

CHAPTER 13 – HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Introduction

Like many other States over the past several decades, West Virginia has implemented nationally driven strategies to develop and fund programs that protect, preserve, revitalize and promote its historically significant landmarks. This effort is driven by the tangible financial gains that may be experienced through the ever increasing tourism industry, as well as the intangible quality of life benefits that direct local community involvement in maintaining pride in the sense of place that historically significant features create.

Morgan County, like much of the eastern seaboard developed by the earliest of European settlers, boasts numerous historically significant features. In order to achieve the greatest exposure through this Plan to both the potential of available government funds and easy identification to tourist travelers, these features are separated into scenic, archaeological, architectural, and other significant lands or buildings.

Scenic Areas

Significant natural and scenic areas are classified by the Wildlife/Heritage database of the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. Prominent physical features which expose rock structures and provide unique vantage points for scenic views are classified by the database as Special Landforms.

The most accessible and well-known panoramic overlook in Morgan County is “Prospect Peak”, which is located along WV Rt. 9 just three miles west of Berkeley Springs. This scenic overlook, which was once featured in National Geographic Magazine, is situated on the Cacapon Mountain and provides a panoramic view of the Potomac River and the States of Maryland, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. There is a second overlook located in Cacapon State Park that provides a scenic view to the east.

Another overlook that provides panoramic views of three States is “Lovers Leap”, which is a high ledge near US Rt. 522 north of Berkeley Springs. A lesser known, but equally inspiring scenic view is “Fluted Rocks”, which overlooks the Potomac and Cacapon rivers at an elevation of 852 ft. Neither of these overlooks, however, is easily accessible or open to the public.

Archeological Features

One of the more significant landforms in Morgan County is “Devil’s Nose”. This feature, which lies on private property, is part of Short Mountain. It is located in the eastern part of the County and projects at nearly 800 ft. elevation into a nose-like structure that overlooks Meadow Branch.

“Eades Fort” is a historically significant rock formation along the shore of the Cacapon River, named for Thomas Eades, an early settler and farmer who escaped to the rock formation when Indians attacked and burned his barn.

Rock Gap Cave is believed to be the only significant cave in Morgan County. It is located at the north end of a small quarry on the southwest side of Rock Gap. It includes a partially blocked passage that leads to a thirteen foot by six-foot crawlway. It is not accessible to the public.

Natural Spring Areas

Morgan County is most well known in the region for its natural spring areas, the most important of which is found in the Town of Bath. Located at about 800 ft. above sea level, the springs form at the base of Warm Springs Ridge, which rises nearly 450 ft. above the Warm Springs valley. The springs discharge area encompasses five principal sources and numerous smaller ones, all within one hundred yards of one another, producing from 1,000 to 2,000 gallons per minute of clear water at a constant temperature of 74.3 degrees Fahrenheit. The springs have been used since pre-colonial times for health spa uses that continue today.

A second important set of springs is the Breakneck Run Springs located at Ridge in the southern area of the County. The combined flow of these springs measures nearly 1,000 gallons per minute, which supplies water for the Ridge State Fish Hatchery. This is the only fish hatchery in the State that is a combination warm and cold water hatchery, producing cold water golden, rainbow, and brook trout as well as warm water large and small mouth bass and muskies. These free flowing springs are the only source of high quality, pollution free water in the State conducive to the production of trout.

Historic Sites

The most important federal property in the area is the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park, a part of which parallels the Potomac River across from Morgan County on the Maryland side. Although the National Park Service owns a few acres in Morgan County along the abandoned B & O Railroad right of way, the C & O Canal recreational historical attractions are all located in Maryland.

One of the most significant attractions of the C & O Canal is the Paw Paw Tunnel, a 3,118 foot brick-lined excavation located across from the Potomac River, just north of the Town of Paw Paw. The Tunnel was constructed from 1828 to 1850 to provide passage for the Canal through a six-mile set of river bends. The C & O Canal was added the National Register in 1966.

Even though the County has remained relatively undeveloped over time, it has experienced significant interest in its natural resources. The most prominent of these is Berkeley Springs State Park, which was added to the National Register in 1976. The park includes a concentration of historic buildings centering on the mineral springs which once formed the core of the spa attracting some the highest officials and socialites in early colonial times. This attractive natural

feature drew so many tourists prior to the American Revolution that in 1776, the Virginia legislature established the Town of Bath on nearly 50 acres adjoining the springs. Although always public land, the park did not achieve its current 4.5 acres until 1881 when the land was razed and sold to the Bath Trustees for the park.

