



2015  
VIETNAM VETERANS  
MEMORIAL STATE PARK  
MANAGEMENT PLAN

Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department • State Parks Division

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VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL STATE PARK

PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

2015



5-29-15

David Martin  
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Date



05-11-2015

Tommy Mutz  
Director, State Parks Division

Date

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| EMNRD | New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department            |
| FY    | Fiscal Year  |
| NM    | New Mexico   |
| SPD   | Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department - State Parks Division |

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Mission of the State Parks Division:

Protect and enhance natural and cultural resources,  
provide first-class recreational and  
education facilities and opportunities, and  
promote public safety to  
benefit and enrich the lives of visitors.

Mission of the Park:

The mission of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial State  
Park is to remember and honor Vietnam veterans,  
provide educational opportunities for the public,  
and maintain a haven for healing and reconciliation.

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| <b>Key Facts</b>          |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Established               | 1968                               |
| Designated a State Park   | 2005                               |
| Land ownership            | State Parks Division               |
| Acres                     | 30.31                              |
| Full-time Employees       | 1                                  |
| Amenities                 | Visitor Center Chapel Amphitheater |
| Average Annual Visitation | 40,752                             |
| County                    | Colfax                             |
| Elevation                 | 8,477'                             |

## INTRODUCTION

### PARK DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY



The Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park (Park) is on 30.31 acres in the Moreno Valley of Northern New Mexico near Angel Fire. The memorial was established by the Westphall family in 1968 and became a state park in 2005. The non-profit David Westphall Veterans Foundation (Foundation) supports management of the Park and has an office at the visitor center.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was created by the family of Victor (David) Westphall. David and 15 other Marines were killed in an ambush in Con Thien, Vietnam. His father, Dr. Victor (Doc) Westphall, explained that the memorial was built as an “enduring symbol of the tragedy and futility of war” and that “we hoped it would serve as a national symbol of the sacrifices of Vietnam veterans and a source of inspiration for the pursuit of a peaceful world”. The chapel is intended to be a “place of peace and tranquility”. It was completed in 1971 and was designed by Ted Luna, a Santa Fe architect. The visitor center was completed in 1986 and was designed by the Glaser and Myers firm of Albuquerque.

Funding for the management of the memorial was always a challenge for the Westphall family. In 1977 a partnership began with the Disabled American Veterans Organization to provide funding to the Park. In 1982 the Disabled American Veterans Organization established the Vietnam

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Veterans National Memorial, Inc., which took over ownership and operation of the Park. In 1998 the Disabled American Veterans Organization transferred the memorial to the Foundation.

After struggling to finance the operation of the memorial, the Foundation chose to donate the memorial to the State of New Mexico in 2004. In 2005 the New Mexico State Legislature (2004 Legislative Session, Senate Joint Resolution 11) established the memorial as a state park. SPD works with the Foundation, which acts as a support organization for the Park.

| <b>Key Milestones</b> |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1968                  | Construction of the chapel begins  |
| 1971                  | Chapel is dedicated  |
| 1977                  | Disabled American Veterans partnership and funding begins                    |
| 1982                  | Ownership is conveyed to the Disabled American Veterans Organization         |
| 1986                  | Visitor center is dedicated  |
| 1987                  | U.S. Congress recognizes the memorial as a monument of national significance |
| 1998                  | Ownership is conveyed to the David Westphall Veterans Foundation             |
| 2005                  | A Donation Agreement conveys memorial ownership to SPD                       |
| 2007                  | Amphitheater is constructed  |
| 2010                  | Visitor center is renovated and expanded (Park closed 7/2009-5/2010)         |



## PARK ASSESSMENT

### PARK RESOURCES

#### LAND

##### Regional Setting

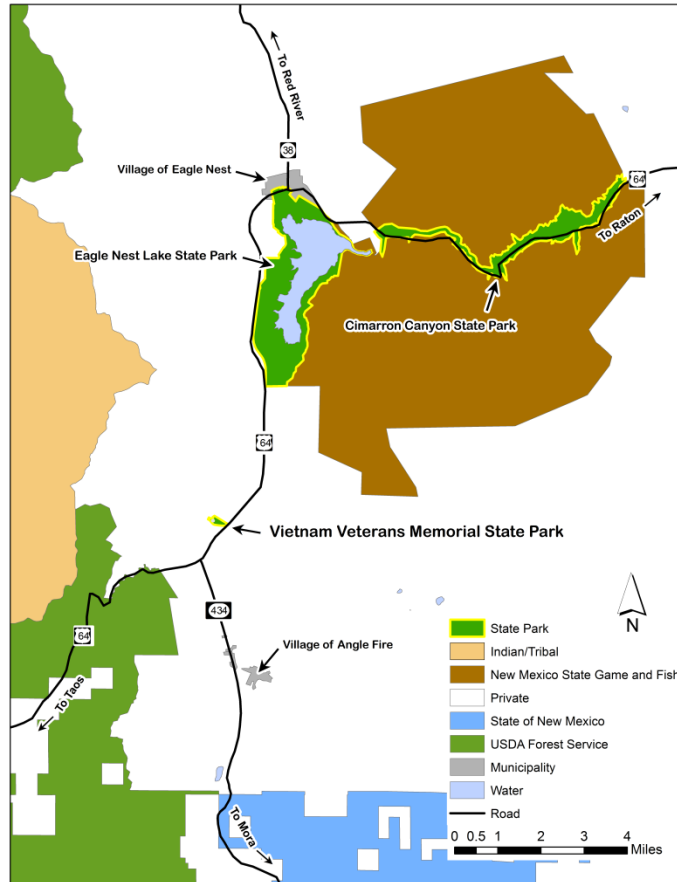
The Park consists of 30.31 acres of land in Colfax County off of U.S. Highway 64 in the Moreno Valley in Northern New Mexico. The village of Angel Fire is 3½ miles to the south. Red River is 26 miles to the north, and Taos is 22½ miles to the west. Cimarron Canyon and Eagle Nest Lake State Parks are less than 20 miles away. The Park is surrounded by private land, but Taos Pueblo, Carson National Forest, and lands controlled by the State Land Office and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish are nearby.

#### NATURAL RESOURCES

Unlike many other state parks, the focus of Vietnam Veterans State Park is cultural history rather than natural history. Even though that may be the case, the site of the chapel was chosen because of its beautiful surroundings overlooking the Moreno Valley and views of the mountains beyond. Visitors to the Park are often drawn to the area because of the natural resources and recreational opportunities nearby. The Park is located along the Enchanted Circle Scenic Byway, which is a popular tourist draw. A 2007 survey found that 38% of visitors came to the Park because they were either in the area sightseeing or happened to be driving by.

