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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell, Governor
The Honorable Marla G. Decker, Secretary of Public Safety
The Honorable Lisa Hicks-Thomas, Secretary of Administration
The Honorable Doug Domenech, Secretary of Natural Resources
The Honorable Jim Cheng, Secretary of Commerce and Trade
The Honorable Charles J. Colgan, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Lacy Putney, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee

SUBJECT: Report Outlining Potential Options fro Re-use of the Natural Bridge Juvenile Correctional Center Property

Pursuant to Item 400 C. of Chapter 874, the 2010 Appropriation Act, attached please find a report outlining potential options for the re-use and redevelopment of the property comprising the Natural Bridge Juvenile Correctional Center which was closed September 2009 by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) as a budget reduction strategy.

The Department of Juvenile Justice continues to explore opportunities to reopen and use Natural Bridge on a limited basis as a transitional facility for correctional center youth and to reopen Camp New Hope to Department units and youth and local programs which have previously utilized Camp New Hope for wilderness/camping experiences.

Steve Pullen, DJJ Deputy Director of Administration and Finance, who coordinated the study and authored the report for the Department, is available should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Seal
for, Helivi L. Holland

NATURAL BRIDGE JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL CENTER STUDY

INTRODUCTION:

In July 2009 the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) was required to submit a 5-10-15% reduction plan to the Department of Planning and Budget. The 5% plan included the closing of Oak Ridge Juvenile Correctional Center (JCC), the 10% plan included closing Natural Bridge JCC, and the 15% plan included closing Hanover JCC. The approved September reduction plan included the closing of the Natural Bridge JCC. Subsequently, the Department began the process of closing the facility with the last youths either transferred to another Juvenile Correctional Center or being released on parole having met their treatment needs and length of stay requirements.

Interest was generated by the County of Rockbridge and the General Assembly on potential uses or re-uses of the Natural Bridge JCC property. This interest resulted in the Budget Conference Committee including the following language in the Appropriation Act:

Item 400 C. of Chapter 874 requires the following:

- C. The Department of Juvenile Justice, with the assistance of the Department of General Services, the Department of Historic Resources, and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership shall work with the County of Rockbridge and other appropriate local entities to address the future use of the property comprising the Natural Bridge Juvenile Correctional Center. A report outlining potential options for re-use and redevelopment of this property shall be provided to the Governor, the Secretaries of Public Safety, Administration, Natural Resources, and Commerce and Trade, and the Chairmen of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees, by October 1, 2010."

Meetings were held with representatives of the Department of General Services, Department of Historic Resources, Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the County Administrator of Rockbridge County to examine potential new uses of the NBJCC property. A visit to the facility was arranged for representatives of the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) to determine its potential historic significance and implications for use and development. DHR was of the opinion "the facility is a fairly rare survivor as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp". DHR is of the opinion that NBJCC has maintained more of the characteristics (housing, walkways, etc.) than any other former CCC Camp in the United States. (See attached correspondence from the Department of Historic Resources.)

Brief history of Natural Bridge Juvenile Correctional Center (NBJCC)

Natural Bridge JCC is a former Civilian Conservation Corps Camp which was later used for youth by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The property became available in 1963. Funding from the Governor's discretionary fund was used to lease and operate the facility until the next legislative session could appropriate funding. In early 1964, the first staff and residents arrived. The facility was the first of the juvenile correctional centers to be racially integrated in 1965.

Natural Bridge was originally designed to house lower-security risk, older, more stable youth. Both the Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) operated the facility in this manner.

In 1973, Camp New Hope was opened on the property of NBJCC. This camping area was developed to provide a camping/wilderness experience for youth from all of the juvenile correctional centers. Access to Camp New Hope was eventually expanded to youth under the supervision of DJJ's Court Service Units, local residential programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other wilderness programs.

In 1999, Chapter 935 (The 1995 Appropriation Act) authorized the Department to enter into an agreement with the federal government to purchase the NBJCC property. The Department purchased the property in September 2000.

In September 2009, DJJ closed NBJCC as part of their fourth reduction plan in the last three years (2007-2009). Youth housed at the facility at the time of the closure were either released on parole or transferred to other JCCs in September of 2009. Limited staff remained at the facility until January 2010 placing it in mothball status, pursuant to the Department of General Services regulations. DJJ has two wage positions maintaining the facility.

Potential Options for Use and Redevelopment of the Natural Bridge Juvenile Correctional Center Property are listed in highest to lowest priority order:

1. Re-open Natural Bridge Juvenile Correctional Center and Camp New Hope. Re-open in phases as a transition program;
2. Use as a camp site by the Department of Conservation and Recreation;
3. Recreational use such as hunting, managed by the Department of Games and Inland Fisheries;
4. Market property as a historic resource (CCC Camp) for private, income producing uses, consistent with its character that could tap available incentives;
5. Staging site for Virginia Department of Emergency Management;
6. Explore use by the Department of Military Affairs for the National Guard;
7. Reopen Natural Bridge JCC and use part of the land as a minimum security halfway house (adults) as a 15-20 resident work release program;
8. Establish a transition program;
9. Establish a program focusing on at-risk youth through the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) utilizing services from local Community Services Boards;
10. Adult pre-lease program for jail inmates- 15-20 beds;
11. Recreate a CCC Camp for youth using the CCC model. Utilize Virginia Military Institute for military aspect of the CCC Camp;
12. Establish a halfway house for CSA youth utilizing CSA funding;
13. Combine the CCC Camp, the correctional center and the Work and Educational Release (WERP) program;
14. Explore with Virginia Military Institute possible use as a training facility.

