutro

Margaret Burch  
1113 Rt. 25  
Kinderhook, NY 12106

Tredwell Burch  
1113 Rt. 25  
Kinderhook, NY 12106

Jim Egnasher  
1082 Rt.25  
Kinderhook, NY 12106

Ed Simonsen  
2675 Route 203

Roland R. Vosburgh  
Columbia County Planning  
Hudson, NY 12534

Michael Bortugno  
Glencadia Farm  
Stuyvesant Falls, NY 12174

Chris Bortugno, Jr.  
Glencadia Farm Stuyvesant  
Falls, NY 12174

Donald Hammerlein  
1326 Old Post Rd,  
Valatie, NY 12184

Frank Genovese  
2197 Rt. 9H  
Kinderhook, NY 12106

## *Appendix D: Written Comments Received via Post and Email*

Ronny L. and Caryn L. Moore  
The Old Dingman Place  
1063 Old Post Road  
Kinderhook, New York 12106

June 17, 2002

Steven M. Beatty, Superintendent  
Martin Van Buren National Historic Site  
1013 Old Post Road  
Kinderhook, New York 12106

RE: Draft Boundary Study/Environmental Assessment for Martin Van Buren National Historic Site

Dear Superintendent Beatty:

Thank you for sharing your plans and proposals for the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site as well as your courtesy in considering the concerns of the community. We are especially appreciative and encouraged that the plans are not to incorporate lands beyond the site of Van Buren's farm.

We are heartened that the boundaries incorporating the historic Martin Van Buren holdings are being carefully reconsidered. Protecting the vistas of our historic resources is of utmost importance where modern intrusions may diminish the historic authenticity of the approach to and from the park creating an island effect. We still have the opportunity to lay protective groundwork for future generations.

The "Kinderhook Creek Conservation and Heritage Corridor" between Kinderhook and MVBNHS has been so designated by the Columbia Land Conservancy. According to the President of the Friends of Lindenwald in a letter dated October 17, 2001 to the Kinderhook Town Board, the "unpaved portion of the Old Post Road adjacent to Lindenwald and proceeding to the north is the last remaining pristine remnant of perhaps the most historically significant road in the history of New York and the country generally. In Colonial and post-Colonial times the New York Albany Post Road was an integral aspect of the westward development of the United States .... The Lindenwald Homestead and the adjacent unpaved portion of the Old Post Road are precious gifts. . . "

As you may recall, years ago the town goodheartedly intended to pave this section of Old Post Road and had the money allocated for this project at its disposal. We neighbors agreed that we would rather retain the historic road, thus saving the town thousands of dollars. When the bridge was deemed unsafe by the County Engineer in the eighties, we agreed to closing/dead-ending the road despite the inconvenience. Again, because this is an historic neighborhood, we felt the necessity of maintaining the historicity and ambience of the eighteenth century.

Similarly, we neighbors have worked together to prevent a developer from building condominiums in the meadow (where the NPS has now placed modern trailers and across from the modern, visually intrusive parking lot); the County from establishing a landfill on what is now, thankfully, a park with hiking trails just across 9-H from this section of historic road; and the Town from demolishing the brick arch bridge to replace it with a metal culvert.

The history of the Old Dingman Place north of the park has been carefully researched and well-documented over the years with clear immediate associations to the neighboring Van Alstyne, Van Ness and Van Alern families as well as countless other's. For example, in 1671 Adam Dingman was appointed Roadmaster at Kinderhook, as well as in Albany County. This was a position of some importance at the time. He still held this position in 1675 when he was additionally appointed "path and fence viewer." He was also deputy sheriff during the year of 1679. During this time of civic service and employment, a son Jacob was born (about 1675) and a daughter Sara (Sarah) followed about 1677. In 1677, Adam bought land from his father-in-law in the Kinderhook vicinity for 500 guilders- In 1648, he purchased additional land through his father-in-law's attorney, Maes Cornelissen. Jacob Gardinier had earlier built a house on this property, in 1696 Adam was one of thirty-one settlers who received parcels of land from Richard Nicholls, governor-general of New York, in what was know at the Kinderhook Patent. Those allotted land in the patent were probably some of the first settlers in the area,

We haven't pinpointed exactly where Adam Dingman lived but it was likely this site. It appears that his family built our present home, as Gerrit Dingman is listed on the census as living at this location in 1744. Gerrit, Adam's son, married Cornelia Gardenier. The stories surrounding Adam's daughter Sarah, serve to illustrate but a small portion of the rich history surrounding this immediate community, a short excerpt from "The History of The Old Dingman Place" which is attached.