The Moreno Valley was created by a fault that makes the valley slope downhill from west to east. The valley is filled with quaternary sediments, which come from the surrounding mountains. Cieneguilla Creek flows through the valley south of Eagle Nest Lake. North of Eagle Nest Lake, the Moreno Creek flows through the Valley.

The geography of the area creates many sub-ecoregions surrounding the Park. The Park is within a grassland ecoregion where bunchgrasses, such as oat grass, fescue species, muhly, and wheatgrasses, are dominant. Just outside the Park are several other ecoregions that consist of several species of spruce, fir, and pine, as well as aspen, Gambel oak, and mountain mahogany.



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Fauna in the area are typical of the greater Southern Rocky Mountain ecoregion, which supports populations of black bear, mountain lion, elk, mule deer, and numerous species of small mammals. The area supports many cold-water fisheries that contain stocked fish as well as the native Rio Grande cutthroat trout. Common avian species include a wide variety of migratory songbirds from spring through fall. Populations of bald eagle, golden eagle, wild turkey, great horned owl, dark-eyed junco, and several species of sparrows, finches, and jays are present year-round.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

There have been no extensive cultural resource surveys of the property, but people have passed through the area for thousands of years. The Moreno Valley (Valley) was originally home to Moache Utes and Jicarilla Apaches. Around 1,000 years ago, Taos Pueblo formed, and members of the Pueblo would come to the Valley to hunt. As early as 1540, Spaniards with Coronado's expedition may have come to the Valley. People of Spanish descent who came to the Valley were followed by other people of European ancestry in search of beaver.

The largest land grant in history was made in 1841 to Charles Beaubien, a French trapper, and Guadalupe Miranda, the secretary of the Mexican provincial government. The grant covered more than 1.7 million acres of land in northeast New Mexico, including the Moreno Valley. The land became known as the Maxwell Land Grant when Lucien Maxwell, a fur trapper from Illinois, married Beaubien's daughter Luz and bought out the remaining heirs.

The Moreno Valley was primarily ranch land during the time it was part of the land grant, but prospectors discovered gold at nearby Baldy Mountain in 1867. The discovery set off a minor gold rush in the area, and subsequently New Mexico's first incorporated city, Elizabethtown, was founded. Elizabethtown's population peaked at 7,000, but as mining claims decreased, so did the population of the Valley. By the mid 1930s mining had ceased in the area, and Elizabethtown was abandoned. Cattle grazing was once again the primary activity in the Valley. In 1964, Doc Westphall purchased an 800-acre ranch on the west side of the Valley, and he had plans to develop the area until his son's death in 1968.

Although the chapel is not 50 years old, the point at which state and federal resource standards consider a structure to be historic, the chapel is a unique feature and further evaluation may find that its cultural significance may qualify the chapel as a historically significant structure according to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

## INTERPRETATION AND EXHIBITS

### Interpretation

A private contractor conducted the interpretive planning process for the Park in 2007 by consulting with park staff, stakeholders, and the public. The contractor also created a visitor

| <b>Weather Statistics</b>      |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Average high in December       | 38.1°  |
| Average high in July           | 78.3°  |
| Record high temperature        | 92°    |
| Average low in January         | 8.6°   |
| Average low in August          | 42.9°  |
| Record low temperature         | -39°   |
| Average yearly precipitation   | 21.59" |
| Average snowfall               | 130.1" |
| Average snow depth in February | 11"    |

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survey. After several years of experience and observation, park staff learned how to improve visitor experience and updated the plan accordingly in early 2014.

Themes are the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after they visit a site and are the source from which the entire site's interpretation flows. Each interpretive theme is the focus of exhibitions at the visitor center, which influenced the renovations at the Park in 2010. The central interpretive theme of the Park is honoring Vietnam veterans and exploring the human costs of war, while promoting healing and reconciliation. The major subthemes are:

- 1) People and healing: the Park memorializes people and not war. The history and mission of the Park is rooted in healing and reconciliation.
- 2) War in people's lives: the human costs of war are staggering.
- 3) War in time: time affects healing, reconciliation, and the act of honoring.
- 4) War in place: war is never confined to the battle field.

## Exhibits

### Visitor Center Exhibits

The visitor center underwent major renovations in 2010 when the exhibits were replaced. The exhibit planning process was instrumental in the creation of new exhibits. These exhibits were completed with limited funds, and some are considered temporary. They were primarily designed and developed through the efforts of SPD and park staff.

- Lobby  
The visitor center entrance area is an introduction to the Park and its history, including the background of Doc Westphall, who created the memorial. It also gives information on David Westphall, whose death in the Vietnam War was the impetus for this memorial.
- Main Exhibit Area  
The exhibits follow the themes of: 1) war in lives, 2) war in time, and 3) war in place. Each area is color coded with title banners depicting the theme. The stories that relate to each theme are relayed through banners, photographs, small interpretive panels, and display cases with applicable artifacts, as well as larger objects and art pieces.
- Movie Room  
The movie room features an HBO production, *Dear America, Letters from Home*, which depicts the personal experiences of soldiers in Vietnam and film footage of the war.
- Multipurpose Room  
The multipurpose room is currently used for lectures, a visitor sitting area, and a place to show videos. It also features a prisoner of war exhibit. This space was originally designed to be an object theater, which would allow visitors to have an interactive experience with artifacts, maps, oral histories, and photographs. Funding, however, was not available to develop the object theater at the time of the renovation.
- Rotating Exhibit Room  
Staffing is limited, and it is difficult for the park manager to keep up with rotating exhibits. Since the library has greatly expanded, rotating exhibits will be phased out and the room will gradually become an extension of the library. The room will be renamed the New

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Mexico Room. The exhibits that are currently in this room tell stories of New Mexico veterans and New Mexico's contribution to our Nation's conflicts. As the room changes to an extension of the library, the walls will retain New Mexico themes.

- **Library**  
The library contains hundreds of books, photos, biographies of Vietnam soldiers killed in action, and a bank of computers that visitors use to conduct research.

## Chapel Exhibits

A wall in the chapel displays photographs of Vietnam veterans who were killed in action. Park staff rotate the photos on a regular basis. Visitors also leave mementos and objects in the chapel, which are routinely inventoried and catalogued by Park staff.

