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# Introduction

## What is a Long Range Interpretive Plan?

A Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) provides a 5-7 year vision for a park's interpretive program.

A facilitator skilled in interpretive planning works with park staff, partners, and outside consultants to prepare a plan that is consistent with other current planning documents.

Part 1 of the LRIP establishes criteria against which existing and proposed personal services and media can be measured. It identifies themes, audiences, and desired experiences. It offers a brief history of interpretive planning to date and, within the context of Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements, it lists results-oriented strategic goals and poses management questions that interpretation might address.

Part 2 recommends a mix of services and facilities that will achieve the management goals and interpretive mission described in Part 1. It identifies promising partnerships and includes an implementation plan that assigns responsibilities and offers a schedule for action.

When appropriate, Appendices provide more detailed discussions of specific topics.

## What is a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan?

The Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) is a collection of planning documents and databases that includes the LRIP as one of three sections. Other sections are the Annual Interpretive Plan (a yearly analysis of the interpretive successes and failures of the past year, a summary of the issues that lie ahead, and a revised, updated work plan) and the Interpretive Database (a compilation of interpretive inventories, reports, evaluations, and surveys plus a basic bibliography).

Detailed explanations of both the LRIP and CIP are found in NPS-6, Chapter III, the National Park Service's Interpretation and Visitor Services Guidelines.

# Executive Summary

## Background

A Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) provides a 5-7 year vision for a park's interpretive program.

Part 1 of the plan establishes criteria that can be used to measure and then select the interpretive techniques employed in the park. All interpretation, for example, must have an obvious link to the reasons that the park was originally created (park purpose). Interpretive programs should concentrate on explaining the park's significance and the stories (themes) that are associated with the park's resources. In order to be effective, interpretive programs should be designed to accomplish specific goals linked to the mission of the National Park Service, address pressing management issues, and satisfy the needs of the park's constituents.

During the first of two workshops, participants reviewed the park's purpose and significance as defined in legislation and earlier planning documents, particularly the park's General Management Plan. They discussed the park's stories and grouped them under three headings: the history and legacy of the place; the history and legacy of the people; and the creation and societal legacy of the art. Recognizing that too many on-site visitors can easily overwhelm the park, they expanded the meaning of "visitors" to include those served by outreach and off-site programming. In fact, several of the management issues identified by workshop participants are linked to the size of the park and the intimacy of its surroundings. Interpretive planning must grapple with the dilemma embedded in the desire to share the park and its stories without damaging its resources and disrupting the local community. As part of a realistic strategy to overcome this dilemma, workshop participants recommended that new initiatives should target the following groups: families; schools (particularly off-site use by students and teachers); members of the local community; residents of Connecticut and nearby New York; members of the artistic community; members of the National Park Service community, and possible patrons of the park.

Finally, participants in this first workshop identified the types of experiences that seemed appropriate for the park and projected visitors. Obviously, each of the existing and targeted audiences must have access to user-friendly orientation that explains the nature of the park, the park's stories, and the park's programs and facilities. The special nature of the park--small in size with limited facilities, intimate landscapes, and private interior spaces--must be understood by all. Interpretive programming should emphasize activity and involvement rather than the transfer of information to passive listeners. It should help visitors connect to the creative process in personal ways.

## **Recommendations**

At a second workshop, participants developed recommendations using the criteria contained in Part 1. Many of these proposals, contained in Part 2, are more specific expressions of ideas introduced in the park's General Management Plan. Others emerged from the actual operating experiences of park staff since the park began receiving guests.

Given the need to communicate broadly, several recommendations focus on off-site audiences, particularly school groups, and on expanded use of the Internet; collection of data about existing and potential audiences would be useful. Several other recommendations will keep local and regional residents informed, particularly about the changes that will occur as the park implements the General Management Plan. Special events, including off-site exhibits, are identified as a valuable component of the overall interpretive program.

As the arrival experience changes over the next several years, improved signs (both inside and outside the park) will be critical to successful orientation. To address internal sign needs, the park will request a comprehensive sign plan as soon as possible. Revisions to the park brochure, to the map in particular, will be needed as well.

Recommended changes to the interim visitor center include expanded use of the existing computer (to make the most of limited space), an exhibit on park development, and increased use of historic photos (an exhibit and a photo album). Concurrently, park staff will help plan the new visitor center, primarily by preparing interpretive objectives for exhibits and AV, by further defining space needs, and by developing operating plans (for an information desk, for the shuttle bus system, etc.).

Staff also will develop both "guided" and "self-guided" options for visiting the Weir House and studios. The existing "Painting Sites Trail" has been a valuable interpretive tool and will be supplemented by a new brochure interpreting the historic farmscape, a re-created "palace car," and perhaps new exhibits that reproduce art in the landscape. Security will be fully evaluated, particularly during discussions of self-guided options. The feasibility of an audio tour will be explored. And an expanded training program will increase the ability of staff to explore artistic technique and art creation with visitors.

Workshop participants strongly endorsed the need for staff leadership of the many existing and proposed educational initiatives. Coordination is critical to their success. Preparation of an Education Plan must receive high priority. Interim policies for on-site school visits are needed immediately.

The Weir Farm Trust's many successful programs, including hands-on art instruction and the visiting and resident artists programs, received workshop endorsement. In addition, participants recommended development of both informal and organized

programs that invite families to create art, perhaps using the Burlingham Barn facility when it is renovated.

In order to link sales more directly to the park's interpretive program, staff will work with the Trust to prepare a Scope of Sales. Together they will consider several new items: new postcards; a publication with historic photos; a cultural time line; an audio tour; a publication on Young; reproduction items; additional items on nature.

Research is needed on the Weir house, studios, and artists, on peer perspectives on Weir, on the recollections of D. Weir, and on the farm's caretakers and other laborers at the site. Procedures will be developed for use of the collection. Additional finding aids for the archives and improved access to photos, slides, transparencies, and library material are needed.

Each of the recommendations included in the body of the plan is listed in the Implementation Plan. Those responsible for taking action are identified; actions are assigned to a fiscal year.

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# **Part 1**

## **Background**

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# Park Purpose & Significance

## Purpose

A statement of purpose emerges from legislative language and existing planning documents. It states the reasons a park was established.

Weir Farm National Historic Site exists:

To preserve and interpret the landscapes, buildings, and objects within the legislated boundaries of the site,

To maintain the visual integrity of the site's cultural and natural landscapes,

To acquire and exhibit "works of art associated with J. Alden Weir, the Weir Farm, and the American Impressionist movement as may be necessary for the interpretation of the historic site" and

To continue, directly and via partnerships, the site's tradition of artistic inspiration, expression, and education.

## Significance

Significance statements explain why the park and its resources are important. They place each NPS unit into context.

Weir Farm National Historic Site is nationally significant because...

It was the summer home and workplace of Julian Alden Weir (1852-1919), a leading figure in American art and the development of American Impressionism, an art movement seen by many as the first modern art movement in America.

Weir Farm (the Weir house and furnishings, Weir Studio and furnishings, farm buildings, and farm landscapes) was integral to Weir's artistic vision and, because it survives largely intact, is the finest remaining landscape of American Impressionism.

Weir Farm was a gathering place for Weir's associates, including other leading American artists who depicted farm landscapes in their work.

The farm has been used continuously and preserved by artists since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most notably by sculptor Mahonri Young, whose studio also is at the

site. Painter Sperry Andrews has used the studios since Young's death and he and his wife, Doris Andrews, retain life-time tenancy rights to the Weir house.

It preserves a comprehensive archive documenting the activities and accomplishments of Weir.

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# Interpretation in Planning Documents

## Background

Weir Farm has a short history as a national historic site. Still, a growing list of planning documents provides guidance to park managers and a brief summary of what each says about interpretation can be instructive.

### Legislation and Legislative Intent

Congress established Weir Farm National Historic Site (NHS) on October 31, 1990. Public Law 101-485 stated that the purpose of the farm (“house, barns, studios, pond, field, and woods”) was “to preserve a significant site of the tradition of American Impressionism; to maintain the integrity of a setting that inspired artistic expression and encourages public enjoyment; and to offer opportunities for the inspirational benefit and education of the American people.” It specifically mentioned exhibits as appropriate site activities and authorized the Secretary of the Interior to “display, and accept for the purpose of display, works of art associated with J. Alden Weir, the Weir Farm, and the American Impressionist movement, as may be necessary for the interpretation of the historic site.”

Earlier preservation efforts made the national historic site possible. In 1985, a group of neighbors and concerned individuals asked the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to protect key acreage at the site pending more permanent action. In 1988, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection purchased the majority of TPL’s land at the farm and donated it to the National Park Service (NPS) in 1992. The grass-roots group that initiated the preservation effort formed the Weir Farm Heritage Trust, now the Weir Farm Trust (Trust), in 1989 and has continued to work to expand the number of protected acres.

The Trust is the National Park Service’s non-profit partner at Weir Farm National Historic Site. Through its programs and activities, the Trust seeks to build community and financial support to help ensure Weir Farm’s success as a national park and as a creative center. The Trust’s major activities include its visiting and artist-in-residence programs, lectures, art workshops and educational programs, exhibitions and publications, and collecting art for the site.

The Weir Farm National Historic Site Expansion Act of 1994 added “the last remaining undeveloped parcels of the historic Weir Farm that remain in private ownership” to the site. In 1999 Congress approved the addition of 15 acres for future development of a new visitor center. As of February 2000, 7.5 of those acres have

been acquired with assistance from the Weir Farm Trust and the Trust for Public Land.

### The General Management Plan (GMP)

A General Management Plan (GMP) for the site was approved in 1995. It identified several interpretive themes (see Appendix 1), recommended additional studies (see Appendix 2), and prepared management objectives designed to guide site development.

According to these objectives, Weir Farm NHS will be managed to...

Safeguard the site's cultural and natural resources, including its historic setting.

Maintain the feeling and the historical, pastoral character of Weir Farm while providing safe, accessible facilities that support visitation levels appropriate to the site's intimate scale.

Collect and exhibit art, realizing the unprecedented opportunity that exists at Weir Farm to reunite the historic property—domestic interiors, studios, and landscape—with the art it inspired.

Perpetuate the site's long and unbroken artistic tradition by providing programs and facilities for ongoing artistic activity.

Provide a diverse visitor experience that encourages enjoyment of the natural beauty of the site and that promotes understanding of the farm's role in American Impressionism and its continuous use by artists from 1882 to the present.

Promote train, bus, pedestrian, and bicycle travel to the site in order to encourage resource conservation and reduce pollution and traffic congestion.

Continue to work in close partnership with the Weir Farm Trust and others to establish an art collection and to support park activities.

The management alternative adopted by the GMP presents the site, once owned by Weir and his descendants, as a marriage of landscape and art. It reunites works of art with the landscapes that inspired them and presents the farm's buildings and landscapes as they appeared to their historic occupants. Facilities for visitor orientation, exhibitions, and collection storage will be located outside the historic core of the site. Guided tours of the house and studios, with established carrying capacities, will be a "major focus" on the site's interpretive program. The Weir Studio will be furnished to interpret his use. The main house will be furnished to reflect continuous use by the Weir, Young, and Andrews (the current residents)

families. The Young studio will be furnished to interpret Young's use but will include exhibits on Sperry Andrews as well. Visitors also will be encouraged to walk the grounds of the Weir Complex, restored to a 1940 appearance, with interpretation provided by guided tour and publications rather than wayside exhibits. Farming practices will be interpreted in the barn. Burlingham Complex landscapes (an adjacent property once owned by Weir descendants), however, will be rehabilitated rather than restored. The house and barn eventually will be rehabilitated for resident artists and school programs (both artists-in-residence programs and school programming are considered a vital part of the site's overall interpretive effort).