CONCLUSION:

While no one particular option for re-use was recommended by the parties involved in the study, all parties supported the Department of Juvenile Justice's position of wanting to re-open NBJCC and Camp New Hope with a focus on transition of youth from other Juvenile Correctional Centers.

This document was prepared by Steve Pullen, DJJ Deputy Director of Administration and Finance.

Natural Bridge Juvenile Correctional Center Tentative Assessment and Broad Guidance

Dear Steve:

Thank you again for seeking input as you explore future use or reuse options for the Natural Bridge Juvenile Correctional Center in Rockbridge County. These are complex matters that involve balancing many issues to achieve a public interest course of action. I appreciate the opportunity to meet and offer suggestions, and in particular to provide information about the property's historical significance and treatment considerations as part of the study process.

Assessment Steps: Following the meeting on September 7, 2010, DHR staff visited the site on September 13, and the agency's National Register Evaluation Committee considered the facility for National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register eligibility on September 16. Environmental Review staff also considered the broad historic resource implications of future use and site development. Our input must be understood to be based on available evidence, not exhaustive research, and the application of standard preservation principles historic site use and development.

Historical Significance: Research into the history of the CCC indicates that at one time Virginia had over 80 CCC camps, and that Virginia ranked fifth in total CCC expenditure nationwide. Currently, however, the DHR records indicate that the Natural Bridge facility is likely to be the most complete surviving camp in Virginia. While Virginia has a wealth of CCC - built projects that are intact, such as in State Parks and forest infrastructure, most CCC camps have not survived. In fact, most of these purposefully designed quasi-military complexes are either completely gone or seriously fragmented.

The evaluation committee felt that collectively the buildings and structures within the Natural Bridge facility reflect the continuous use and vernacular development of the camp for CCC workers and that its use as a federal and state youth reformatory after the CCC period is also significant in the history of social welfare. The Federal Bureau of Prisons opened an "experimental" program for youths, aged sixteen to eighteen, in August, 1944, and this use was maintained by the Commonwealth into the recent period. Although alterations were undertaken in the 1990s, the committee felt the camp's overall physical integrity remained intact.

The committee recommended that the facility be considered eligible for listing in the registers at the statewide level of importance under Criterion A (History) for its association with Conservation and Social History, and Criterion C for its Architecture. The committee further recommended a period of significance of beginning in 1933, to include the CCC period and extending to subsequent periods to capture the Camp's use by the federal and state government for youth reform. More research will be needed to establish the exact end date. We note that based on the available research, which shows

the rarity of surviving CCC camps at the national level, the facility also has potential for regional (East Coast) significance, but further investigation is needed in this regard.

Future Development or Redevelopment Consistent with Historic Significance: As an eligible historic district, comprised of some 40 buildings and adjacent acreage, consideration should be given to maintaining the character-defining elements of the property as an aspect of future use and development. Examples of such elements at the Natural Bridge facility include the general “camp” arrangement of the buildings, lawns, and walkways; the vernacular “rustic” design of the buildings; and more specifically, material and craftsmanship features such as the fieldstone foundations and chimneys, exposed rafter ends, interior wood trusses, interior horizontal pine wall boards, round log exteriors, and any handcrafted stone or brick. Since the Natural Bridge facility is significant as a former CCC camp and for its use as a federal and state youth reformatory, character-defining elements from CCC and reformatory camp periods of development should be considered carefully in order to retain the integrity of setting, feeling, and association.

Although there are no recorded archaeological resources on the property, the presence of numerous prehistoric and historic sites on surrounding parcels suggests a high potential for unrecorded resources. Currently undeveloped portions of the property are more likely to contain intact archaeological sites; however, the central core of the facility may also retain archaeological integrity.

Against this background, the following specific approaches would be consistent with the facility’s historic significance.

Architecture and Environs

- The current layout, particularly the central core of four dormitory buildings surrounding a small lawn with central path, should be maintained. Demolition or infill construction should be avoided in this core area so that the historic character of the facility can remain intact.
- The modest scale of the existing buildings, mostly low, one-story structures should also be respected when planning for additions or new construction. Any new, larger scale buildings developed at this property should be located outside this central core and where possible, sited to have little or no visual impact on the core.
- Future access roads and utilities to be developed in conjunction with any new facilities should be as minimally intrusive as possible, especially in the central core area, in order to maintain the pedestrian, “camp” feel of the property.
- Any new additions in the core area of the facility should reflect the design and materials of the existing historic buildings, such as the use of wood and stone.

Archaeology

- An archaeological assessment should be conducted to determine the degree of prior disturbance and archaeological potential; however additional archaeological survey may be needed in those areas proposed for new construction or disturbance. If intact,

significant archaeological sites are identified, those sites should be avoided to all reasonable extent, but if not feasible, archaeological data recovery may be necessary.

New uses: reuse options that build on the historic character of the Center might include a range of outdoor recreational opportunities, a retreat center, or training facility. I note that investors contemplating a new, income-producing use of this property will find state and federal historic rehabilitation incentives of interest. The guidance above offers a broad framework for achieving a successful rehabilitation project. The guidance also reflects a broad approach to best practices by any property manager in consideration of retaining the facility's historic significance.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with the Department of Juvenile Justice regarding the future of the Natural Bridge Juvenile Correctional Center.

If you have any questions at all, please call me at (804) 367-2323, Ext. 128 or cell at (804) 840-4756.

Kathleen