## **Programs**

### Guided Tours

Park staff and trained volunteers provide guided tours to visitors four times a week during the summer and on request during the remainder of the year. The tours include information about the history of the site and points of interest at the Park, such as the Huey helicopter and the Westphall graves. A self-guided tour brochure is also available.

During the summer, visitors can attend star parties presented by volunteers. School groups come throughout the year, and children from the Angel Fire Kids Camp come to the park each week in June and July. Programs for the children alternate between patriotic and nature themes.

### Off-site Programs

Park staff often have the opportunity to bring presentations to groups outside park boundaries. Staff and volunteers give a version of the guided tour to groups, such as the Rotary Club, by using a PowerPoint presentation. Park staff or volunteers also assist with summer reading programs by presenting nature-themed stories in July at the Shuler Library in Angel Fire. The Park has a touchable exhibit, which is displayed in the conference room during the summer, but it travels to various locations throughout the year. The exhibit contains items that soldiers in the war were very familiar with, such as a metal canteen, a flight helmet, combat boots, an M1 helmet, and a Marine Corps flack vest.

### Publications

Visitors have access to a brochure about the Park itself, a self-guided tour brochure, a brochure that describes the importance and history of the Huey helicopter, a brochure that covers the background of the Vietnam War, and a bird list for the Moreno Valley and Cimarron Canyon.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **Memorial Day**

The Park partners with a veterans group to provide speakers who cover a thematic topic honoring veterans throughout the weekend. A prisoner of war/missing in action candlelight vigil takes place on Sunday evening. On Monday there is a flag parade down US 64, which includes members of the local community joining with scores of veterans to march and carry the flag to the Park. The

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weekend also features live music, lectures, displays and a flag retirement ceremony. During the ceremony, flags that may be damaged are retired from service with dignity and respect. The flags are torn into strips and burned in the fire pit with a running dialogue of the proper procedures. The Park partners with the local fire departments, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and veterans for this event, and the public is invited to participate. Approximately 4,000 to 7,000 people visit the Park during this week.

### **Run for the Wall, Friday before Memorial Day**

Hundreds of veterans on motorcycles visit the Park on their way to join an event in Washington, D.C., on Memorial Day. The Park partners with the villages of Angel Fire and Eagle Nest to welcome these veterans at a community-sponsored dinner. Some say that the sacredness of the Park is one of the highlights of the ride across the country.

### **Run for the Wall Reunion**

This event started as a volunteer work party hosted by the Park at the end of August or early September. It has turned into a function that benefits the David Westphall Veteran Foundation. Every year the Foundation hosts an event to install memorial bricks, which are bought for veterans and installed by veterans with dignity and honor. The name on each brick is reverently called out and saluted during the event. Approximately 300 people participate in this event each year.

### **Veterans Day**

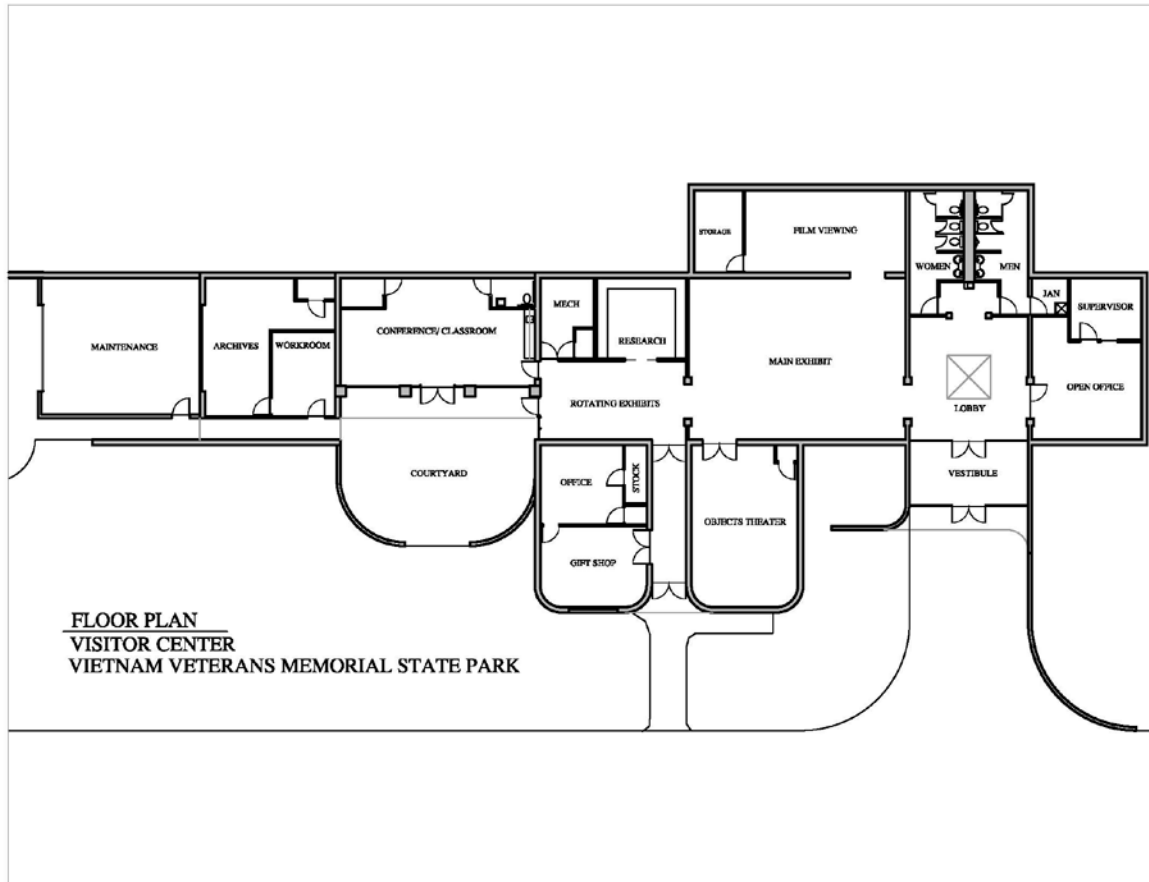
Similar to the events on Memorial Day, Veterans Day events feature a thematic topic, community involvement (such as the high school band), and participation of veterans groups. The events attract 100 to 200 visitors.