## **Interim Interpretive Plan**

Since 1995, when the GMP received approval, the site has relied upon an Interim Interpretive Plan and has made important progress in interpretation.

The park's expanded website now includes a new kids' section, launched for pilot testing in August 1999.

A modest visitor center, with limited space, is currently located in the Burlingham House. It offers orientation to the site and site story. There are sales, exhibits, and a small seating area where visitors can watch videos of site settings and its artistic tradition.

Rangers and staff offer three tours of the grounds and the Weir and Young studios each day, Wednesday-Sunday. A "stone walls" tour is offered once a month.

The park has a unigrid folder and a self-guided "historic painting sites trail" that allows visitors to explore the farm landscapes and helps them make visual connections between art and place.

An introductory wayside exhibit orients visitors who park in the site's parking lot.

The farm is a member of the Connecticut Impressionist Art Trail, a group of ten museums and historic sites that interpret the American Impressionist art movement.

A teacher's guide to the site includes information on site visits and programs. A lesson plan on the site is available via Preservation Press and the "Teaching with Historic Places" program. Junior Ranger programs are offered on selected weekends during the year and in the summer. Art workshops (Art Explorer) for young artists are offered during spring recess, on Saturdays, and during the summer. Adult art classes are offered periodically.

The Weir Farm Trust hosts an artist lecture series and sponsors both visiting and resident artist programs. The Trust organizes an annual exhibit (with catalogue) of art created by the site's visiting artists. Both the National Park Service and the Trust produced a major J. Alden Weir exhibit at the Parrish and Bruce Museums which

opened in April 2000; a component of the Weir exhibit will be at Weir Farm from April to September 2000.

Planning currently is underway for a variety of additional programs: traveling education vans are being planned; the Burlingham Barn will be rehabilitated for year round school programs; and a future off-site visitor center will provide improved exhibition and orientation space. Recommendations in the site's Public Affairs/Communications Program (Science Applications International Corporation, 1999) will be incrementally implemented and many have been integrated into this LRIP.

In support of interpretive programming, in fiscal year 1999, the park allotted 1.5 FTE to permanent staffing for interpretation and .83 FTE to temporary staffing. Volunteers contributed 1731 hours to the site in fiscal year 1999.

## **Current Goals**

Some planning documents also identify goals that interpretive programming will help to achieve.

### Government Performance & Results Act (GPRA)

The GPRA process involves preparation of goals at both the servicewide and parkwide levels. Servicewide goals that directly relate to interpretation include those listed below. Refer to Weir Farm's GPRA Strategic Plan for its current long-term and annual goals

#### Goal IIa1.

Park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

#### Goal IIa2.

Park visitor accident rate is reduced or remains low.

#### Goal IIb1.

Park visitors understand and appreciate the significance of Weir Farm and its ongoing artistic tradition.

### "The Road Ahead"

Released in 1997 by the Northeast Region of the NPS, "The Road Ahead" is a strategy for achieving excellence in interpretation and education. It identifies six goals:

Discover the Untold Stories, i.e., interpretive and educational programs are inclusive and present diverse perspectives and multiple points of view where appropriate and are related to park themes.

Open New Doors to Learning, i.e., school systems, academic institutions, organizations, diverse visitors and life-long learners recognize and use parks to enhance learning.

Invest in Children, i.e., every park will have a curriculum-based education program so that children have a quality educational “park experience” during their elementary and high school years.

Develop America’s Best Workforce, i.e., the profile of our workforce reflects the rich diversity of the United States population. All employees demonstrate the necessary competencies and approach their responsibilities with the highest degree of professionalism and innovation in order to provide outstanding customer service, to maintain subject matter credibility, and to be accountable in all aspects of the operation.

Make Connections, i.e., every park will connect its story to the entire National Park System and will seek opportunities to link themes and build bridges with parks and partners locally, nationally, globally.

Get Wired to the World, i.e., every park capitalizes on new and emerging technologies in order to enhance resource protection, improve customer service, and educate all audiences.

### Areas of Emphasis

Imbedded in these generic goals are several areas that will receive special attention at Weir Farm:

Because the site is relatively new as an NPS unit and because American Impressionism and J. Alden Weir in particular are not popularly known, it is important that interpretive programming heighten the site’s profile. More people need to hear and learn about the site and its themes.

However, the site can accommodate only a limited number of on-site visits making outreach and virtual visitation critical.

The site’s purpose and its themes, particularly the preservation of an artistic tradition, set it apart from most NPS units, demanding innovative application of interpretive techniques.

# Issues & Influences Affecting Interpretation

During any planning process, park staff turn to their own experiences in dealing with the visiting public and ask whether there are ways to improve. Framed as questions to be addressed in LRIP discussions, the following issues surfaced during an early LRIP planning workshop.

## Program Administration

What must be done to maximize opportunities for artists interested in continuing the site's tradition of artistic expression?

Is there a role for fee interpretation at the site? Are there interpretive activities that can generate income? Are some kinds of interpretation particularly attractive to funding organizations?

What will be an adequate level of staffing in the future? Will there need to be realignment of staff duties?

## Identity & Outreach

Given the site's official (and traditional) name, Weir Farm, how can interpretation help visitors understand the natural but non-agricultural condition of the site today?

How can awareness of the site be heightened without generating overuse and neighborhood discontent? What kinds of publicity are appropriate? Is there a need for more outreach or interpretive programming for neighbors? For local audiences? For regional and national audiences?

Can anything be done about directional road signs, particularly along Route 7?

How can the site reach out to more diverse audiences? How can interpretation counteract the impression among some groups that the site's story is irrelevant?

Can the site be linked more effectively to other theme-related sites?

How do we address the issue of our shared natural resource, open space, and common boundaries with organizations such as the Nature Conservancy, the Town of Ridgefield, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, etc.? How do we best take advantage of these shared concerns?

### Educational Programming

What sorts of educational programming are appropriate for the site?

How will site programming address issues related to educational standards, curriculum, schedules, testing, etc.?

How do site themes and experiences fit into CT and NY standards of learning?

How will the site prepare an educational plan?

### Site & Collection Limitations

How can interpretation help to address the limited parking at the site? How can it encourage forms of access other than cars and tour buses?

Since the park is still evolving, what are the most effective ways to provide potential visitors with up-to-date information about existing conditions? About future plans? What should on-site visitors be told about current conditions and the existence of a life estate? How can those sections of the farm still occupied by the Andrews be adequately interpreted? Is there a need for on-site explanation of plans for the site?

How can the site accomplish its interpretive objectives prior to acquiring art?

Until the visitor center is completed, what can be done to make the best use of limited visitor contact space? Are there innovative solutions to the site's current lack of exhibit space? Are there questions that relate to conversion of the barn to other uses?

What visitor amenities can the site appropriately provide?

Since bad weather can limit visitors' willingness to see the grounds and link landscapes to inspiration and product, can interpretation provide alternative experiences?

How can the site archives be made more accessible to scholars?

### Safety & Vandalism

Since the road that runs through the site can be dangerous for visitors, can interpretation help with warning messages?

Is there a need for safety messages about lyme disease?

Although not yet a significant problem, is there enough vandalism (primarily litter) to initiate a discussion of possible interpretive solutions?

### Program Effectiveness

Are existing non-personal services adequate? Effective?

### Research

What additional research is needed to support interpretation?

### Partners

What sorts of additional programming might enlist more partners?

Is the Scope of Sales up-to-date? Are there new items that could be developed or located for sale?

### Recreation

What sorts of recreation are appropriate for the site and should interpretation attempt to reach those who visit primarily for recreational reasons?

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# Parkwide Interpretive Themes

## What are Interpretive Themes?

The NPS Guideline on “Interpretation and Visitor Services, NPS-6, Chapter III” describes themes as

key statements defining the park’s significance and resource values. Themes should be stated as single sentences, may be divided into primary and secondary, and should be prioritized. These statements connect park resources to the larger processes, systems, ideas, and values of which they are a part.

While interpretation could touch upon any number of stories related to Weir Farm, focused themes increase effectiveness. Themes are the most important stories, in this case the essence of the history and legacy of the site.

## Theme Development Process

Interpretive themes for the site have been discussed many times. In fact, the interpretive themes that follow rely upon the wisdom of the past. They are a blend of existing language and ideas (including the themes suggested in the GMP) modified to address the very real and practical needs of contemporary visitors.

These themes combine what site staff and partners want to tell visitors about the site with what visitors, including specific groups of visitors who do not currently come to the site, want (and need) to know. They can be organized under three equally important concepts: the history and legacy of place, the history and legacy of people, and the creation and societal legacy of art.

Primary themes are critical to understanding the site and will be offered to all on-site visitors and included in outreach and off-site programming. Secondary themes, while important, will be communicated whenever adequate resources are available.

## I. The History & Legacy of the Place

### Primary Theme

1) Weir Farm has a long and continuing artistic tradition.

A) Weir Farm, the pastoral studio of American painter Julian Alden Weir and summer home of Weir and his family, also served as a retreat and source of inspiration for an extended community of late-19<sup>th</sup> century artists linked to the

development of American Impressionism, an art movement characterized in part by the celebration of place.

B) Since J. Alden Weir purchased the farm, it has been occupied by working artists (particularly Mahonri Young, Dorothy Weir Young, and Sperry Andrews but also by a growing list of visiting artists) who have been inspired by the setting, who have expressed their creative genius on-site, who have preserved the general character of the property, and who (the artist-owners) have on occasion adapted it to their personal needs.

C) Weir Farm is being protected from development and gradually converted into an educational and commemorative site that fosters on-going artistic creativity thanks to the efforts of local citizens (including farm residents and Weir descendants), the Weir Farm Trust, private organizations, and public agencies (including the National Park Service).

### Secondary Theme

1) J. Alden Weir actively managed his farm, learning about and experimenting with farming techniques and recasting many of its landscapes into his own vision of a natural world tamed for modern enjoyment.

### Questions asked by visitors:

These primary and secondary themes will address the following visitor questions:

- Where is the art?
- What belonged to Weir? What are all these other buildings?
- Where are the farm animals?
- Why did Weir come here? How much time did he spend here?
- Who else visited and painted here?
- What is American Impressionism and how is it linked to Weir Farm?
- Why did American Impressionism happen?
- Where else can I go to learn about Weir and Impressionism?
- What is the NPS doing here?
- What is the Weir Farm Trust?
- What plans are there for the site?

## **II. The History & Legacy of the People**

### Primary Theme

1) J. Alden Weir played a pioneering and leadership role in the development of American artistic expression, using his personality, his tutelage, and his art to attract a large, gifted circle of colleagues and influential art patrons to emerging forms of art.

### Secondary Theme

- 1) Life at Weir Farm was an inextricable weave of ordinary, everyday activity and extraordinary, creative expression.
- 2) Although Mahonri Young documented the Weir Farm in numerous sketches, his primary artistic legacy rests with his sculpture, particularly the many monumental pieces that he produced.

### Questions asked by visitors:

These primary and secondary themes will address the following visitor questions:

- Who was Weir? What is his background? How was he trained?
- Did Weir make his living as an artist?
- Did Weir have a family? Children? Did they come to Weir Farm?
- Where are Weir's descendents now and what are they doing?
- How did Weir influence art and the art world?
- What are some of Weir's most famous works?
- Where was Weir when he wasn't at Weir Farm?
- Who else "painted" Weir Farm? Did anyone famous visit Weir Farm?
- Who was Young? What are his most well-known works?