Thus, I trust you will understand the utmost importance of protecting not only the Park's vistas, but those of the immediate historic community front the good intentions of the park itself For example, the aforementioned parking lot and modular visitor center are a **serious detriment to this historic community** which we implore you to reconsider as you plan for the future. When Martin Van Buren left his home to ride to Kinderhook, he did not see a paved parking lot or a visitor center obstructing his view of the beautiful meadow overlooking the Kinderhook Creek valley and the mountains.

As for the boundary considerations, we ask you to ponder the above historical considerations and respectfully implore you to remove/relocate the modern intrusions of the paved parking lot and visitor center, realizing that even the adjacent present day Cutro home was likely built in about 1861 when Martin Van Buren was still in residence at Lindenwald.

Because the National Park Service has not adequately addressed protection of the historic community north of Lindenwald **from** the visually intrusive modern constructions and because the NPS has not been a good steward of this property north of Lindenwald which it already has acquired, we respectfully request that the Park be restrained from acquiring additional lands, concentrating instead on protective easements for the surrounding views.

Cordially,

Ron and Caryn Moore  
The Old Dingman Place



**New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic  
Preservation  
New York State Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau  
Peebles Island, P.O Box 189, Waterford,  
New York 12188-0189**

518-237-884

July 2, 002

Steven M. Beatty  
Park Manager  
Martin Van Buren  
1013 Old Post Road  
Kinderhook, NY 12106

Re: NPS  
Martin Van Buren NHL  
(boundary expansion)  
Kinderhook, Columbia Co.  
O2PR02783

Dear Mr. Beatty,

Ruth Pierpont forwarded your letter and the Draft Boundary Study regarding the potential expansion to the Martin Van Buren National Historic Landmark Site. The submitted information was reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and relevant implementing regulations.

Based upon our review of the submitted information, the SHPO supports the proposal to expand the boundaries of the existing site to include the agricultural lands that were owned and farmed by the President Van Buren. The SHPO also concurs that the acquisition of the subject farmland would greatly aid in the interpretation, protection and preservation of the National Historic Landmark. In addition, our office agrees that the property acquired under Alternative 'C' would best suit and help accomplish the goals of the Park Service.

Thank you for allowing the SHPO to comment on this worthy effort. Hopefully, we can look forward to the time when the farmland is reunited with the Lindenwald estate. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me at your convenience. Ext. 3273.

Cc: NPS. Northeast Region Support Office

Sincerely,

Kenneth Markunas  
Historic Sites  
Restoration Coordinator

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative action Agency

OPEN SPACE  
INSTITUTE

July 2, 2002

Steven M. Beatty, Superintendent  
Martin Van Buren National Historic Site  
1013 Old Post Road  
Kinderhook, NY 12106

Re: MVBNHS Draft Boundary Study

Dear Mr. Beatty:

On behalf of the Open Space Institute ("OSI"), I am writing to express OSI's strong support for Alternative C ("Protect Historic Farm and Setting") as described in the Draft Boundary Study. We agree that the protection of the Historic Site and the ability of NPS to conduct a comprehensive interpretive program require the acquisition of property interests in parcels outside the current National Historic Site boundary that were not part of the original Van Buren farmstead, as well as in parcels north of Route 9H that were within the original farmstead's boundaries.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Boundary Study. OSI looks forward to continuing to work with NPS to protect the key parcels identified in the document.