## OPERATIONS

### PARK FACILITIES

#### **Visitor Center**

The original 6,539-square-foot visitor center was built in 1985. The layout included offices for Park and Foundation staff, an exhibit area, a video room, restrooms, storage, and a garage. The building was built into the hillside and is partially underground, which made expansion a challenge. The 2010 renovations added 2,472 square feet to the building, which is now 9,011 square feet (including the garage and covered walkway). The new floor plan accommodates a library, the rotating exhibit/library extension area, a larger garage/maintenance area, the archives, a work room, the objects theater, and expanded office space, in addition to the facilities that existed on-site before renovation. Park staff offices are now next to the lobby, and the Foundation has an office attached to the gift shop, which it runs. The lobby, vestibule, and restrooms are also updated.



## Chapel

The Peace and Brotherhood Chapel was the first structure Doc Westphall had built at the memorial. Construction began in 1968, and the chapel was dedicated in 1971. It was the first major structure in the nation to honor veterans of the Vietnam War. The Foundation oversaw minor improvements to the building in 2007 that included new stucco, roofing, and an HVAC system.

## Amphitheater

The amphitheater is adjacent to the chapel and was built in 2007. The amphitheater has an expanded stage area, concrete seating, and a sound system. The stage used to have a removable canopy, but it was damaged by wind a few years after installation and was removed.

## Huey Helicopter

The Huey helicopter at the Park served in Vietnam with the 121st Assault Helicopter Company as a smokeship and became known as "Viking Surprise". Smokeships provided cover for ground operations by using smoke to reduce visibility. The New Mexico National Guard donated the helicopter to the memorial in 1999.

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## Gravesite

Doc Westphall died on July 22, 2003. His wife Jeanne died on August 1, 2004. Both died at the age of 89. They are buried on the grounds of the Park. Their son, David, is buried at the National Cemetery in Santa Fe.

## North Office Building

The modular building across the road from the visitor center used to house offices for the Department of Veterans Services. The department abandoned the building in 2010, and it is currently unused. The building has two offices, one restroom, and a reception area.

## Employee Housing

SPD acquired residential property adjacent to the visitor center in 2008 to provide housing for the park manager. Having the house within sight of the visitor center provides added security and acts as a buffer between the Park and the nearby housing development.

## Utilities

| Utility Providers      |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Water                  | On-site well  |
| Electricity            | Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Inc.                |
| Propane                | Contract vendor (currently Northern New Mexico Gas) |
| Solid Waste Management | Colfax County                                       |
| Wastewater Management  | On-site septic system                               |
| Communications         | CenturyLink   |

## PARK MANAGEMENT

### Hours of Operation

The Park is open year-round. The visitor center is open daily from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>. From November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 31<sup>st</sup> the visitor center is closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The chapel and grounds are open to the public 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

### Fee Collection

Unlike other state parks, there are no visitor fees for the memorial.

### Curation

The Park's collection includes many items that need special care and preservation. Park staff and some volunteers are trained in curation and cataloguing techniques. Preservation is a costly

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undertaking, therefore park staff decided on a phased approach, which focuses on certain types of items in certain years. Staff choose which items based on urgency and need.

FY 2011 and FY 2012 focused on the proper storage of the Park's extensive collection of photographs, its framed art, and book repair. FY 2013 and FY 2014 focused on newspapers, which are the hardest items in the collection to preserve. Staff scanned clippings, preserved the originals in mylar pockets, and placed the pockets in document storage boxes.

FY 2015 will focus on flags and banners. The collection holds many flags that either flew in Vietnam or have other special significance. FY 2016 will focus on uniforms, which also need storage boxes to minimize folding. Park staff are conducting research to find the best way to preserve flags and uniforms that require extra care because of their delicate condition.

FY 2017 will focus on magazines. Currently, magazines are stored flat in large boxes but many need individual polyethylene bags. Some of the issues of Time Magazine in the collection are considered collectors' items and need special care.

## **Staffing**

The park manager is the only full-time employee at the park. Two seasonal employees work in the summer and one in the winter. In an effort to keep at least one employee on site daily from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, staff must rotate their schedules. The following are the typical duties of each position:

- Park manager – responsible for park management, day-to-day operations, interpretive education programming, and collections management.
- Seasonal laborer – responsible for landscaping and both indoor and outdoor maintenance.
- Seasonal interpreter – Responsible for indoor maintenance, visitor contact, and assists in interpretation and administration.

The Park is located in Region II, and the regional office is located in Tucumcari. Regional office support is provided by the regional manager and a regional administrator. The regional interpreter is based out of Sugarite State Park in Raton and assists park staff with star parties.

## **Volunteers**

Cadres of volunteers have been coming out for Memorial Day weekend for many years. Many of these volunteers have been integrated into SPD's volunteer system. Volunteers help set up for special events and ceremonies, put out flags, participate in the ceremonies, and assist visitors with information about the Park. In 2012, SPD added a volunteer site with full RV hookups in an area adjacent to the north office building. A full-time volunteer that lives on-site can provide additional support to staff.

The Park also recruits students from Moreno Valley High School, which requires public service hours for graduation. These students help primarily with grounds maintenance. In the summer, rotating youth groups work service projects and also assist with grounds maintenance.



## **Partnerships**

### Friends of Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park

A friends group for the Park formed in May 2012, and they have supported the Park by purchasing curation supplies, display materials, reference books, training and travel for park staff, and miscellaneous items such as comfortable chairs for the movie room. In addition to monetary support, members of the friends group volunteer their time and do a wide variety of jobs, including assisting with special events, conducting tours, and assisting with curation.

### David Westphall Veterans Foundation

The Foundation is a nonprofit organization that owned the memorial from 1998 to 2005. The Foundation's purpose is to honor America's veterans and members of its military forces. The Foundation complements, contributes to, supports, and aids SPD in the management of the Park. The Foundation leases an office and the gift shop. It also raises funds through donations, gift shop proceeds, and memberships.

### Angel Fire Garden Club

The Angel Fire Garden Club created and maintains the garden at the entrance from the upper parking lot. The gardens are the gateway to the Park and welcome visitors while enhancing the beauty of the grounds. The plants are primarily native xeric or low water use, many of which flower profusely during the summer season. There is an automatic irrigation system for the gardens. The Park's garden is on the "Blue Star Garden Scenic Byway" tour, which is sponsored by National Garden Club and honors those who served in the Armed Forces.