## **The Creation and Societal Legacy of the Art**

### Primary Theme

- 1) Weir Farm is a laboratory of creative expression, exploring many aspects of the creative process from inspiration (landscapes, interior settings, family activities) through art production (studio settings, equipment, supplies, and materials).

### Secondary Theme

- 1) The evolution of American Impressionism and subsequent debates over the merits of specific pieces of art inspired by or created at Weir Farm shed light on how society evaluates, embraces (or rejects), and values art.

### Questions asked by visitors:

These primary and secondary themes will address the following visitor questions:

- Can I paint here?
- So what? What difference does it make who started American Impressionism?
- Why haven't I heard of Weir?

How did these artists work? What inspired them? What were their studios like?  
What materials did they use?  
Is that really art? Is that “good” art?

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# Desired Visitor Experiences

In addition to the stories communicated and the issues addressed by interpretation, it is important to think about the nature of the “visit” itself and consider how actual on-site visitors as well as virtual visitors who may never travel to the park will experience the site. What do we want visitors to do? How do we hope visitors will feel and what impressions will emerge? What memories do we want to create? What can we do to provide an enjoyable AND a meaningful visit?

Based on workshop discussions, interpretive programming should...

## Orientation

Use interpretive techniques that will allow a wide range of visitors (including virtual visitors who access the site via the Internet) to discover some part of the story that is relevant to them. Present options for “seeing” and discovering the site and help visitors understand what those options are early in their “visit.”

Spread the word that the Weir Farm has a distinct but intimate character, explain what the site offers, and get people excited about the site and its activities.

Provide additional information about other theme-related, geographically nearby, and NPS attractions.

Let visitors to the site know that they have arrived at a special place, make them feel welcome, and provide them with user-friendly orientation to themes, services, and facilities.

## The Setting & Art

Provide visitors with opportunities to see and examine works of art inspired by Weir Farm or related to artists associated with the farm’s artistic traditions.

Provide visitors opportunities to see the actual landscapes and settings that inspired and continue to inspire art and the venues (inside and outside) in which the creative process occurred and still occurs.

Provide visitors opportunities to see the tools of creation used by several generations of artists.

Engage visitors in debates over art and artistic expression. Help visitors learn to “see” art; to explore what art is.

Help visitors imagine a time when Impressionism was a new form of artistic expression. Discuss how art movements evolve. Investigate the role of art and artists in society.

Place the creative process and inspiration into the context of everyday life at the farm.

### Personal connection

Provide opportunities for the general public and for professional artists to become personally involved in the farm's on-going artistic tradition (art creation and site preservation). Give visitors the chance to witness the creative process and to meet artists.

Provide opportunities for on-site visitors to connect with farm resources in personal ways. Visitors should have fun. Others might be inspired. Some will be renewed and refreshed. No one should be "intimidated" by art.

Provide on-site visitors settings in which they can appreciate the natural world and also witness how nature often is manipulated for the enjoyment of human occupants and observers.

### Formal Education

Provide opportunities for groups to participate in curriculum-based instruction that is engaging and interdisciplinary and that inspires artistic expression.

Offer educational resources and materials for both on-site and off-site instructional use.

Provide students who have little contact with artistic expression with opportunities to learn about and create art.

Provide access to site archives and encourage scholarly investigation of site themes.

Provide life-long learning opportunities that explore the life of Weir and American Impressionism.

### Follow-up

Provide opportunities for visitors to extend their visit with appropriate, theme-related memorabilia.

Encourage visitors to become stewards of Weir Farm and patrons of the arts.

# Visitor Profile

## Existing

Weir Farm is located in western Fairfield County (population 800,000) Connecticut. The towns of Wilton and Ridgefield cover 61.65 square miles and, in 1990, had 36,908 residents. The local population is predominantly white (97.5%). The area's per capita income is among the highest in the state. Wilton and Ridgefield are primarily "bedroom" communities for New York City.

Calendar year 1999 visitation was just over 15,000.

Despite the still developing nature of the park, educational groups do visit. Within the last two years, groups have traveled from Bethel, Bristol, Fairfield, Norwalk, Ridgefield, Stamford, Westport, Weston, and Wilton. Several groups carpoled to avoid the difficulties of bus parking.

In 1994, the University of Vermont conducted a survey of visitor attitudes, perceptions, and demographics. Planners used the information collected to shape alternatives in the GMP.

Survey results indicated that visitors appreciated the site's "peace and quiet" and opportunities to "enjoy the natural environment." They felt that certain types of recreation were appropriate (bird watching, nature study, and walking) while others were not (horseback riding, and bicycling). Nearly three quarters favored recreating portions of the Weir landscape and the majority (56.7%) preferred that visitor facilities be located outside site boundaries.

Even though the site was undeveloped at the time of the survey, over half (56%) of the visitors surveyed stayed at least two hours; 19.4 % stayed three hours or more.

Survey results, combined with staff observations, indicate that site visitors tend to be well educated with higher than average income. The site attracts many local (including service groups, clubs, and elementary or middle school students and teachers) and regional visitors (60%+). Some local visitors to the site are primarily interested in recreation. Understandably, many who come to the site are artists, art lovers, or art enthusiasts while a few are attracted because the site is a national park.

## Targeted

Planning also should ask whether the park wants to encourage other specific groups to visit in larger numbers and, if so, develop programming that will accomplish new visitation goals even while continuing to appeal to those already coming to the park.

Based on comparable sites, the GMP projects a long-term increase in visitation to 25,000-40,000. However, the goal is not simply to increase visitation. Targeted audiences for Weir Farm must be chosen with particular care since the site can be easily overwhelmed. The intent should be to spread knowledge of the site and its themes to wider, even national, audiences via on- and off-site programming.

Workshop participants, confirming many of the recommendations contained in the park's Public Affairs/Communications Plan, felt that over the next 5-7 years the LRIP should begin to expand the park's audiences via new efforts to reach out to the following groups:

Families. Since families travel in small groups, they should be encouraged to come on-site or take advantage of special educational programs.

School groups. Students will become the site's future supporters and the site should investigate innovative ways to connect its themes with school curriculum. Since on-site visitation by large groups traveling in buses could be difficult, the site should investigate the use of the Internet as an important tool of communication and education.

The local community. Neighbors are particularly important given the residential nature of the site and nearby communities.

Connecticut and nearby New York residents. Although the site would like to reach interested audiences everywhere, Connecticut provides a logical place to begin. Considering the close ties that Weir had with New York City and the cultural vitality of the city and surroundings today, New Yorkers are logical targets for interpretative outreach.

The artistic community. It is important that artists, art historians, art lovers, museum studies students and professors, art schools, and art museums are familiar with and use the site and help generate support for site preservation and programming. This audience is national and international in scope.

Patrons. The site's ambitious plans, including residencies, educational programming, and art acquisition, require on-going support from partners and donors.

The NPS community. The site is a relatively new addition to the NPS and not all NPS employees understand the site's significance.

# **Part 2**

## **Future Interpretive Program**

DRAFT

# Interpretive Program Description

## Organization

Interpretation at Weir Farm will occur in a variety of venues. At times it will be linked to specific physical spaces--the Weir Studio, for example, or along the trail to the pond. Other interpretation, however, is not as dependent upon location. Materials are sent to visitors in response to telephone and mail inquiries. Increasingly, visitors use the Internet for information.

The location of the park, along a narrow road in a residential neighborhood, and the very nature of its physical resources, relatively small structures built for individual or family use, suggest that on-site visitation can easily intrude and even overwhelm the park and its surroundings. To compensate, outreach will play a critical role in interpreting the park's themes and a range of educational programming will be offered off-site (in addition to planned on-site opportunities).

Assuming that recommendations in the General Management Plan are implemented, those visitors who do travel to the park will begin at a visitor center that will be developed close to but outside the park's historic core. From the visitor center they will ride or walk to the park itself, where they will have both "self-service" and "guided" options. When the site is fully developed, visitors will be able to see the Weir Home as well as the studios of Weir and Young. Visitors will be encouraged to walk the grounds to see the natural, agricultural, and recreational landscapes so often the source of inspiration for Weir and others. Many visitors will see the work of contemporary resident or visiting artists. And before they leave, on-site visitors will have an opportunity to express their personal creativity and perhaps take home a memento of their own artistic imagination.

The interpretive recommendations suggested in this LRIP are grouped by primary interpretive venue or opportunity. Some recommendations will be summaries of proposals contained in the GMP. Others will help staff manage and interpret the park until full development. A few identify additional planning that will be needed to prepare for full development.

For easy reference, look for bullets to find each recommendation. Each bulleted item also is listed in the Implementation Plan toward the end of this document.

The text that accompanies the recommendations will attempt to summarize the nature of each idea and, when there is a strong connection, will refer the reader to Part 1 for justification.

## **Recommendations**

### **Off-site Orientation & Interpretation**

Recommendations designed to communicate to audiences off-site will be linked to the groups targeted in the “Visitor Profile” in Part 1. The park’s Public Affairs & Communications Plan provides useful guidance in reaching out to these audiences; many of the recommendations included below are drawn from that document.

For all audiences, communication designed to reach visitors before they arrive must explain what the park is and what visitors can expect on-site. It must reconcile visitor expectations with reality. And it must address the physical limitations of the site, including limited parking and easily overcrowded grounds and facilities.

- Since there is very little information about current or potential visitors, the park will explore strategies to gather scientific information about who does or might visit and who might use park-supplied interpretive materials.
- All materials describing the park will stress the intimate scale of the resources and the limitations of on-site facilities.

### **The Internet**

The Internet will play an important role in efforts to orient off-site visitors to both the park’s stories and its programming. To increase Internet effectiveness, park staff will...

- Initiate regular reviews of the park’s “expanded” website. The goal will be a dynamic website that is easy to use, that is accurate and current, that shares a wide variety of park-produced materials with electronic visitors, and that offers links to carefully selected websites of others (NPS sites, regional art sites, American Impressionist art sites, art education sites, etc).
- Immediately supplement the website in three ways. 1) Add information on plans for the park development 2) Establish links to the park’s website through other related websites and gateways, such as, ArtsEdNet (Getty) and ArtsEdge (The Kennedy Center) 3) Explain the contents of the park’s collections and archives and how scholars can use them.
- Work with the Weir Farm Trust to establish a sales link so interpretive materials can be ordered by Internet customers.

- Include additional visuals of Weir and American Impressionist art to help with “product recognition,” i.e., what did Weir and others actually create.
- Explore links that might help electronic visitors locate art on display near their home.
- Add the park’s website address to all publications.
- Plan to integrate new educational materials into the website, as they become available.
- Develop a virtual tour of the park that includes building interiors that are not now always open to visitors.
- Develop virtual tours of future exhibitions as they are finalized.
- Evaluate the merits of answering visitor questions electronically and consider posting visitor comments online (these comments would provide feedback as the park develops and encourage more interest in the park).

### **Mail & Phone Inquiries**

Contacts via regular mail and telephone also remain important. Staff will...

- Review existing mailing lists and expand to include audiences identified in the “Visitor Profile” above.
- Use mailing lists to spread information about the park’s website.
- Keep the park’s voice mail system and telephone answering procedures up-to-date as new facilities are completed.

### **Links & Outreach**

Because it is important to nurture the support of neighbors and provide interpretation to more diverse, off-site audiences, park staff need to build and maintain links with others and sustain vigorous and on-going outreach. Specifically they will...

- Contact local newspapers and explore the possibility of a regular column about park development, park activities, etc.
- Commit additional time to preparation of regular news releases highlighting park development and special events.