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Martens  
President



Columbia Land Conservancy, Inc.  
P.O.Box 299, 49 Main Street  
Chatham, New York 12037

June 29, 2002

Mr. Steven M. Beatty  
Park Manager, NPS  
Martin Van Buren National Historic Site  
1013 Old Post Road  
Kinderhook, NY 12106

Dear Mr. Beatty:

This letter serves to comment on the Draft Boundary Study/Environmental Assessment for the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site. After reviewing the associated document, it is apparent to me that the best long-term scenario would be "Alternative C"--- protecting the landscape setting of the historic site.

Too often, important historic sites are "saved" and made available to the public for recreation and educational purposes only to then realize that the real importance lay in how the site functioned within the larger working landscape. Sadly, this realization often comes far too late, with the site fragmented by incompatible development and no hope for integrating tourism, education, recreation and economic development into the overall conservation plan.

The Martin Van Buren site offers the chance to do things a little bit differently---to work with willing landowners to either purchase fee title or conservation easements on the surrounding lands, and thus ensure that this site will retain its historic integrity. Timing is critical. With current development pressures reportedly breaking all records (see the quote from Supervisor Gerry Simons, in the June 11, 2002 *Independent* article), thus surpassing close to a 30% increase in development from 1990 —2000, it will be important for landowners to have the opportunity to work with the Park Service to conserve their land, rather than be forced to sell for development.

The town and village of Kinderhook have taken leadership roles in understanding the importance of agriculture, trails, the Kinderhook Creek and its supporting watershed, and their historic infrastructure. The proposed trail along the creek will assist in both tourism and raising an appreciation for President Van Buren's historic landscape. Maintaining the agricultural landscape and thus allowing farmers to farm what is considered by many to be some of the best farmland in the county, will further the goals of the town and village, as well as, form a strong backdrop for the Van Buren site.

Anderson to Beatty; Page Two  
June 29, 2002

And finally, providing additional land to be available to the public for recreation, education and enjoyment, will help strengthen the growing tourism industry in Columbia County as well as offer places for residents and their families to enjoy the rural landscape.

Columbia County has the least amount of public open space of any of the surrounding seven counties: only 35%. Compare this to Berkshire County in Massachusetts with 27%, Ulster County with 23% or Rensselaer County with 4%. The additional fee-simple land proposed as part of the Historic Site will help off-set this deficit of public land.

Quality of life is difficult to measure, yet if one reviews the comprehensive plans of both the Village and Town of Kinderhook, the rural landscape is clearly important to those that live there. In addition, the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce *Patterns for Progress* study in 1999 revealed that the people of Columbia County felt strongly that the rural character of the county was very important, and that we should collectively work to support the businesses in the county that support this open space.

Enhancing the Martin Van Buren site is one step in strengthening what could be a longterm tourism resource for Columbia County. In addition, the link to the village of Kinderhook via trails and the surrounding agricultural lands make this proposal one that will be able to sustain its historic integrity and serve the people of the county.

The Columbia Land Conservancy continues to be available to assist landowners, the National Park Service and the Village and Town of Kinderhook to implement the conservation goals as outlined in "Alternative C". As always, please feel free to give me a call if you have questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Judy Anderson  
Executive Director

2675 Route 203  
Valatie, N.Y. 12184

Martin Van Buren NHS  
Boundary Study

June 30, 2002

Mr. Steven Beatty  
National Park Service  
Martin Van Buren Historic Site  
1013 Old Post Road  
Kinderhook, N.Y. 12106

Dear Mr. Beatty:

Subject: Draft Boundary Study/Environmental Assessment for Martin Van Buren Site

I reviewed the above study and offer the following comments. Lindenwald has been part of my "view shed" for over 60 years. In my youth, much of Kinderhook was as it had been for the previous 150 years. Small subsistence farms predominated the landscape. Vast open spaces largely free of power poles connected by dirt roads was the norm. Some farmers still relied upon horses for their source of power.