The following community partners have provided the Park with support on events and advertising:

- Village of Angel Fire
- Angel Fire Chamber of Commerce
- Village of Eagle Nest
- Village of Cimarron
- Moreno Valley Fire Department
- Angel Fire Fire Department and Emergency Services
- Enchanted Circle Byway Association
- Red River Chamber of Commerce
- Taos County Chamber of Commerce
- Cimarron Chamber of Commerce
- Sangre de Cristo Chronicle newspaper

The Park also has several stakeholder groups that support the Park's educational mission and participate in special events. These groups include:

- Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 318, Albuquerque, NM
- New Mexico Veterans Motorcycle Association
- Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 574, El Paso, TX
- New Mexico Disabled American Veterans
- Gold Star Wives
- New Mexico Military Institute
- New Mexico National Guard

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- Run for the Wall
- The Westphall Family

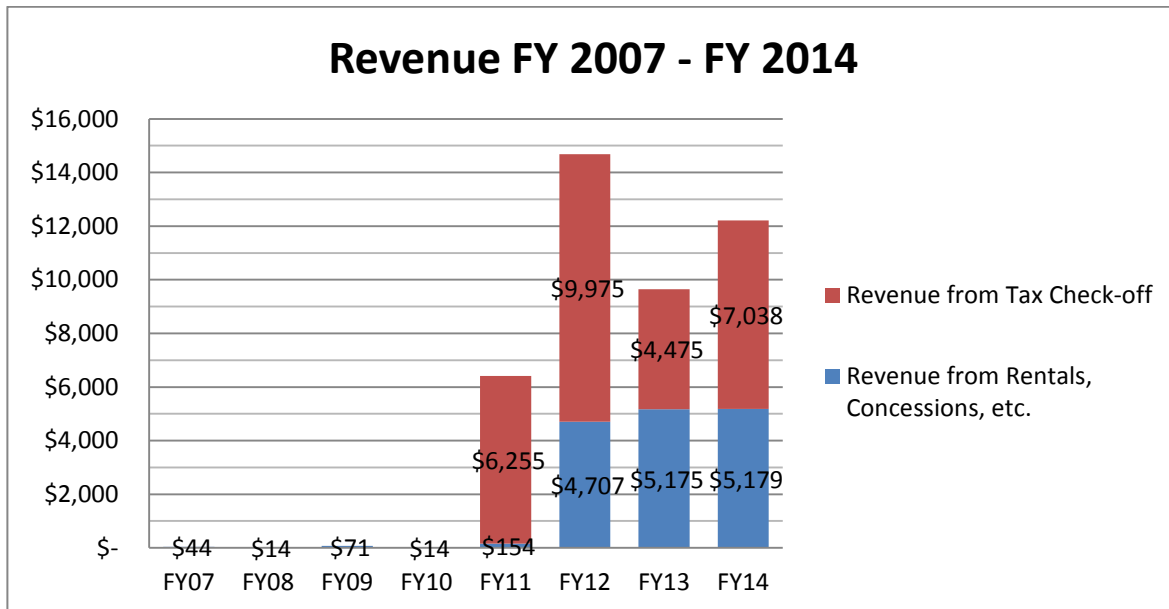
## Concessions

The Foundation is the only concessionaire at the Park. The Foundation rents an office and runs the gift shop. It then donates money to the Park for various projects and supplies.

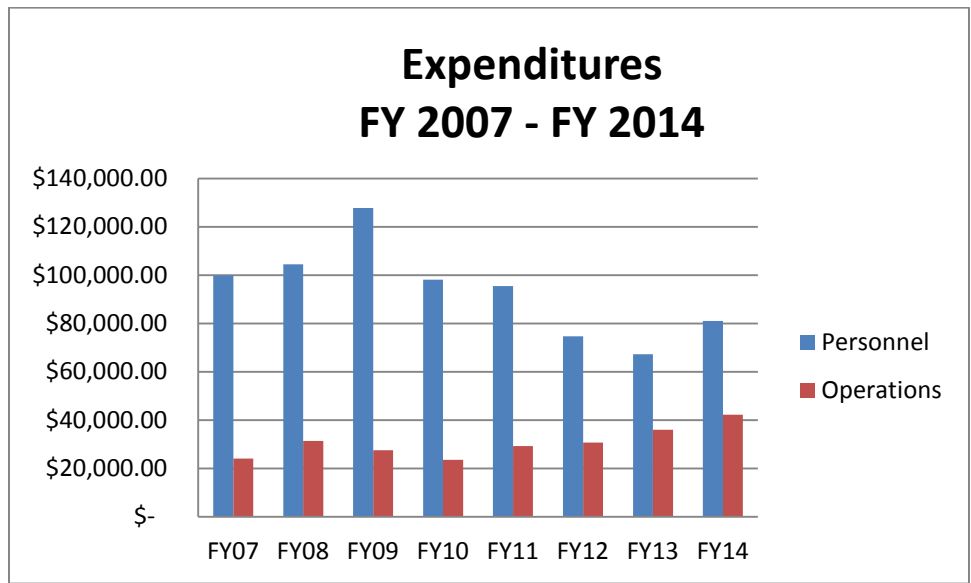
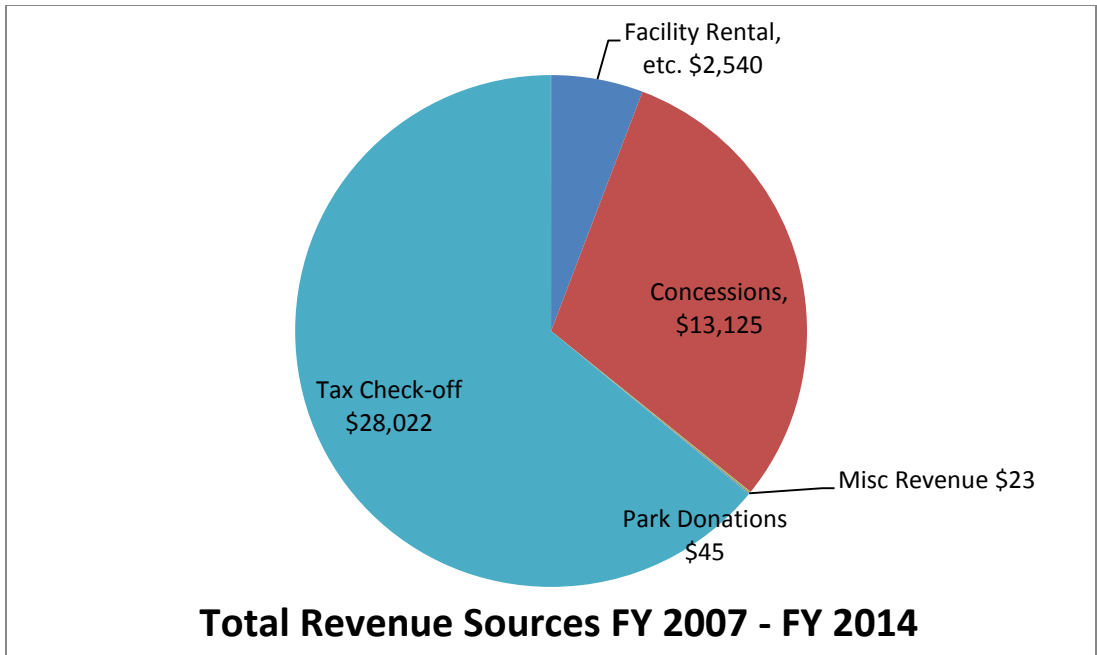
## Budget