- Strengthen ties with local Chambers of Commerce and make sure that park events are included in calendars of events.
- Explore ways to inform new residents about the park by providing informational brochures and/or making personal contact with organizations in local towns, such as, Newcomers Clubs, Welcome Wagons, and relocation consultants.
- Review materials (publications and informational exhibits) provided by others, particularly maps along major regional highways, to ensure that the park is included.
- Develop a “rack” card for highway information centers. This rack card will have a focused message that will not necessarily encourage on-site visitation. Artistically designed, this card will introduce the park’s primary themes and encourage visitation to the park’s website.
- Consider a brochure, exhibit, or electronic tour of New York City and Windham, Connecticut, sites that played roles in Weir’s life and the development of American Impressionism.
- Develop a policy that allows others to use park meeting spaces when new facilities are completed.
- The superintendent will consider creating a staff detail to or from the park to other NPS sites with art-related themes and resources.
- The superintendent also will enlist the assistance of others in improving links with public transit, particularly the train.

Since Weir and his guests arrived by train from New York City, there is an obvious interpretive link that could be exploited. However, the park needs help in obtaining permission (and financial assistance) to install informational and interpretive materials at the Branchville train station and, perhaps, in influencing weekend train schedules. When the park’s new visitor center is completed and a shuttle bus system initiated (see below), the park also will need cooperation so the shuttle can conveniently meet arriving passengers.

- The Weir Farm Trust will continue work on a brochure that links regional art sites and the park will remain involved with the Connecticut Impressionist Art Trail.
- The superintendent and the Weir Farm Trust will explore the feasibility of implementing the Public Affairs & Communications Plan’s suggestion for a planned event in Washington, D. C. This event would raise the visibility of the park and help decision-makers understand the park’s significance.

- The superintendent and the Trust also will coordinate recruiting efforts (for staff and for visiting artists) and continue to explore strategies to locate diverse employees, artists, and art historians.

Exhibits of art will play an on-going role in the interpretive programming at the park. Plans are underway for several exhibits, one to be held on-site and another off-site. An exhibit at the Parrish and Bruce Museums is scheduled to open in April 2000.

### **Special Events**

Special events are one effective way to reach local audiences and neighbors. However, on-site space is limited and immediate neighbors have understandable concerns about traffic. Taking these real concerns into account, park staff and the Trust will...

- Develop procedures for using a park shuttle bus to transport visitors to the park for special events, perhaps making regular trips to remote parking in Ridgefield, for example.
- Continue three existing events co-sponsored by the Trust—an annual concert, the visiting artist exhibition, and a holiday open house.
- Continue to participate in off-site events (festivals and fairs) as staffing permits.
- Plan a special event that targets the park's neighbors, an open house, for example, that offers neighbors a behind the scenes look at the park or sneak previews of park plans.
- Plan another event that focuses more specifically on the artistic community but offers a similar behind the scenes look at the studios and plans for artist residencies.
- Plan a third event that encourages the creation of art via hands-on rather than passive activities. Guests would be enticed into the creative process. Serious artists would be welcome as well. If held on-site, this event could use remote parking and the park's shuttle.
- Continue to explore opportunities to interpret the park via off-site exhibitions and joint projects. This form of outreach circumvents the physical limitations of the park while effectively spreading the park's themes to new audiences.

### **Arrival & On-site Orientation**

The park is committed to creation of a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere that evokes the ambience of the Weir Farm when used by the family and family guests.

Considering the size of the park and the nature of park facilities, however, staff must develop strategies that discourage concentrated overuse, particularly by groups, in order to ensure a positive experience at the park. Specifically, staff will...

- Use mailings, the website, and direct contact with groups and individuals to explain site limitations and, when appropriate, suggest alternatives (other times, car pools, off-site parking, specially arranged tours, etc.).
- Work with state and local agencies to improve road signs—signs are needed for Route 7; the existing signs on Route 102 are too small.
- Develop an interim sign for Nod Hill Road to direct visitors to parking; plan for signs to direct visitors to the new visitor center when it is completed.
- Develop pre-determined procedures for handling buses or groups efficiently when they do arrive.
- Identify alternative parking for staff and volunteer vehicles when unavoidably heavy use is anticipated.
- Ask Harpers Ferry Center for a more detailed map in the official “unigrid” park brochure, perhaps including simplified building elevations as frames of reference.
- Request a comprehensive sign plan for the park. This proposed sign plan will remedy existing deficiencies and address needs generated by approved park development. These include: an alternative to the existing, confusing wayside adjacent to the parking lot; the need for carefully considered signs to provide orientation and interpretation at the new visitor center (see below); and any needs for interpretive or identification signs throughout the park.

It is important to note that while previous planning documents wisely cautioned against intrusive signs, actual operating experience suggests a possible role for well-designed and carefully positioned installations inside the park. Certainly, the trail from the visitor center to the park will benefit from a trailhead installation that offers a map, an explanation of facilities and programming, and a summary of the park’s essential stories. The terminus of the trail will need another installation that offers a sense of arrival and re-orientation (see below).

### **Visitor Centers**

During the life of this LRIP, park staff will be confronted with two realities. On the one hand, they must make the most of limited space in a temporary visitor center. On the other, they must plan an efficient and effective visitor center of the future.

Both the temporary visitor center and the future visitor center will use exhibits, brochures, audiovisual and electronic programs, and sales items to orient on-site visitors to story, facilities, and programming. In both temporary and new visitor centers, a person will greet visitors and help with orientation. Since the park will be developing an extensive website (see above), and since exhibit space will be limited even when the new visitor center is completed, the park will continue to provide access to computers for visitor use on-site.

Staff also will...

- Evaluate the value of an interactive CD-ROM program that explores Weir and American Impressionism. How successful have CDs been in reaching museum audiences elsewhere?

#### Existing, Temporary Visitor Center

Until the visitor center is completed off-site, space will be extremely limited. Exactly because of these limitations, existing spaces in the Burlingham House must be used effectively. To improve effectiveness, staff will...

- Develop a new “exhibit” that explains proposed park development to visitors. This exhibit might include changing examples of development milestones, including projects underway or the Trust’s first purchase of a Weir painting. It will encourage participation in park and Trust activities and enlist support. It may encourage visitor feedback on their park experience.
- Make the most of limited space by expanding use of the existing computer station in two ways.
  - 1) Anticipating long-term use both on- and off-site, an interactive program will be developed, via professional contract, to explore the creative process as practiced by Weir and other American Impressionists. This new program will use on-site examples to discuss the Impressionists’ philosophy of art. What inspired them? What were they trying to say with their art? What tools did they use to express themselves artistically? It will help users learn to “read” a painting.
  - 2) Staff also will develop or install a cultural time line that will place farm activities into context. What was happening elsewhere, what milestones were passed in the art world, what were the major events affecting life in New York, etc.?
- Use the temporary visitor center for changing exhibits, beginning with a display of art produced by resident artists.

- Also install large format historic photos around the walls of the temporary visitor center. These photos will be chosen to introduce visitors to who lived at and visited the farm and to show farm activities.
- Because many historic photos exist, staff also will prepare a “photo album” of additional historic views and make it available for visitors to peruse.

### New Visitor Center

The GMP recommends a new visitor center outside the park’s historic core. A site has been chosen along Nod Hill Road near to the park. It appears certain that this new visitor center will become reality during the 5-7 life of this LRIP.

Workshop participants reviewed the existing recommendations for space use in this new facility and, in light of other programming ideas, refined the building’s functions (see Appendix 3).

The interpretive goals for the new visitor center seem clear. It will provide space for visitor orientation including the exhibits and electronic media (audiovisual and computer technology) that can communicate the contextual stories of the park effectively. As presently conceived, the building will contain no theater space. Instead, audiovisual programming will be shown in discrete spaces, with a limited number of seats, integrated into other exhibitry. The building will include flexible space that can be used as public meeting space or, when groups arrive, to view the orientation video (see below). There will be space for sales.

But the new visitor center will perform one additional, crucial service. It will provide controlled environments that can be used to display art safely. There will be space for both permanent and temporary art exhibits.

When visitors are ready to proceed to the park, they will ride a shuttle bus or walk a short trail.

The recommendations that follow are intended to provide practical guidance to staff action in the interim. In order to prepare for the new visitor center, staff will...

- Plan two types of focus group research. One phase of the research will gather information on visitor expectations and help create both an effective initial welcome to the park and design a satisfactory on-site visitor flow. A second phase of inquiry will focus on off-site communication and identify how to interpret park themes for non-visitors.
- Plan for formative surveys designed to evaluate planning as the new visitor center and its interpretive media evolve.
- Prepare objectives for interpretive exhibits.

- Develop a list of requirements for a staffed reception area and sales (desk or not?, storage of safety items, storage of maps and brochures, telephone, etc.)
- Begin planning for a new short, 12-minute video.

This program will play an important role in orienting visitors to the primary park themes in the future but will be useful in the interim as well.

Using images of artwork and the rich collection of historic photos of farm and family, the new video will place the park into context and reinforce the chronology of events. It will explain the marriage of landscape and art concept adopted by the GMP and introduce visitors to the surviving resources. Not intended as an informational, didactic piece, it will capture the intimacy of the farm and develop an affinity for the artists who created on site, as well as their families and friends.

Two other versions of the video—one for school groups and another, longer version similar to a made for PBS documentary—will be considered in the future.

When completed, this video will be offered as a sales item (see below).

- Begin to develop an operating plan for the shuttle buses. Considerations include schedules (organized by season) and off-site use (educational programs, links to public transportation, use for special events, etc.).
- Develop a list of requirements for a shuttle bus staging area adjacent to the visitor center and the site's historic core, i.e., seating, shelter, information, maps, etc.

### **Entering the Park**

Visitors will have a choice when they are ready to move from the new visitor center to the park. They can ride the shuttle bus or walk along a landscaped path. The GMP recommends using the Weir Barn as the in-park destination of the shuttle bus and as an anchor for the trail from the visitor center. The proposed comprehensive sign plan for the park (see above) will address the interpretive opportunities along this path. At a minimum there will be a trailhead that summarizes the essence of the park (the park's themes) and provides information on the length of the trail and what visitors will see at the other end. Trailhead content also might help visitors to “read” the landscape as they walk; once the trail enters the park historic core, interpretation via wayside exhibits will be minimal or non-existent.

All-weather interpretive exhibits at the barn will include a map of the park, provide an overview of the whole complex, and introduce visitors more specifically to Weir's use of the property as a farm as well as a source of inspiration and retreat. These exhibits will be included in the proposed comprehensive sign plan.

In season (the Weir Barn is unheated), visitors will be greeted by staff who can explain how best to proceed.

### **Other Buildings and Grounds**

The alternative selected in the GMP proposes a “the marriage of landscape and art,” accomplished “by reuniting works of art with the landscapes that inspired them” and “by presenting the farm’s buildings and landscape to the visitor as they appeared to their historic occupants.” Creativity and landscape converged at Weir Farm. Of equal importance, that convergence endured and continues to this day. Artists at work and visitors at leisure can share, each in their own way, the influence of the farm and its setting. Carefully planned interpretation can deepen and enhance that influence.

In order to achieve the vision of the GMP, park staff will...

- Ask the Trust to continue to publish and sell the “Weir Farm Historic Painting Sites Trail” brochure. Work with the Trust to produce an updated version of the brochure when the new visitor center opens.

This publication effectively links landscape to art and offers easily understood insights into the creative process.