The Martin Van Buren National Historic site is an invaluable asset to this community. The Comprehensive plan adopted August 2000 chronicles the history of this community and identifies areas and structures within the Town of particular significance. The location of Lindenwald lies within a "Heritage Overlay District" which extends back 1000 feet on either side of Routes 9H and County Route 25. The goals established by the creation of these districts were "to identify and protect historic sites and structures, to retain the rural and historic assets, and to discourage the intrusion of development and or construction that is inconsistent with the rural and historic character of the Town." The current Town Code includes a map showing these districts.

Alternative C shown on page 61 represents an effort to accomplish the goals of the Town's adopted Comprehensive plan. This alternative, if adopted and implemented, would expand the site boundary and protect the historic farm and agricultural setting. Large areas of prime soils would remain in agriculture. Infrastructure needs would remain the same while there would be no loss in tax revenue. Alternative C is the choice which benefits most residents while providing an attractive future. Thank you

Sincerely,

Edwin R. Simonsen



P.O. Box 765  
Kinderhook, NY 12106  
2 July 2002

Mr. Steven Beatty,  
Superintendent, MVT NPS  
1013 Old Post Road  
Kinderhook, NY 12106

Dear Mr. Beatty,

I regret not having heard before hand of the Barnwell meeting. There isn't the slightest doubt in my mind of the importance of supporting your choice "C", which I understand to be the establishing of the Lindenwald boundaries at the maximum reasonable lines.

Historical interpretation, aesthetic sensibility, and respect for so significant a presidential and architectural site require that the environment remain reflective of the historical context.

Sincerely,

E. Leslie Byrne

Trustee, Friends of Lindenwald

Comments Received via Email

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Attention Steven Beatty

I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my views on the alternative options for the site. It is clear to me that Alternative C is the best choice by far, so it would have my enthusiastic support.

John Pickett  
Kinderhook

---

Dear Mr. Beatty,

I support your effort to protect land around Lindenwald from inappropriate development. A crucial component of any historic property is its setting, and Lindenwald's setting is particularly beautiful and thus far minimally developed. Cultural tourism is on the rise nationally--protecting the land now will allow us to hold onto and increase the economic benefits associated with cultural tourism.

Sara Griffen  
15 Albany Avenue  
Kinderhook, NY

---

Dear Superintendent Beatty:

I am writing to you to express my support for the purchase of land north and south of Route 9H (Alternate C) to help preserve the Lindenwald National Park site. I live not far from the site on Novak Road in Valatie, and want to lend my voice in support of preserving the historical and rural character of the landscape. I have lived in Columbia County for 22 years and think it is crucial to speak out now to prevent development of the landscape that we will all regret.

Sincerely,  
Roberta Bernstein

---

Dear Sir:

My husband Thomas Nicholson and I are both are very much in favor of Alternative C for many reasons. Sites such as Lindenwald DO need all the protection they can get. We both grew up in this county and have watched farm after farm become some thing. Usually not a good something. Places such as Lindenwald are part of our future relatives' ie. grand children, great grandchildren etc. heritage. As more and more development comes to the area we need to protect and preserve what is most beautiful around us. Any bit of land that could be added to the Lindenwald site should be obtained while it is still available. We certainly would not like to see a McDonald's or a Home Depot anywhere in the Lindenwald view shed.

As a member of the of the Garden Club of Kinderhook I like many members of the community take great pride in the appearance of Lindenwald. I know that people travel great distances to visit Lindenwald. I have been asked many times for directions to the site while walking my dogs in the Village of Kinderhook. The license plates on the cars are from all over the USA. I also have always had admiration for the way the site is run. Lindewald is an active member of the community. My children have participated in "picnics" held for their outgoing second grade classes on the grounds. The rangers were both informative and entertaining.

I strongly urge you to protect a precious resource! Buy as much land as you can.

Sincerely,  
Susan O'Brien  
22 Broad Street  
Kinderhook NY

---

Steve: I understand that the matter of the boundary of the historic site is under discussion again and I want you to know that I fully support the Site on its plan "C".