Although the Park does not collect entrance fees, it does receive revenue from rental fees. People can rent the amphitheater during operating hours for \$125 or after operating hours for \$275. The chapel and conference rooms are available for rent for \$30 each during operating hours and \$60 each after operating hours. Additional amenities such as use of the sound system, chairs, tables, and staff time for setting up and breaking down are available for additional costs.

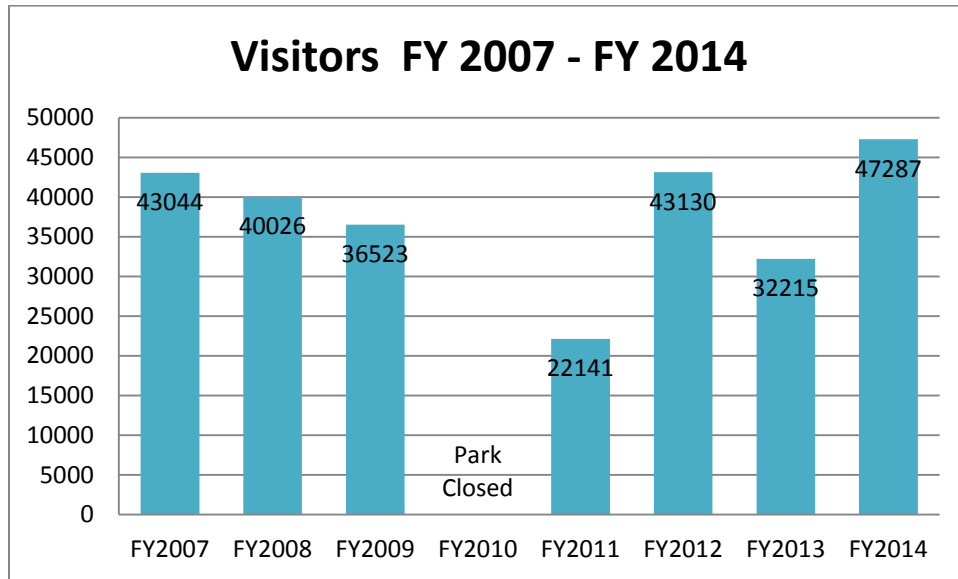
New Mexico residents can now donate their tax refunds to the Park by checking a box on their tax returns. Tax refund donations raised over \$28,000 between FY 2009 and FY 2014.



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**Visitation**



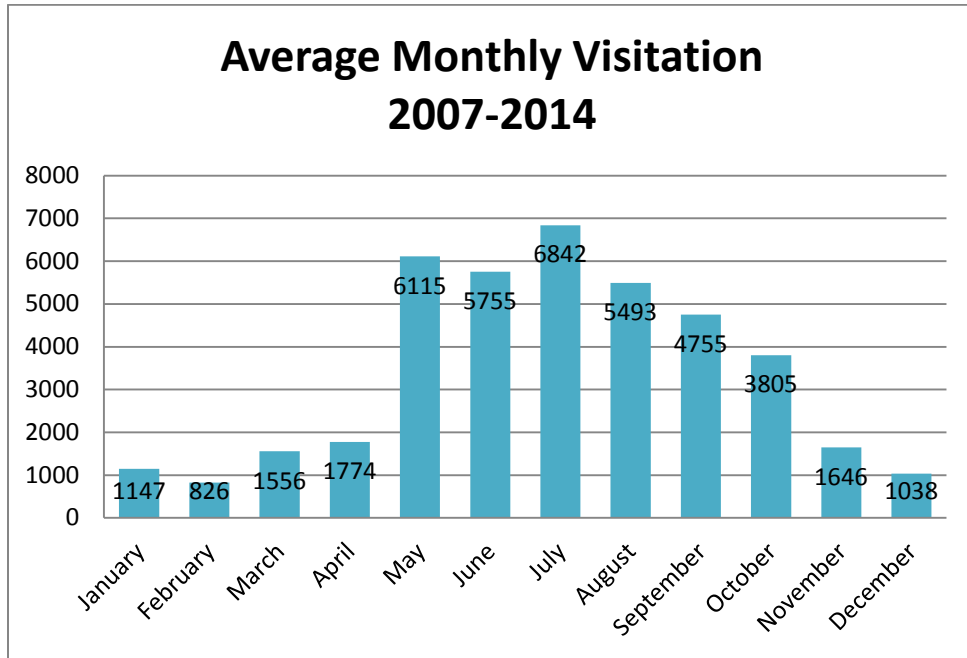
An automatic sensor at the visitor center used to record visitation data. The sensor only counted those people entering the building and did not capture those who chose not to enter the building, including many special event visitors. In 2010, SPD added traffic counters at the parking lot entry points.

The graphs in this section illustrate the average monthly visitation using the counter at the visitor center prior to 2010 and the counters at the parking lot entry points since then. Since the visitor center was closed for renovations, SPD did not collect visitation data during FY 2010. The Park’s busiest time is over the Memorial Day weekend.

In April 2014 Governor Susana Martinez announced plans to develop four new veterans’ cemeteries in New Mexico, one of which would be on donated land adjacent to the Park. The land is south of the chapel across County Road B4. The New Mexico Department of Veterans’ Services would run these cemeteries, each of which would be on three to five acres of land. Each cemetery is projected to cost between \$1.3 and \$1.6 million dollars to develop. The cemeteries would meet the U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs’ (VA) development criteria for all national cemeteries and the VA would match any funding approved by the State Legislature to establish these cemeteries.