- Consider well designed but experimental exterior exhibits that integrate art into the landscape, without text (see above). If this experiment is successful, more permanent exhibits will be included in the park’s comprehensive sign plan.
- Use the temporary exhibit that will be installed in the interim visitor center (see “Existing Visitor Center,” above) to explain the park’s goals for the landscape.
- Consider installing the “palace car” that was recreated for the Weir 2000 exhibit in either the new visitor center or on the new visitor center grounds. The interior could be used for a small interpretive exhibit—perhaps just a single panel showing the car in photos and in art, and explaining how Weir used it (and why it was a logical Impressionist tool of creation).
- Plan and develop a brochure or brochures that interpret the historical farmscape and plantings. The brochure(s) will explain that the park grounds are managed today as part of a larger ecosystem that includes all of the natural resources such as woodlands and wetlands.
- Expedite construction of a walkway along Nod Hill Road (or an alternative path) to ensure visitor safety.

- Implement the recommendations contained in the approved Cultural Landscape Report, Volume 2: Analysis and Treatment (see Appendix 4).
- Develop guided and self-guided options for seeing the park.

Language in the GMP actually describes the interpretive intent of a tour of the park—it will acquaint visitors “with the domestic, personal, and creative dimensions of the lives of Weir and his successors.” Both options will interpret the park’s primary historic buildings in similar ways.

### The Studios

The studios are the place to interpret how art was created and what tools the artists used. The contrast between the two studios is evident and easily understood. In many ways, these studios represent the heart of the site and because so few historic art studios survive and are open for visitation they are an unusual resource.

### The Weir House

Based on the GMP, only the first floor of the house will be refurnished and open. A Furnishings Plan, now in preparation, will determine what might be available for display.

Inside the house, interpretation will connect everyday life and the artistic process. Visitors will understand how Weir interacted with family and friends. They will see the objects, including the art, that Weir wanted to have around him. And they will be reminded that others have lived at Weir Farm since and have influenced the appearance of the house and farm. There will be no exhibits.

### The Caretaker’s House

The caretaker’s house will be interpreted from the outside only, perhaps via a brochure on the agricultural landscape or, if recommended by the proposed sign plan, a simple wayside or marker.

### The Caretaker’s Garage

The caretaker’s garage will be converted into studio space for contemporary artists. At times, visitors will be allowed inside the studio to see work in progress and meet on-site artists.

### The Burlingham House

The Burlingham House will be converted from the temporary visitor center into a residence for artists.

### The Burlingham Barn

The Burlingham Barn will be converted into a year round space for art classes and lectures. It also will become a place to engage visitors in the creative process.

- Staff will encourage the creation of art by providing inexpensive materials that can be used by visitors and families to complete art projects. Easy instructions will allow the activity to occur without staff although, at times, artists in residence may be recruited to help.
- Around the walls of the barn, staff will display art made by visitors.
- In addition, staff will install large format photos of the farm, family, and guests.
- In the future, more extensive art projects, with supplemental instruction, will be developed and offered for a fee.

### The Guided Option

The park is an intimate, personal expression of creativity that will benefit from the use of personal services interpretive techniques. As with all parks, staff and volunteers must be able to use the park's resources to explore all of the park's themes. In the case of Weir Farm, they have an additional role—they must help visitors to see in different ways, to look carefully at art, to consider how art is created, to understand the role that art plays in society, and even to tap the creativity that may lie inside. These interpretive responsibilities require special training. To prepare, park staff will...

- Discuss the frequency and length of regular tours that cover all of the park's themes as well as special tours that focus on some specific story or resource. They will explore the feasibility of "fixed" point duty at sensitive or interpretively important locations. Since conditions during the life of this LRIP will change (the new visitor center is the most obvious and predictable change, but access to park buildings also could change), a variety of options will be needed. Staffing requests and training will emerge from these discussions.
- Design an innovative training program that not only develops subject matter expertise (on Weir, American Impressionism, Young, etc.) but also ensures appropriate skills related to art appreciation and interpretation. In order to address each of the park's primary themes, staff and volunteers need special

training that will help visitors “look” at art. Tours must do more than interpret the legacy of place and of people, they must also explain the legacy of art in society (see “Parkwide Interpretive Themes”).

- Plan and offer a regular program of tours by “professional” artists and art educators for those visitors who want to go beyond the basics of art appreciation, particularly since the park has decided that the artistic community, broadly defined, is a targeted audience (see “Visitor Profile”).

### The Self-guided Option

Because there may be times when staff are not available for all visitors or because some visitors may prefer to see the park at their own pace, staff will...

- Design a self-guided option(s).

Security of the artifacts and buildings will be an obvious concern that must be solved before this option is feasible. If visitors are allowed inside unattended buildings, how will the structures and contents be protected (electronic surveillance, barriers, etc.)?

Interpretive media could include an audio tour distributed at the new visitor center; headphones would control noise spillover. Audio tours typically use “voices” from the past, actual quotations mixed with contemporary narrative. At Weir Farm, a recorded tour could effectively explain how both landscape and domestic life served as sources of inspiration and how the artists used the tools of their profession to complete the creative process.

- Park staff will work with the Trust to develop a policy about contemporary art installed within the park’s boundaries, including in the landscape. Where (if anywhere) will installations be appropriate? How long might they stay up? How would they be selected?

### **Visiting and Resident Artists**

The visiting and resident artists programs sponsored by the Weir Farm Trust play an important role in continuing the farm’s artistic tradition, a tradition that will be significantly enhanced by converting the Burlingham House into a residence for artists and the caretaker’s garage into an open studio (both are recommended by the GMP). These programs foster on-going creativity and demonstrate the contemporary relevance of art to society. Visitors will be able to watch art creation and meet artists involved in the creative process. The Trust will...

- Continue the lecture series that complements these programs.
- Continue the visiting artist annual exhibition and catalog.

On a less formal basis, park staff need to...

- Develop procedures that will comfortably accommodate artists (other than those included in the Trust's programs) who want to work on-site.

## **Education**

The park has decided that it will make special efforts to communicate with educational groups both on- and off-site. Several desired experiences (see "Desired Visitor Experiences") seek to help young people understand and become personally involved in the creative process.

However, development of a well-conceived educational program is complicated by several factors. Connecticut does not have state standards of learning (individual schools develop their own curriculum); nearby New York does. Preparing materials that will be useful to local schools as well as others that might choose to use the park's website poses problems that require professional guidance. On-site facilities and even parking are limited and will, to some extent, continue to require careful planning to ensure successful group visits.

Because the park is undergoing development, some recommendations intended to overcome these challenges are immediate and interim while others are linked to new facilities or supplemented staffing.

Immediately, park staff will...

- Work with Heritage Partners to complete an assessment of how to use the park's shuttle buses to transport staff and volunteers to schools for off-site programs.

Expand the scope of that assessment to include recommendations for school programming.

Seek professional evaluation of what is offered currently to children and school groups. Does existing programming achieve appropriate educational goals? Can interim programs easily be linked to curriculum, at least for local schools? Can the kid's website be integrated into programs that provide a formal sequence of learning?

Gather information about existing programs that address similar themes and stories, the "landscape explorers" programs at Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site, for example.

- Develop a strategy that will provide leadership and coordination for educational planning. Someone must be available to oversee planning and delivery of both on- and off-site educational programming.

- Prepare policies for on-site school visits that reflect the reality of existing conditions. These policies will earmark times for visits and limit the number of groups accepted on-site.

With current facilities and staffing, the park can adequately handle only a limited number of on-site school groups. Furthermore, on-site programs designed to achieve specific educational objectives have not been developed. To the extent that staffing allows, staff and volunteers may travel to the schools instead.

- Prepare an Education Plan to guide any park programming linked to a formal sequence of learning. Ideas to explore as part of this planning process include...

Creation an advisory group to provide feedback on existing and proposed educational programming offered by the park and the Trust.

Opportunities for professional development of teachers via an “Institute” on-site or affiliated with the park. Ideally, this program would involve collaboration with co-sponsors.

Teacher workshops designed to explain how to effectively use park resources.

In partnership with the Trust, the park will...

- Continue to provide hands-on art instruction. Although instruction for adults has received only moderate response, programs for children are very popular.
- Ask the Trust to gather more information on who attends its programs.
- Continually re-assess these programs as new facilities are completed and will consider expanding what is offered to young people, particularly in light of the comprehensive Education Plan that will be written of the park.
- Continue the popular Trust-sponsored lectures for adults.
- Develop experimental art programs for families, in addition to a full schedule of programs for children (see “Existing Conditions”).

These programs would invite families to create art together. They might take several forms. When not in use by groups or planned educational activities, the converted Burlingham Barn will provide space for visitors, including families, to try their hand at art. Recycled materials and instructions describing simple art projects will be available for visitor use. Wall spaces will be used to display examples of visitor or group creations.

A more structured program might bring families together for personal instruction that will lead to a family art project.

Resident or visiting artists might be recruited to help with either the informal or structured program.

### **Recruitment of Additional Support**

The Weir Farm Trust has been approached by interested partners and asked for ways to provide hands-on help to the park. In response, staff will...

- Meet with the Trust and develop a list of work projects that might be undertaken by volunteers, with minimal supervision.

Several types of programming seem to be particularly attractive to funding organizations—programs for children, the artist in residence program, and environmental art.

- Staff and the Trust will seek ways to maximize the fund-raising potential of these types of programming.

### **Sales**

Sales publications are an effective way to allow visitors to see the products of creation and, with narrative explanation, understand the context of the art, the techniques employed by the artist, and even assessments of the artists' talents—all themes of the park. Staff will work with the Weir Farm Trust to...

- Prepare a Scope of Sales statement.
- Develop a new video program (see above) that can be sold as well.
- Develop new postcards. At least three types of cards would be interpretively useful: art (Weir, Young, and others); historic photos of the farm and families; and contemporary scenes (landscapes and interiors).
- Consider development of a publication that uses surviving historic photos to communicate park themes.
- Explore a cultural time line sales item.
- Develop an audiotape tour (see above) that will allow visitors to see the park's grounds on their own.
- Develop a new publication on Mahonri Young, perhaps focusing on his sketches.

- Develop a small reproduction item, based on the park collection, that can be used as a premium item for donors and also, perhaps in a less expensive form, can be sold to visitors.
- Review items that interpret the natural aspects of the park and consider adding more.

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# Research Needs

Research in the following areas is needed to support the park's interpretive program...

- An Historic Resource Study that focuses on the use of the house and studios and includes the roles of other artists at Weir Farm.

This study would provide valuable information for tours. It has been funded for FY2000.

- Peer perspectives of Weir.
- Personal recollections of Dorothy Weir.
- An ethnography study that will address the story of the farm and other laborers at the site including Paul Remy, the Bass family, and the Knoche family.
- A continuation of the oral history project that began in 1999. In addition to oral histories of the Bass and Knoche families, other oral histories could include interviews with Weir and Young family descendents and artists who worked with Mahonri Young or Sperry Andrews.
- A Natural Resource Inventory (components already begun) that will include items such as base cartographic data, an inventory of fauna, and a water quality inventory.

Several of these topics would help with the development of outreach programs.

# Collection Needs

The new visitor center will include climate-controlled space for collection and archival storage supplemented with work areas (see Appendix 3). As new facilities are developed, several related projects will improve the interpretive effectiveness of the park's collection. Park staff will...

- Develop and “publicize” procedures for use of the park's growing archival collection by scholars.
- Prepare additional finding aids for the archives. Finding aids are needed for the:
  - Dorothy Weir Young Scrapbook Collection (target FY 01)
  - Dorothy Weir Young Manuscript (target FY 01)
  - Cora Weir Burlingham Scrapbook Collection (target FY 01)
  - Documentation of the site's history (target FY 01 to begin collecting, FY 03 for processing)
  - Charlie Burlingham Photograph Collection (target FY 02)
  - Cultural and Natural Resource Management documentation on projects such as the sunken garden restoration, Weir house roof, corncrib, etc. (target FY 03)
- Develop a complete set and subject-indexed set of archives transcripts.
- Design access to the historic photograph (now in progress), art slide, and transparency databases.
- Process and maintain all library materials.