The 34-mile long abandoned Western Maryland Railroad right-of-way from Long Ridge in Washington County, Maryland to Maryland Route 51 was added to the National Register in 1981. Construction of this stretch of the Western Maryland Railroad began in 1903, closely following the C & O Canal and the Potomac River on the northern (Maryland) side. At the Great River Bends between Hancock, Maryland and Paw Paw, West Virginia the railroad cut through the mountains of Maryland and across the river by means of three tunnels and six bridges, transferring seven miles of the right-of-way onto the West Virginia side in Morgan County. Following abandonment of the right-of-way in 1975, it was acquired by the National Park Service in 1980. At the time of purchase, the Service agreed to relinquish fee title to the right-of-way in Morgan County subject to suitable development controls.

Historic Structures

Possibly the most prominent single structure in Morgan County, Berkeley Castle, is a two story stone structure built in the Romantic tradition of the 19th century and positioned against the Warm Springs Ridge along WV Rt. 9 near the center of Berkeley Springs. Also known as Suit Castle, it was built as a summer home by Colonel Samuel Taylor Suit, a successful Maryland businessman who earned his fortune in the securities market. Construction of the castle began in 1885 and was completed in the early 1890's by his wife following the death of Colonel Suit in 1888. The Castle was added to the National Register in 1980. Today it serves as a private residence.

The T.H.B. Dawson House is a large red brick Italian style 19th century residence located on a hillside lot at the corner of Green and Market Streets in the Town of Bath. It is a significant and largely intact example of a substantial house type once commonly assigned to upper middle class businessmen and professionals of America's Gilded Age. The house was built in 1880 for Mr. Thomas Hart Benton Dawson, a native of the community who served in the Union Army during the Civil War, was elected County Clerk in 1886, and was active in the legal profession and insurance business. The House was placed on the National Register in 1982. The house is currently vacant.

The Manor, also known as the Sloat-Horn-Rossell House, is a large two-story Empire style residence located on Fairfax Street in the Town of Bath, the only remaining example of this style in the area. Constructed in 1879, it is the work of the Hunter family, a prominent local family that was in the construction business. The Manor was accepted onto the National Register in 1984, and has been transformed into a bed and breakfast inn.

The John Herbert Quick House, popularly known as "Coolfont", was also placed on the National Register in 1984. Coolfont, a 2 ½ story mansion of Colonial Revival style that was built in 1913, is significant for its architecture. More importantly though, it is known as the home of John

Herbert Quick, a noted late 19th and early 20th century literary figure and social reformer of national renown. The house is now a private residence separate from the 1800 acre resort located in the valley between Cacapon Mountain and Warm Springs Ridge, just south of Berkeley Springs.

The Berkeley Springs Train Depot, located on North Washington Street, was constructed in 1914 for use by the B & O Railroad. It is a decorative brick structure that was built in the Spanish Revival style and was used by the railroad until 1935. The Depot was purchased by the Town of Bath and converted for use as both the City Hall and correctional facility. It was added to the National Register in 2001. It is currently owned by the Town and is rented for commercial purposes.

The Clarence Hovermale House, located on Wilkes Street in the Town of Bath, was also built by the Hunter family in 1884. Also known as the Allen Mendenhall House, it represents the Queen Anne style period. The house currently serves as a private single residence and was added to the National Register in 2003.

Wisteria Cottage, built in 1872, was home to Judge John W. Wright. Judge John Wright served as a Lincoln appointee to the U.S. Court of Appeals. It is a cubical cottage in Tuscan style located on South Green Street in the Town of Bath. The cottage was added to the National register in 1986, and is currently vacant.

Ambrose Chapel is a single religious structure located on 15 acres along Winchester Grade Road. It was placed on the National Register in 1998.

The Morgan County courthouse is the most recent addition to this growing list, and was placed on the register in 2005. It is located along Washington and Fairfax Street. This building was opened in 1908 and was later added onto in 1923. This structure, which is the third courthouse in the County's history, was recently damaged by fire and is being demolished.

Table 13-1 Historic Register Sites and Structures

<u>Listing</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Year Listed</u>	<u>Owned</u>
C&O National Historic Park	Site	N/A	1966	Public
Berkeley Springs State Park	Site	N/A	1976	Public
Western Maryland Railroad	Site	1903	1981	Public
Berkeley Castle	Structure	1885	1980	Private
T.H.B. Dawson House	Structure	1880	1982	Vacant
Manor (Sloat-Horn-Rossell house)	Structure	1879	1984	Private
John Herbert Quick House	Structure	1913	1984	Private
Berkeley Springs Train Depot	Structure	1914	2001	Public
Clarence Hovermale House	Structure	1884	2003	Private
Wisteria Cottage	Structure	1872	1986	Private
Ambrose Chapel	Structure	1850	1998	Private
Morgan County Courthouse	Structure	1908	2005	Public

Source: National Register of Historic Places

Aside from the sites already registered with the National Register, there are numerous additional sites that have been identified for eligible inclusion due to their significance as part of the historic architectural and cultural resources within the County. Most of the sites include structures located within the Berkeley Springs area.