The VA received 91 applications from around the country and approved 17 locations for funding during the 2015 federal fiscal year. Gallup was ranked 16<sup>th</sup> and was the only location in New Mexico that the VA approved for funding during this cycle. Fort Stanton ranked 21<sup>st</sup>, Carlsbad ranked 63<sup>rd</sup>, and Angel Fire was 65<sup>th</sup>.

Even though the VA passed on funding a cemetery in Angel Fire during this cycle, it is possible that the cemetery will be approved for funding in the future, because applications from previous years are re-prioritized each year. If the veterans’ cemetery is approved, visitation to the Park would likely increase.



Currently, SPD records visitor information with a voluntary guest register in the lobby. Visitors may record where they are visiting from, the number in their party, and how they heard about the Park. The majority of visitors are from Texas followed by New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma, California, Arizona, and Kansas. Most visitors hear about the Park from friends and family, followed by highway signs, veterans groups, and visitor guides.

Surveys in 2007 and 2014 found that 65% of visitors travelled more than 200 miles, 28% were sight-seeing, and 15% were paying respects. Seventy-one percent of the respondents were over the age of 50, 69% were first-time visitors, 28% brought children, and 67% were in groups of two or more adults.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Issues” are concerns, problems, threats, or opportunities. The issues were raised by individual staff, during the group planning workshops, by stakeholders, or by the public. Not all issues will result in an action. Some issues may be beyond SPD’s control or may not be a priority during this planning period.

The proposed actions (shown with ➤) are also listed in the “Action Plan” following this section. After the public comment period, the final action items will be prioritized using the criteria developed in the Strategic Operations and Sustainability Plan. Some actions will require further research, evaluation, planning, or design before they can be implemented. Each action is contingent upon available funding and other resources, and there is no guarantee that it will be feasible or that it can be funded and implemented in the proposed timeframe.

#### **Education and Interpretation**

##### Interpretive Planning and Training

A certified interpretive planner, host trainer, and manager course through the National Association for Interpretation will enhance the park manager’s skill set and ability to create interpretive planning, programs, and exhibits, in-house.

- Have park manager certified in interpretive planning, interpretive host training, and management.

The National Association for Interpretation will train and certify volunteers as interpretive hosts. Training in interpretation will allow volunteers to assist park staff in completing interpretive tasks. Training will also ensure that programs, such as the guided tour, are delivered accurately, consistently, professionally, and in a sensitive manner.

- Create a volunteer training program that incorporates interpretation training.

##### Accreditation

The Park will investigate museum accreditation opportunities with appropriate organizations. Accreditation increases visibility, credibility, and the appearance of professionalism by fostering organizational improvement and development. Furthermore, accreditation will be a valuable asset for raising funds through the Foundation or friends group and for attracting support both within state government and in the private sector.

- Investigate museum accreditation opportunities with appropriate organizations.

##### Exhibits

SPD had exhibits fabricated and installed in the visitor center in 2010. Although much of the baseline for exhibits is in place, the exhibit main hall still needs improvements. The hall will have computers with large screens, a large screen television, digital photo frames, an interactive map to replace the existing map, and an audio system. The hall will also have larger interpretive panels and efficient lighting that does not over-light exhibit items. The friends group, Foundation, or others may help purchase some of these items.

- Make upgrades to main exhibit hall.

# VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL STATE PARK 2015 MANAGEMENT PLAN

SPD will upgrade the signs and current exhibits in the main hall to museum quality so that it better matches the rest of the rooms in the visitor center.

- Upgrade signs and exhibits to museum-quality.

## Outdoor Signs

The Park needs additional signs in several places. SPD will place interpretive signs at the Huey helicopter, the gravesites, and walkway bricks, and have small, numbered, signs for people taking the self-guided tour.

- Acquire signs to aid interpretation in areas throughout the Park.

## Programs

The Park will have an oral history program that will collect the recollections of the experiences of veterans through recorded interviews. Park staff will archive the interviews and make them available to scholars, students, veterans, and the public. The recordings will also become part of the Park's exhibits and interpretation. SPD will link the program to, and model the program after, the "Oral History Project" of Texas Tech University's Vietnam Center and Archive and the Library of Congress' "Veterans History Project".

- Develop an oral history program.

## Trails

A walking trail will provide an alternative activity for visitors. The proposed trail will be a narrow, natural-surface path for a nature-oriented experience. SPD will install benches along the trail to take advantage of the scenic views. Interpretive signs will explain the landscape, birds, and other features of the Moreno Valley.

- Add a walking trail in the Park.

## **Facilities**

### Chapel

Besides having unique architectural elements, the chapel is the first major Vietnam veteran's memorial in the country. SPD and the State Historic Preservation Office will evaluate if it is eligible for addition to the National Register of Historic Places.

- Evaluate the chapel for National Register of Historic Places designation.

### Movie Room

The movie room in the visitor center has a wide opening with no doors. The sound of the movie playing in the room may interfere with other visitors' experience. SPD will install doors on the movie room to reduce the noise level in the rest of the building.

- Construct doors for the movie room.

### Lighting

SPD will evaluate interior and exterior lighting in the Park and make improvements that include the use of energy-efficient lighting fixtures and designs that do not impact the dark sky.

- Evaluate interior and exterior lighting in the Park and make improvements.

### Building Exterior and Entrance

# VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL STATE PARK 2015 MANAGEMENT PLAN

The stucco on the original visitor center was last resurfaced sometime in the 1980s and it is deteriorating. The exterior walls have occasionally been patched over the years, which has created areas of different colors. Other areas may also need some patchwork. The wing walls at the entrance will also be re-stuccoed with surrounding landscaping.

- Re-stucco the building's exteriors.
- Re-stucco and landscape the wing walls at the entrance.

## Lower Parking Lot

The lower parking lot and related walkways to the west of the visitor center were built in 1986 and are deteriorating quickly. The southeast corner of the lot is also sinking. SPD will re-grade and resurface the lot.

- Re-grade and resurface the lower parking lot.

## Vendor Area

Vendors currently set up in an outdoor area adjacent to the parking lot. SPD will put a roof over this area, and rent it out as a multi-use shelter. Moveable picnic tables will be added to enable picnickers to use the area, but it will remain functional for vendors, as well.

- Create a group shelter in location of the existing vendor area.