# Staffing

## **Interim Staffing Needs Until New Visitor Center is Operational:**

(asterisk (\*) indicates new positions)

### Management/Administration:

- Superintendent, GS-13
- Administrative Officer, GS-9
- Temporary Administrative Technician, 20 hours/week, GS-5

### Interpretation:

- Chief of Visitor Services/ Collections Management, GS-9/11 (Supervisory Park Ranger)
- Park Ranger, GS-5/7/9
- \*Education Coordinator, GS-9
- \*Permanent Park Ranger, GS-5 (now a temporary position)
- Seasonal fulltime GS-5 (or SCA) ranger for summer season

### Curatorial:

- \*Permanent Museum Technician, GS-7 (now a temporary position)
- \*Permanent Museum Technician, GS-7, 20 hours/week (now a temporary position)

### Maintenance:

- Facility Manager, GS-11
- Woodcrafter, WG-10
- Temporary Maintenance Worker/Painter, WG-7
- \*Seasonal Maintenance Worker, WG-5 (buildings & utilities)
- Horticulturist, GS-11
- Temporary Gardener, WG-6
- \*Seasonal Maintenance Worker, WG-5 (grounds)

## **Staffing Needs for New Visitor Center and When Burlingham Barn Rehabilitated:**

### Management/Administration:

- Superintendent, GS-13
- Administrative Officer, GS-9
- \*Administrative Technician, GS-5

### Interpretation:

- Chief of Visitor Services/ Collections Management, GS-9/11 (Supervisory Park Ranger)
- Park Ranger, GS-5/7/9

- \* 1 additional permanent 5/7/9 Park Ranger (for a total of two 5/7/9 rangers working on (aside from behind-the-scenes planning work) education outreach, Burlingham barn coverage, historic core/ tour coverage, visitor center/ gallery coverage)
- \*Education Coordinator, GS-9
- \*Permanent Park Ranger, GS-5 (now a temporary position)
- \*2 Seasonal fulltime GS-5 (or SCA) rangers for summer season (now have one)

Curatorial:

- \*Museum Curator, GS-9/11
- \*Permanent Museum Technician, GS-7/9 (now a temporary position, GS-7)
- \*Permanent Archives Technician, GS-7, 20 hours/week (now a temporary museum technician position)
- \*Permanent Museum Technician/ Housekeeping, GS 5/7 (or WG equivalent), 20 hours per week

Maintenance:

- Facility Manager, GS-12
- \*Secretary, GS-5, 20 hours/week
- Woodcrafter, WG-10
- \*Maintenance Mechanic, WG-10
- \*Maintenance Worker/Painter, WG-7
- \*Seasonal Maintenance Worker, WG-5 (buildings & utilities)
- \*Laborer/Custodial, 20 hours/week, WG-3
- Horticulturist, GS-11
- \*Gardener, WG-8
- \*Seasonal Maintenance Worker, WG-5 (grounds)

# Implementation Plan

This Implementation Plan lists the recommendations included in Part 2 of the LRIP. The recommendations appear in the order in which they are discussed in the text. For a more complete understanding of each recommendation, refer to the plan (see page number references).

C = Curatorial, E = Everyone, I = Interpretation, M = Maintenance/ Natural Resource Management, S = Superintendent, T = Weir Farm Trust

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Who?</b>		<b>FY00</b>	<b>FY01</b>	<b>FY02</b>	<b>FY03</b>	<b>FY04</b>	<b>FY05</b>	<b>FY06</b>	<b>New VC/ B Barn</b>
Gather data on "visitors" p. 28	I				X					
Stress the nature of the site p. 28	I	On-going	X							
<b>The Internet</b>										
Regular reviews of website p. 28	E	On-going	X							
Add info. on park development p. 28	I, S, T	On-going		X						
Establish additional links p. 28	I	On-going	X							
Explain how to use collections p. 28	C, I			X						
Add sales link p. 28	I, S, T					X				
Include more visuals p. 29	I	On-going	X							
Add links with art locations p. 29	I	On-going	X							
Add web address to publications p. 29	I	On-going	X							
Include new ed. materials p. 29	I					X				
Develop virtual tours p. 29	I			X						
Answer visitor inquiries online p. 29	I			X						
<b>Mail &amp; Phone</b>										
Review/expand mailing lists p. 29	I, S, T							X		
Expand knowledge of website p. 29	I	On-going	X							
Keep voice mail updated p. 29	I	On-going	X							

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Who?</b>		<b>FY00</b>	<b>FY01</b>	<b>FY02</b>	<b>FY03</b>	<b>FY04</b>	<b>FY05</b>	<b>FY06</b>	<b>New VC/ B Barn</b>
<b>Outreach</b>										
Explore news column p. 29	S			X						
More development news p. 29	I, S	On-going		X						
Strengthen Chamber of C. ties p. 29	S			X						
Inform new residents p. 30	I	On-going	X							
Review materials of others p. 30	I	On-going	X							
Develop "rack" card p. 30	I			X						
Consider tour of NYC and CT p. 30	I			X						
New policy on space use p. 30	I, S									X
Create staff details p. 30	S			X						
Improve public transit links p. 30	S									X
Brochure linking art sites p. 30	I, T	On-going				X				
Explore event in D.C. p. 30	S, T			X						
Coordinate recruiting p. 30	S, T	On-going	X							
<b>Special Events</b>										
Use shuttles p. 31	I	On-going				X				
Continue 3 events p. 31	I, T	On-going	X							
Participate in off-sites p. 31	I	On-going	X							
New event for neighbors p. 31	S, I					X				
New event for art community p. 31	S, T, I									X
New hands-on event p. 31	I, T					X				
Continue off-site exhibits p. 31	S, I, T	Ongoing	X							
<b>Arrival &amp; Orientation</b>										
Suggest alternatives p. 32	I	On-going	X							
Improve highway signs p. 32	S			X						
Add interim road sign p. 32	S			X						
Plan new road signs p. 32	S									X
Procedures for buses p. 32	I		X							

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Who?</b>		<b>FY00</b>	<b>FY01</b>	<b>FY02</b>	<b>FY03</b>	<b>FY04</b>	<b>FY05</b>	<b>FY06</b>	<b>New VC/ B Barn</b>
Staff parking p. 32	I, M		X							
New map for unigrid p. 32	I									X
Request comprehensive sign plan p. 32	S									X
<b>Interim Visitor Center</b>										
Evaluate CD-ROM on Weir p. 33	I, T				X					
Exhibit on development p. 33	I, T				X					
Expand use of computer p. 33	I					X				
Use changing exhibits p. 33	I, T	On-going	X							
Install historic photos p. 33	I	On-going	X							
Prepare photo album p. 33	I, C					X				
<b>New Visitor Center</b>										
Plan focus groups p. 34	I			X						
Plan formative surveys p. 34	S, I					X				
Write exhibit objectives p. 34	I, S, T				X					
List requirements for reception p. 34	I, S, T				X					
Plan video p. 34	I, S, T				X					
Operating plan for shuttles p. 35	S									X
List requirements for staging p. 35	S					X				
<b>Buildings &amp; Grounds</b>										
Continue painting trail brochure p. 36	T	On-going	X							
Update painting trail brochure p. 36	I, T									X
Consider installing palace car p. 36	S									X
Brochure on farmscape p. 36	I, M					X				
Improve walkway p. 36	M						X			
Implement CLR p. 36	M	On-going	X							
Dev. guided/self-guided options p. 36	I									X
Hands-on art in Burl. Barn p. 38	I, T					X				X

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Who?</b>		<b>FY00</b>	<b>FY01</b>	<b>FY02</b>	<b>FY03</b>	<b>FY04</b>	<b>FY05</b>	<b>FY06</b>	<b>New VC/ B Barn</b>
Art display in Burl. Barn p. 38	I				X					X
Historic photos in Burl. Barn p. 38	I				X					X
Plan for tours p. 38	I						X			
New training p. 38	I	On-going								
Artist tours p. 39	I, T				X					
Solve security p. 39	M									X
Consider audio tours p. 39	I, T									X
Policy on contemporary art p. 39	E	On-going		X						
<b>Visiting &amp; Resident Artists</b>										
Continue lecture series p. 39	T	On-going	X							
Continue visiting art. ex. & cat. p. 39	T	On-going	X							
Procedures for on-site art p. 40	I			X						
<b>Education</b>										
Complete/expand ed. assessment p. 40	I				X					
Provide ed. leadership in park p. 40	I				X					
Policies for school's on-site p. 41	I			X						
Prepare Ed. Plan p. 41	I				X					
Continue art instruction p. 41	T, I	On-going								
Gather info. on attendance p. 41	T			X						
Re-assess Trust programs p. 41	T, I, S	On-going								
Continue lectures for adults p. 41	T	On-going								
New program for families p. 41	T, I									X
<b>Additional Support</b>										
List projects for volunteers p. 42	E	On-going	X							
Maximize fund-raising p. 42	S, T	On-going	X							

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Who?</b>		<b>FY00</b>	<b>FY01</b>	<b>FY02</b>	<b>FY03</b>	<b>FY04</b>	<b>FY05</b>	<b>FY06</b>	<b>New VC/ B Barn</b>
<b>Sales</b>										
Prepare Scope of Sales p. 42	T, I			X						
New postcards p. 42	T, I	On-going	X							
Publication with historic photos p. 42	T, I				X					
Cultural time line p. 42	T, I				X					
Audio tour for sale p. 42	T, I									X
Publication on Young p. 42	T, I					X				
Reproduction items p. 42	T, I				X					
Items on nature p. 43	T, I			X						
<b>Research</b>										
HRS on house, studios, artists p. 44	I		X							
Peer perspectives on Weir p. 44	I					X				
Recollection of D. Weir p. 44	I					X				
Ethnography Study p. 44	I							X		
Natural Resource Inventory p. 44	M	On-going								
<b>Collections</b>										
Procedures for use p. 45	C			X						
Finding aids for archives p. 45	C			X						
Archives transcripts p. 45	C			X						
Access to photos, slides, trans. p. 45	C				X					
Library materials p. 45	C					X				

# Recommendations by Fiscal Year

## Fiscal Year 2000

Stress the nature of the site p. 28	I	On-going
Regular reviews of website p. 28	E	On-going
Establish additional links p. 28	I	On-going
Include more visuals p. 29	I	On-going
Add links with art locations p. 29	I	On-going
Add web address to publications p. 29	I	On-going
Expand knowledge of website p. 29	I	On-going
Keep voice mail updated p. 29	I	On-going
Inform new residents p. 30	I	On-going
Review materials of others p. 30	I	On-going
Coordinate recruiting p. 30	S, T	On-going
Continue 3 events p. 31	I, T	On-going
Participate in off-sites p. 31	I	On-going
Continue off-site exhibits p. 31	S, I, T	Ongoing
Suggest alternatives p. 32	I	On-going
Procedures for buses p. 32	I	
Staff parking p. 32	I, M	
Use changing exhibits p. 33	I, T	On-going
Install historic photos p. 33	I	On-going
Continue painting trail brochure p. 36	T	On-going
Implement CLR p. 36	M	On-going
New training p. 38	I	On-going
Continue lecture series p. 39	T	On-going
Continue visiting art. ex. & cat. p. 39	T	On-going
Continue art instruction p. 41	T, I	On-going
Re-assess Trust programs p. 41	T, I, S	On-going
Continue lectures for adults p. 41	T	On-going
List projects for volunteers p. 42	E	On-going
Maximize fund-raising p. 42	S, T	On-going
New postcards p. 42	T, I	On-going
HRS on house, studios, artists p. 44	I	
Natural Resource Inventory p. 44	M	On-going