Table 13-2 Historic Sites and Structures Eligible for the National Register

<u>Listing</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Owned</u>
Old Bath District High School	Structure	1918	Bath	Public
The Bathkeeper's quarters	Structure	1907	Bath	Public
Berkeley Springs Presbyterian Church	Structure	1876	Bath	Private
Dutch Cemetery	Site	1777	Bath	Public
Highlawn Inn (Algernon Unger House)	Structure	1902	Bath	Private
Highspire	Structure	1894	Bath	Private
Hunter's Hardware	Structure	1928	Bath	Private
The Ice House	Structure	1911	Bath	Public
The Inn & Spa at Berkeley Springs	Structure	1933	Bath	Private
The Inn on Fairfax Street	Structure	1903	Bath	Private
Lynette's Café (Eichelberger Residence)	Structure	1915	Bath	Private
Masonic Lodge/Visitor Center	Structure	1907	Bath	Private
Morgan County Public Library	Structure	1870	Bath	Public
Mount Tabor Church and Cemetery	Site	1852	Rock Gap	Private
Perry Office Building	Structure	1948	Bath	Private
Saint Mark's Episcopal Church	Structure	1882	Bath	Private
Saint Vincent de Paul Catholic Church	Structure	1932	Bath	Private
Old School House Lot	Site	1903	Bath	Public
Star Theatre	Structure	1916	Bath	Private
Trump & Trump Law	Structure	1939	Bath	Private

Historic Preservation Organizations

There are several organizations at various levels of government actively involved in the preservation efforts of Morgan County. Many of these government organizations serve as the procedural mechanism for grassroots groups seeking direction on preservation and restoration of significant community structures and sites.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American

history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Listing in the National Register contributes to preserving historic properties in a number of ways:

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community
- Consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects
- Eligibility for federal tax benefits
- Qualification for federal assistance for historic preservation, if funds are available

Like many state and federal preservation programs, the interest in National Register listing originates with the property owner. Once approved by the state, the state historic preservation agencies can nominate the property to the national level. Listing does not interfere with a private property owner's right to alter, manage, or dispose of the property. However, it often changes the way communities perceive their historic resources and gives credibility to efforts to preserve these resources as irreplaceable aspects of the community.

Town of Bath Historic Landmark Commission

In 2006 the Town of Bath established an Historic Landmark Commission to facilitate formal identification of historically eligible and significant sites in and around Berkeley Springs. Currently a Historical Survey is in progress centering on the 131 original sites in the Town of Bath as well as several sites contiguous thereto. The survey is empowered to consider any structure or site built or established prior to 1957.

Completion of the survey in 2007 will provide a much more definitive understanding of the historically prominent sites in Bath and the nearby surrounding area.

Bath-Romney Campaign Historical and Preservation Association

This group is based out of Berkeley Springs, West Virginia. The primary purpose of the organization is to continue the research and study of the campaign, provide a forum that encourages an ongoing exchange of ideas and dialogue; educate the public by organizing and hosting living history events and other educational forums; document associated sites, structures, and artifacts; and to assist in preserving and interpreting those sites, structures, and artifacts.

Goals and Objectives

Goals

Given the age and rich history of Morgan County, historic preservation is an important and widely supported aspect of the local ethos. The following goals will foster this important trend:

- Promoting the preservation of historic sites and structures that define the unique historical and cultural character of the County; and

- Encouraging community development occurring in the vicinity of identified cultural and historic resources to be sensitive to the special nature of the surrounding area.

Objectives

These goals are supported by the following objectives:

- Exploring creation of a tax district with strict regulation of historic preservation efforts;
- Promoting the old Paw Paw train depot as a community museum;
- Fostering programs offering ‘learning vacations’ to unique historical areas of the county;
- Supporting development of an inventory of cultural and historic landmarks and resources and identifying sites to be earmarked for National Register status and/or local protective regulations;
- Promoting creation of a Historic Landmarks Commission for the County;
- Evaluating establishment of a dedicated funding stream to purchase and renovate historically significant structures; and
- Supporting efforts of various local historic preservation groups to promote the County’s historic and cultural assets.