The Park grounds and chapel are open to visitors at all times, even when the visitor center is closed. Therefore, restroom facilities are not always available to guests. SPD will install a new vault toilet adjacent to the parking lot, so facilities are available at all times.

- Add a new vault toilet next to the upper parking lot.

## North Office Building

The Department of Veteran's Services no longer occupies the modular building across from the visitor center. SPD will find a new use for this building.

- Develop and implement a plan for the north office building.

## **Park Management**

### Partnerships

SPD has had previous discussions with the National Park Service's Vietnam Veterans National Memorial about sharing resources. SPD will resume discussions with the National Park Service in order to identify mutually beneficial partnership opportunities.

- Explore partnership opportunities with the National Park Service.

### Staffing

The Park had three full-time employees until 2010: a park manager, an instructional coordinator, and park technician. Currently there is only the park manager position. By reestablishing the instructional coordinator position, the Park will enhance the programming as well as contribute to maintenance needs. This classification will attract employees who are experienced and interested in working in a museum setting with the public and volunteers.

- Identify the feasibility of reestablishing the instructional coordinator position.



# VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL STATE PARK 2015 MANAGEMENT PLAN

| Vietnam Veterans Memorial Action Item Score Sheet   |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|---------|-------|--|
| <b>Have park manager certified in interpretive planning, interpretive host training and management.</b> |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 0   | 1                 | 2                   | 0                  | 1          | 3                  | 1       | 8     |  |
| <b>Create a volunteer training program that incorporates interpretation training.</b>                   |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 0   | 1                 | 2                   | 0                  | 3          | 3                  | 3       | 12    |  |
| <b>Investigate museum accreditation opportunities with appropriate organizations.</b>                   |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| -1  | 0                 | 2                   | 0                  | 1          | 1                  | 0       | 3     |  |
| <b>Make upgrades to main exhibit hall.</b>  |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| -1  | 0                 | 0                   | 0                  | 1          | 3                  | 2       | 5     |  |
| <b>Upgrade signs and exhibits to museum quality.</b>  |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 2   | 0                 | 0                   | 0                  | 2          | 3                  | 2       | 9     |  |
| <b>Acquire signs to aid interpretation in areas throughout the Park.</b>                                |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 0   | 0                 | 1                   | 0                  | 3          | 3                  | 3       | 10    |  |
| <b>Develop guidelines and training procedures for an oral history program.</b>                          |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 0   | 0                 | 0                   | 0                  | -2         | 3                  | 2       | 3     |  |
| <b>Add a walking trail in the park.</b>   |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| -2  | 1                 | 1                   | 0                  | -1         | 3                  | 1       | 3     |  |
| <b>Evaluate the chapel for the National Register of Historic Places designation.</b>                    |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 0   | 0                 | 3                   | 0                  | 0          | 1                  | 2       | 6     |  |
| <b>Construct doors for the movie room.</b>  |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 0   | 0                 | 0                   | 0                  | 0          | 3                  | 2       | 5     |  |
| <b>Evaluate interior and exterior lighting in the Park and make improvements.</b>                       |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 3   | 2                 | 3                   | 0                  | 3          | 2                  | 3       | 16    |  |
| <b>Re-stucco the exterior of the visitor center.</b>  |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 2   | 0                 | 3                   | 0                  | 2          | 1                  | 3       | 11    |  |
| <b>Re-stucco and landscape the wing walls at the entrance.</b>  |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 1   | 0                 | 1                   | 0                  | 1          | 2                  | 3       | 8     |  |
| <b>Create a group shelter in location of the existing vendor area.</b>                                  |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| -1  | 1                 | 1                   | 3                  | 2          | 3                  | 2       | 11    |  |
| <b>Re-grade and resurface the lower parking lot.</b>  |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 3   | 3                 | 2                   | 0                  | 1          | 2                  | 3       | 14    |  |
| <b>Add a new vault toilet next to the upper parking lot.</b>  |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| -2  | 3                 | 2                   | 2                  | 0          | 3                  | 3       | 11    |  |
| <b>Develop a plan for the north office building and implement.</b>                                      |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 1   | 0                 | 1                   | 2                  | 1          | 2                  | 1       | 8     |  |
| <b>Explore partnership opportunities with the National Park Service.</b>                                |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 0   | 0                 | 2                   | 0                  | 1          | 2                  | 1       | 6     |  |
| <b>Reinstate the heritage educator position.</b>  |                   |                     |                    |            |                    |         |       |  |
| Maintenance   | Safety/Regulatory | Resource Protection | Revenue Generation | Efficiency | Visitor Experience | Urgency | Total |  |
| 3   | 3                 | 3                   | 1                  | 3          | 3                  | 3       | 19    |  |

## ACTION PLAN

The tasks recommended above are listed in priority order in the following table.

| Action  | Ranking | Cost Estimate |
|---|---------|---------------|
| Identify the feasibility of reestablishing the instructional coordinator position.                | 19      | \$0           |
| Evaluate interior and exterior lighting in the Park and make improvements.                        | 16      | \$40,000      |
| Re-grade and resurface the lower parking lot.   | 14      | \$85,000      |
| Create a volunteer training program that incorporates interpretation training.                    | 12      | \$500         |
| Re-stucco the building's exteriors.   | 11      | \$130,000     |
| Create a group shelter in location of the existing vendor area.                                   | 11      | \$70,000      |
| Add a new vault toilet next to the upper parking lot.   | 11      | \$55,000      |
| Acquire signs to aid interpretation in areas throughout the Park.                                 | 10      | \$10,000      |
| Upgrade signs and exhibits to museum-quality.   | 9       | \$25,000      |
| Have park manager certified in interpretive planning, interpretive host training, and management. | 8       | \$2,500       |
| Re-stucco and landscape the wing walls at the entrance.   | 8       | \$10,000      |
| Develop and implement a plan for the north office building.                                       | 8       | TBD           |
| Evaluate the chapel for National Register of Historic Places designation.                         | 6       | \$0           |
| Explore partnership opportunities with the National Park Service.                                 | 6       | \$0           |
| Make upgrades to main exhibit hall.   | 5       | \$5,000       |
| Construct doors for the movie room.   | 5       | \$15,000      |
| Investigate museum accreditation opportunities with appropriate organizations.                    | 3       | \$0           |
| Develop an oral history program.  | 3       | \$1,500       |
| Add a walking trail in the Park.  | 3       | \$9,000       |

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