## Fiscal Year 2001

Add info. on park development p. 28	I, S, T	On-going
Explain how to use collections p. 28	C, I	
Develop virtual tours p. 29	I	
Answer visitor inquiries online p. 29	I	
Explore news column p. 29	S	
More development news p. 29	I, S	On-going
Strengthen Chamber of C. ties p. 29	S	
Develop "rack" card p. 30	I	
Consider tour of NYC and CT p. 30	I	

Create staff details p. 30	S	
Explore event in D.C. p. 30	S, T	
Improve highway signs p. 32	S	
Add interim road sign p. 32	S	
Plan focus groups p. 34	I	
Write exhibit objectives p. 34	I, S, T	
List requirements for reception p. 34	I, S, T	
Plan video p. 34	I, S, T	
Improve walkway p. 36	M	
Policy on contemporary art p. 39	E	On-going
Procedures for on-site art p. 40	I	
Policies for school's on-site p. 41	I	
Gather info. on attendance p. 41	T	
Prepare Scope of Sales p. 42	T, I	
Items on nature p. 43	T, I	
Procedures for use p. 45	C	
Finding aids for archives p. 45	C	
Archives transcripts p. 45	C	

### Fiscal Year 2002

Gather data on "visitors" p. 28	I	
Include new ed. materials p. 29	I	
Review/expand mailing lists p. 29	I, S, T	
Use shuttles p. 31	I	On-going
New event for neighbors p. 31	S, I	
New hands-on event p. 31	I, T	
Evaluate CD-ROM on Weir p. 33	I, T	
Exhibit on development p. 33	I, T	
Hands-on art in Burl. Barn p. 38	I, T	
Art display in Burl. Barn p. 38	I	
Historic photos in Burl. Barn p. 38	I	
Complete/expand ed. assessment p. 40	I	
Provide ed. leadership in park p. 40	I	
Prepare Ed. Plan p. 41	I	
Publication with historic photos p. 42	T, I	
Cultural time line p. 42	T, I	
Reproduction items p. 42	T, I	
Access to photos, slides, trans. p. 45	C	

### Fiscal Year 2003

Add sales link p. 28	I, S, T	
Brochure linking art sites p. 30	I, T	On-going
Expand use of computer p. 33	I	
Prepare photo album p. 33	I, C	
Plan formative surveys p. 34	S, I	
List requirements for staging p. 35	S	
Brochure on farmscape p. 36	I, M	
Artist tours p. 39	I, T	

Publication on Young p. 42	T, I
Peer perspectives on Weir p. 44	I
Recollection of D. Weir p. 44	I
Library materials p. 45	C

**Fiscal Year 2004**

Plan for tours p. 38	I
Ethnography Study p. 44	I

**Fiscal Year 2005**

**Fiscal Year 2006**

**New VC/Barn**

New policy on space use p. 30	I, S
Improve public transit links p. 30	S
New event for art community p. 31	S, T, I
Plan new road signs p. 32	S
New map for unigrid p. 32	I
Request comprehensive sign plan p. 32	S
Operating plan for shuttles p. 35	S
Update painting trail brochure p. 36	I, T
Consider installing palace car p. 36	S
Dev. guided/self-guided options p. 36	I
Hands-on art in Burl. Barn p. 38	I, T
Art display in Burl. Barn p. 38	I
Historic photos in Burl. Barn p. 38	I
Solve security p. 39	M
Consider audio tours p. 39	I, T
New program for families p. 41	T, I
Audio tour for sale p. 42	T, I

# Participants

## Attended Workshops

Hildy Cummings, Art Curator, Historian, Member of the Weir Farm Trust Council of Overseers

Constance Evans, Executive Director, Weir Farm Trust

Bonnie Garmisa, Museum Education Specialist, Heritage Partners

Joan Kaskell, Chair of Overseers, Weir Farm Trust

Cliff Laube, Park Ranger, Weir Farm NHS

Linda Lindroth, Artist, Professor of Art

John Maounis, Acting Deputy Associate Regional Director for Cultural Resources, Northeast Regional Office, National Park Service

Anne Markham, Chief of Visitor Services/ Collections Management, Weir Farm NHS

Sarah Olson, Former Superintendent, Weir Farm NHS

Patti Reilly, Education Specialist, Boston Support Office, National Park Service

Meghan Scanlon, Administrator, Weir Farm Trust

Majorie Smith, Park Planner, Boston Support Office, National Park Service

Dolores Tirri, Museum Technician, Weir Farm NHS

Greg Waters, Horticulturist, Weir Farm NHS

Ron Thomson, Facilitator/Writer, Heritage Partners

## Commented on Drafts

Roy Cortez, Superintendent, Weir Farm NHS

Constance Evans, Executive Director, Weir Farm Trust

Robert Fox, Facility Manager, Weir Farm NHS

Michelle Gutmann, Park Ranger, Weir Farm NHS

Hope Kocian, Museum Technician, Weir Farm NHS

Cliff Laube, Park Ranger, Weir Farm NHS

Anne Markham, Chief of Visitor Services/ Collections Management, Weir Farm NHS

Sarah Olson, Former Superintendent, Weir Farm NHS

Patti Reilly, Education Specialist, Boston Support Office, National Park Service

Dolores Tirri, Museum Technician, Weir Farm NHS

Greg Waters, Horticulturist, Weir Farm NHS

# Appendix 1

## Interpretive Themes Suggested by the GMP

### Primary Themes

Weir Farm, the summer home and workplace of American painter Julian Alden Weir, became an important place in the development of American Impressionism, an art movement characterized in part by the celebration of place. Weir Farm was also a destination and inspiration for numerous artistic figures of the late-nineteenth century.

Weir Farm continues to serve as a setting and inspiration for visiting artists. In addition, it has been continuously occupied by working artists, including Mahonri Young and Doris and Sperry Andrews, who have preserved the character of the property even as they adapted it to their own needs.

### Secondary Themes

Weir Farm was protected from development and established as a national historic site due to the foresight, commitment, coordination, and effort of local citizens (including Doris and Sperry Andrews and Cora Weir Burlingham), private organizations, and public agencies on both a regional and national basis.

Artists have historically influenced environmental and conservation movements by producing images that served to galvanize political response.

The relationship of landscape and art has evolved because of technological advances (for example, premixed paints in tubes) and changing attitudes towards nature.

Weir Farm contains a variety of natural and cultural resources that illustrate several historical periods and a variety of land uses.

Paintings, sculpture, and etchings and other prints have been produced at Weir Farm, and the process of working in each of these media requires distinctive skills and equipment.

# **Appendix 2**

## **Planning Documents Completed or Underway (2/00)**

The following documents contain information useful to interpretation:

“Weir Farm National Historic Site Visitor Study Completion Report,” prepared by Robert Manning, 1993.

“Weir Farm National Historic Site General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement,” 1995.

“The Weir Farm: Working Agriculture and the Vision of Rural Life in New England 1860-1940,” prepared by Jack Larkin, 1996.

“Cultural Landscape Report for Weir Farm National Historic Site, Volume 1: Site History and Existing Conditions,” prepared by Cynthia Zaitzevsky Associates, 1996.

“Cultural Landscape Report for Weir Farm National Historic Site, Volume 2: Analysis and Treatment,” prepared by Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service, 1997.

“Weir Farm National Historic Site Collection Management Plan” in final draft 2000.

“Weir Farm Furnishing Report,” in final draft 2000.

“Weir Farm National Historic Site Preservation Maintenance Plan: Operations Manual and Maintenance Records” prepared by Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service, 1999.

“Weir Farm Historic Structures Report,” in final draft 2000.

# Appendix 3

## Functions & Square Footage for New Visitor Center

Function	Square Feet
Reception, orientation to story and facilities	1,200
Permanent and temporary exhibit and art display	1,200
Exhibit preparation space	?
Meetings and programs	1,500
Rest rooms	300
Sales	400
Curatorial support & storage, library & research space	2,100
Security	200
Receiving	200
Staff meetings	400
Break room and kitchen	300
Offices	2,000

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# **Appendix 4**

## **Recommendations from the Cultural Landscape Report, Volume Two: Analysis and Treatment**

The first volume of the Cultural Landscape Report addresses the site's history and existing conditions. Volume Two explores additional contexts and inventories character-defining landscape features. It concludes with a landscape treatment plan and tasks needed to implement the management philosophy outlined in the park's General Management Plan (GMP).

Consistent with the GMP, the landscape treatment plan divides the site into three parcels: the Weir Complex, the Burlingham Complex, and the Pond and Woodland Area. For the Weir Complex, the area lying to the north and west of the intersection of Nod Hill Road and Pelham Lane, restoration to c. 1940 is recommended. The Burlingham Complex, which is the area south and west of the Nod Hill Road and Pelham Lane intersection, will be rehabilitated to accommodate new facilities and features for visitor use and environmental programs. At the Pond and Woodland Area, to the east of Nod Hill Road, an accurate restoration to c. 1940 is impossible due to suburbanization within the historical boundary of Weir's original farm. Therefore, a rehabilitative treatment is specified to mitigate the visual impact of development.

Chapter Three of the treatment plan, "The Weir Farm: Working Agriculture and the Vision of Rural New England," is an exploration of Weir Farm's place within New England's agricultural and rural traditions. This chapter is particularly valuable to the park's interpretive program because earlier contextual studies had examined Weir Farm primarily as the inspiration for Weir's art and the subsequent generations of artists who followed him as the property's stewards.

# Appendix 5

## Programmatic Accessibility

### Guidelines for Interpretive Media

Prepared by  
Harpers Ferry Center  
Accessibility Task Force  
June 1996

#### Statement of Purpose

This document is a guide for promoting full access to interpretive media to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to National Parks. Just as the needs and abilities of individuals cannot be reduced to simple statements, it is impossible to construct guidelines for interpretive media that can apply to every situation in the National Park System.

These guidelines define a high level of programmatic access which can be met in most situations. They articulate key areas of concern and note generally accepted solutions.

Due to the diversity of park resources and the variety of interpretive situations, flexibility and versatility are important.

Each interpretive medium contributes to the total park program. All media have inherent strengths and weaknesses, and it is our intent to capitalize on their strengths and provide alternatives where they are deficient. It should also be understood that any interpretive medium is just one component of the overall park experience. In some instances, especially with regard to learning disabilities, personal services, that is one-on-one interaction, may be the most appropriate and versatile interpretive approach.

In the final analysis, interpretive design is subjective, and dependent on both aesthetic considerations as well as the particular characteristics and resources available for a specific program. Success or failure should be evaluated by examining all interpretive offerings of a park. Due to the unique characteristics of each situation, parks should be evaluated on a case by case basis. Nonetheless, the goal is to fully comply with NPS policy:

"...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the quality of the park experience for everyone."  
NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

#### Audiovisual Programs

Audiovisual programs include motion pictures, sound/slide programs, video programs, and oral history programs. As a matter of policy, all audiovisual programs produced by the Harpers Ferry Center will include some method of captioning. The Approach used will vary according to the conditions of the installation area and the media format used, and will be selected in consultation with the parks and regions.

The captioning method will be identified as early as possible in the planning process and will be presented in an integrated setting where possible. To the extent possible, visitors will be offered a choice in viewing captioned or uncaptioned versions, but in situations where a choice is not possible or feasible, a captioned version of all programs will be made available. Park management will decide on the most appropriate operational approach for the particular site.