Muriel Gibbons

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Dear Superintendent Beatty,

I write as a resident of the Town of Kinderhook, a former historic interpreter at Lindenwald, a member of the Friends of Lindenwald and a supporter of authentic historic restoration of significant sites. For all of these reasons and others too extensive to enumerate, I strongly support Alternative C for the Martin Van Buren Historic Site. This will protect the site's historic setting from contemporary development.

Sincerely yours,  
Frank Rhyner  
3608 Route 203  
Valatie, NY 12184

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Dear Superintendent Beatty,

As an elementary teacher in the Ichabod Crane School District I have brought many classes to Lindenwald as part of the New York State 4th grade curriculum on local history. Therefore I strongly urge support of Alternative C to protect this very valuable resource in our community. Children need to view the Martin Van Buren Historic Site in its historic context so they can learn about and appreciate their heritage as it truly was.

Sincerely yours,  
Deirdre Leland  
3608 Route 203  
Valatie, New York 12184

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I want to register my support for Alternative C which is in line with the National Park Services intent to protect historic sites from development.

Thank you. Kathryn Huff

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July 5, 2002

Superintendent Steve Beatty  
Lindenwald  
1013 Old Post Road  
Kinderhook, NY 12106

Dear Mr. Beatty:

I am in support of Alternative-C. Columbia County, with its many historic sites, is in grave danger of losing its unique character. The idea of restoring the Martin Van Buren residence to its original dimensions and purpose through the purchase of adjacent lands appears to me to be a very good idea. It provides a noteworthy area for tourism and study. The alternative is to allow over-development with housing and commercial areas which will make it exactly like most of the inhabited areas closer to New York City. As a matter of national pride we must protect the rural areas that are left especially where historic landmarks are located. America is a big country and we should respect the need for preserving these areas in the face of rapacious outside developers who see any tree filled open space as a potential strip mall. We have enough commercial development within a short drive. Let's keep Kinderhook as it is with all its historic beauty and significance. Once altered, those qualities cannot be regained.

Yours truly,

Robert Baksa  
221 Fordham Road  
Valatie, NY 12184

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Mr. Steve Beatty  
Lindenwald  
Kinderhook, NY 12106

Dear Mr. Beatty,

We are delighted to know that Lindenwald will be given the opportunity to expand under Plan c.

Kinderhook is so fortunate to be a part of the chain of historic sites along the Hudson Valley. Lindenwald is not only a gem to us, but to our many visitors. There is something special about the site that makes one feel transported back into life in another era, and the expansion can only enhance the feel of living history.

Thank you so much from my family and from all the guests we have taken to visit Lindenwald.

Very truly yours,  
Diane Whelton

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**Attention: Superintendent Steve Beatty**

I am writing to express my concern that a certain group of people, for their own selfish interests, want to stop the expansion of Lindenwald's grounds. In these troubled times in our history, when we are fighting a war against terrorism, I find this to be most unpatriotic.

Lindenwald is an important historical site. By adding farming lands to its property will not only make it more historically accurate but will protect it from future commercial and residential development.

The preservation of Lindenwald, to as closely as it was in the times of Martin VanBuren, is not only important to this community but to the history of this nation as a whole. Historical sites draw tourists and tourism is an industry that should be tapped and developed in Kinderhook.

Let us be patriotic! I support Alternative-C and wish to see it implemented.

Allen Schaefer  
P O Box 424  
Kinderhook NY 12106  
518 758-8337

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TO: Steve Beatty, Supt. Lindenwald Historic Site  
Kinderhook, New York 12106

FROM: Joanne Stiles  
1327 Old Post Road  
Kinderhook, NY 12184

Thank you for taking my call this morning. I am sorry I could not attend the public comment meeting last week. However, I would like to add my support for Alternative C--the plan to maintain the historic character of Lindenwald by adding certain parcels and ensuring the land stays agricultural.

I am convinced that Alternative C is in the best interests of not only the local residents, but also the citizens of New York State and throughout the nation. It is well worth our tax dollars to support this initiative.

Best regards,  
--Joanne Stiles