#### Guidelines Affecting Mobility Impaired Visitors

1. The theater, auditorium, or viewing area should be accessible and free of architectural barriers, or alternative accommodations will be provided. UFAS 4.1.
2. Wheelchair locations will be provided according to ratios outlined in UFAS 4.1.2(18a).
3. Viewing heights and angles will be favorable for those in designated wheelchair locations.
4. In designing video or interactive components, control mechanisms will be placed in accessible location, usually between 9" and 48" from the ground and no more than 24" deep.

#### Guidelines Affecting Visually Impaired Visitors

1. Simultaneous audio description will be considered for installations where the equipment can be properly installed and maintained.

#### Guidelines Affecting Hearing Impaired Visitors

1. All audiovisual programs will be produced with appropriate captions.
2. Copies of scripts will be provided to the parks as a standard procedure.
3. Audio amplification and listening systems will be provided in accordance with UFAS 4.1.2(18b).

#### Guidelines Affecting Learning Impaired Visitors

1. Unnecessarily complex and confusing concepts will be avoided.
2. Graphic elements will be chosen to communicate without reliance on the verbal component.
3. Narration will be concise and free of unnecessary jargon and technical information.

#### Exhibits

Numerous factors affect the design of exhibits, reflecting the unique circumstances of the specific space and the nature of the materials to be interpreted. It is clear that thoughtful, sensitive design can go a long way in producing exhibits that can be enjoyed by a broad range of people. Yet, due to the diversity of situations encountered, it is impossible to articulate guidelines that can be applied universally.

In some situations, the exhibit designer has little or no control over the space. Often exhibits are placed in areas ill suited for that purpose, they may incorporate large or unyielding specimens, may incorporate sensitive artifacts which require special environmental controls, and room decor or architectural features may dictate certain solutions. All in all, exhibit design is an art which defies simple description. However, one central concern is to communicate the message to the largest audience possible. Every reasonable effort will be made to eliminate any factors limiting communication through physical modification or by providing an alternate means of communication.

#### Guidelines Affecting Mobility Impaired Visitors

1. Exhibit space will be free of physical barriers or a method of alternate accommodation shall be provided.
2. All pathways, aisles, and clearances will meet standards set forth in UFAS 4.3. Generally a minimum width of 36" will be provided.

3. Ramps will be as gradual as possible and will not exceed a slope of 1" rise in 12" run, and otherwise conform with UFAS 4.8.
4. Important artifacts, labels, and graphics, will be placed at a comfortable viewing level relative to their size. Important text will be viewable to all visitors. Display cases will allow short or seated people to view the contents and the labels. Video monitors associated with exhibits will be positioned to be comfortably viewed by all visitors.
5. Lighting will be designed to reduce glare or reflections, especially when viewed from a wheelchair.
6. Ground and floor surfaces near the exhibit area will be stable, level, firm, and slip-resistant. (UFAS 4.5).
7. Operating controls or objects to be handled by visitors will be located in an area between 9" and 48" from the ground and no more than 24" deep. (UFAS 4.3)
8. Horizontal exhibits (e.g. terrain model) will be located at a comfortable viewing height.
9. Information desks and sales counters will be designed for use by visitors and employees using wheelchairs, and will include a section with a desk height no greater than 32 to 34 inches, with at least a 30 inch clearance underneath. The width should be a minimum of 32 inches vertical, with additional space provided for cash registers or other equipment, as applicable.
10. Accessibility information about the specific park should be available at the information desk and the international symbol of access will be displayed where access information is disseminated.
11. Railings and barriers will be positioned in such a way as to provide unobstructed viewing by persons in wheelchairs.

#### Guidelines Affecting Visually Impaired Visitors

1. Exhibit typography will be selected with readability and legibility in mind.
2. Characters and symbols shall contrast with their backgrounds, either light characters on a dark background or dark characters on a light background. (UFAS 4.30.3)
3. Tactile and participatory elements will be included where possible.
4. Audio description will be provided where applicable.
5. Signage will be provided to indicate accessible rest rooms, telephones, and rest rooms elevators. (UFAS 4.30)

#### Guidelines Affecting Hearing Impaired Visitors

1. Information presented via audio formats will be duplicated in a visual medium, either in the exhibit copy or by printed material.
2. Amplification systems and volume controls will be incorporated to make programs accessible to the hard of hearing.
3. Written text of all audio narrations will be provided.
4. All narrated AV programs will be captioned.

5. Allowance for Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) will be included into information desk designs.

#### Guidelines Affecting Learning Impaired Visitors

1. Exhibits will avoid unnecessarily complex and confusing topics.
2. Graphic elements will be developed to communicate non-verbally.
3. Unfamiliar expressions and technical terms will be avoided and pronunciation aids will be provided where appropriate.
4. To the extent possible, information will be provided in a manner suitable to a diversity of abilities and interests.
5. Where possible, exhibits will be multi-sensory. Techniques to maximize the number of senses utilized in an exhibit will be encouraged.
6. Exhibit design will be cognizant of directional handicaps and will utilize color and other creative approaches to facilitate comprehension of maps.

#### Historic Furnishings

Historically refurbished rooms offer the public a unique interpretive experience by placing visitors within historic spaces. Surrounded by historic artifacts visitors can feel the spaces "come alive" and relate more directly to the historic events or personalities commemorated by the park.

Accessibility is problematical in many NPS furnished sites because of the very nature of historic architecture. Buildings were erected with a functional point of view that is many times at odds with our modern views of accessibility.

The approach used to convey the experience of historically furnished spaces will vary from site to site. The goals, however, will remain the same, to give the public as rich an interpretive experience as possible given the nature of the structure.

#### Guidelines Affecting Mobility Impaired Visitors

1. The exhibit space should be free of architectural barriers or a method of alternate accommodation should be provided, such as slide programs, videotaped tours, visual aids, dioramas, etc.
2. All pathways, aisles, and clearances shall (when possible) meet standards set forth in UFAS 4.3 to provide adequate clearance for wheelchair routes.
3. Ramps shall be as gradual as possible and not exceed a 1" rise in 12" run, and conform with UFAS 4.8.
4. Railings and room barriers will be constructed in such a way as to provide unobstructed viewing by persons in wheelchairs.
5. In the planning and design process, furnishing inaccessible areas, such as upper floors of historic buildings, will be discouraged unless essential for interpretation.
6. Lighting will be designed to reduce glare or reflections when viewed from a wheelchair.
7. Alternative methods of interpretation, such as audiovisual programs, audio description, photo

albums, and personal services will be used in areas which present difficulty for the physically impaired.

#### Guidelines Affecting Visually Impaired Visitors

1. Exhibit typefaces will be selected for readability and legibility, and conform with good industry practice.
2. Audio description will be used to describe furnished rooms, where appropriate.
3. Windows will be treated with film to provide balanced light levels and minimize glare.
4. Where appropriate, visitor-controlled rheostat-type lighting will be provided to augment general room lighting.
5. Where appropriate and when proper clearance has been approved, surplus artifacts or reproductions will be utilized as "hands-on" tactile interpretive devices.

#### Guidelines Affecting Hearing Impaired Visitors

1. Information about room interiors will be presented in a visual medium such as exhibit copy, text, pamphlets, etc.
2. Captions will be provided for all AV programs relating to historic furnishings.

#### Guidelines Affecting the Learning Impaired

1. Where appropriate, hands-on participatory elements geared to the level of visitor capabilities will be used.
2. Living history activities and demonstrations which utilize the physical space as a method of providing multi-sensory experiences will be encouraged.

#### Publications

A variety of publications are offered to visitors, ranging from park folders which provide an overview and orientation to a park to more comprehensive handbooks. Each park folder should give a brief description of services available to the disabled, list significant barriers, and note the existence of TDD phone numbers, if available.

In addition, informal site bulletins are often produced to provide more specialized information about a specific site or topic. It is recommended that each park produce an easily updatable "Accessibility Site Bulletin" which could include detailed information about the specific programs, services, and opportunities available for the disabled and to describe barriers which are present in the park. These bulletins should be in reasonably large type, 18 points or larger.

#### Guidelines Affecting Mobility Impaired Visitors

1. Park folders, site bulletins, and sales literature will be distributed from accessible locations and heights.
2. Park folders and Accessibility Site Bulletins should endeavor to carry information on the accessibility of buildings, trails, and programs by the disabled.

#### Guidelines Affecting Visually Impaired Visitors

1. Publications will be designed with the largest type size appropriate for the format.
2. Special publications designed for use by the visually impaired should be printed in 18 point type.
3. The information contained in the park folder should also be available on audio cassette. Handbooks, accessibility guides, and other publications should be similarly recorded where possible.

#### Guidelines Affecting Hearing Impaired Visitors

1. Park site bulletins will note the availability of such special services as sign language interpretation and captioned programs.

#### Guidelines Affecting Learning Impaired Visitors

1. The park site bulletin should list any special services available to this group.

#### Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits, which include outdoor interpretive exhibits and signs, orientation shelter exhibits, trailhead exhibits, and bulletin boards, offer special advantages to disabled visitors. The liberal use of photographs, artwork, diagrams, and maps, combined with highly readable type, make wayside exhibits an excellent medium for visitors with hearing and learning impairments. For visitors with sight impairments, waysides offer large type and high legibility.

Although a limited number of NPS wayside exhibits will always be inaccessible to visitors with mobility impairments, the great majority are placed at accessible pullouts, viewpoints, parking areas, and trailheads.

The NPS accessibility guidelines for wayside exhibits help insure a standard of quality that will be appreciated by all visitors. Nearly everyone benefits from high quality graphics, readable type, comfortable base designs, accessible locations, hard-surfaced exhibit pads, and well-landscaped exhibit sites.

While waysides are valuable on-site "interpreters," it should be remembered that the park resources themselves are the primary things visitors come to experience. Good waysides focus attention on the features they interpret, and not on themselves. A wayside exhibit is only one of the many interpretive tools which visitors can use to enhance their appreciation of a park.

#### Guidelines Affecting Mobility Impaired Visitors

1. Wayside exhibits will be installed at accessible locations whenever possible.
2. Wayside exhibits will be installed at heights and angles favorable for viewing by most visitors including those in wheelchairs. For standard NPS low-profile units the recommended height is 30 inches from the bottom edge of the exhibit panel to the finished grade; for vertical exhibits the height of 6-28 inches.
3. Trailhead exhibits will include an accessibility advisory.
4. Wayside exhibits sites will have level, hard surfaced exhibit pads.
5. Exhibit sites will offer clear, unrestricted views of park features described in exhibits.

#### Guidelines Affecting Visually Impaired Visitors

1. Exhibit type will be as legible and readable as possible.
2. Panel colors will be selected to reduce eye strain and glare, and to provide excellent readability under field conditions. White should not be used as a background color.
3. Selected wayside exhibits may incorporate audio stations or tactile elements such as models, texture blocks, and relief maps.
4. For all major features interpreted by wayside exhibits, the park should offer non-visual interpretation covering the same subject matter. Examples include cassette tape tours, radio messages, and ranger talks.
5. Appropriate tactile cues should be provided to help visually impaired visitors locate exhibits.

#### Guidelines Affecting Hearing Impaired Visitors

1. Wayside exhibits will communicate visually, and will rely heavily on graphics to interpret park resources.
2. Essential information included in audio station messages will be duplicated in written form, either as part of the exhibit text or with printed material.

#### Guidelines Affecting Learning Impaired Visitors

1. Topics for wayside exhibits will be specific and of general interest. Unnecessary complexity will be avoided.
2. Whenever possible, easy to understand graphics will be used to convey ideas, rather than text alone.
3. Unfamiliar expressions, technical terms, and jargon will be avoided. Pronunciation aids and definitions will be provided where needed.
4. Text will be concise and free of long paragraphs and wordy language.