
**Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration**

**Annual Report to Congress on the Establishment of
Additional National Cemeteries**

As Required by the Veterans Millennium Health Care and
Benefits Act, Public Law 106-117 and the National
Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, Public Law 108-109

May 2006

Status of New Cemetery Development
Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, Public Law 106-117

Major Process	Atlanta/ Georgia National Cemetery	Detroit/ Great Lakes National Cemetery	Miami/ South Florida National Cemetery	Oklahoma/ Ft. Sill National Cemetery	Pittsburgh/ National Cemetery of the Alleghenies	Sacramento
Potential Sites Identified (within the primary 75- mile service radius)	Completed Mar 2000	Completed Mar 2001	Completed Apr 2000	Completed Apr 1996	Completed Oct 2000	Completed Oct 2000
National Environmental Policy Act Compliance	Completed Dec 2000	Completed Jan 2002	Completed Feb 2002	Completed Sep 1996	Completed Sep 2001	Completed Sep 2002
Final Site Selected	Completed Dec 2000	Completed Apr 2002	Completed Apr 2002	Completed Feb 1997	Completed Mar 2002	Completed Oct 2002
Land Acquisition	Completed Apr 2001	Completed Sep 2002	Completed Aug 2002	Completed May 1998	Completed Mar 2003	Completed Jul 2004
Master Planning & Design Development Contract Award	Completed Mar 2002	Completed Nov 2002	Completed Jul 2003	Completed Oct 2000	Completed May 2002	Completed Oct 2004
Phase 1 Construction Documents Preparation Contract Award	Completed Mar 2003	Completed Nov 2003	Completed Nov 2004	Completed Jul 2001	Completed Aug 2004	Completed Sep 2005
Phase 1 Construction Contract Award	Completed Dec 2004 *First Burial Apr 2006	Completed Sep 2004 *First Burial Oct 2005	Estimate Jun 2006	Completed Mar 2002 *First Burial Nov 2001	Estimate Aug 2006 *First Burial Aug 2005	Completed Feb 2006
Phase 1 Construction Completion	Estimate Dec 2007	Estimate Dec 2006	Estimate Dec 2008	Completed May 2004	Estimate Aug 2008	Estimate Sep 2008

*Phase 1A burials, prior to completion of Phase 1 construction. Note: Letters in **BOLD** indicate that the major process has been completed.

SITE: Georgia National Cemetery (Atlanta, GA)

PAST ACTIVITY:

July 2000 toured the top 4 of 12 recommended sites.

July 12, 2000, Cherokee County location identified as the preferred site. The late Mr. Scott Hudgens, a World War II veteran, donated the land (approximately 770 acres).

The firms of URS Corporation (Architect-Engineering firm), Greiner, Woodward, and Clyde conducted an environmental assessment (EA) and published a final report, "Finding of No Significant Impact" on the environment.

April 3, 2001, ceremony conducted to mark the Hudgens family's land donation.

March 27, 2002, contract for master planning was awarded to Rochester & Associates of Atlanta.

March 2003, the master plan concept for the layout of the cemetery was completed.

Cherokee County constructed an access road to the new cemetery site with VA contributing \$1.4 million towards road construction.

March 1, 2004, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced that the name of the Atlanta area cemetery would be Georgia National Cemetery.

December 2004, construction documents for Phase 1 developed and construction contract was awarded.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

April 2006, Phase 1A was completed and the cemetery opened for burials.

NEXT STEPS:

Construction is scheduled for completion in December 2007.

BUDGET:

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 appropriation included \$125,000 for the site selection and EA processes.

The FY 2001 appropriation included \$3 million for advance planning and design development.

The FY 2002 appropriation included \$28.2 million for construction.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

SITE: Great Lakes National Cemetery (Detroit, MI)

PAST ACTIVITY:

2001 identification of eight potential parcels of land.

January 2002, preferred site was selected and the environmental assessment (EA) completed.

April 23, 2002, Secretary of Veterans Affairs approved selection of a 554-acre site in Oakland County, Michigan.

September 13, 2002, purchased the 554-acre site in Oakland County for a price of \$6,156,000.

November 21, 2002, Architect-Engineering firm, URS Corporation of Farmington Hills, Michigan, was awarded the contract for the master plan and design development.

November 17, 2003, design documents were completed and the construction document contract was awarded.

March 1, 2004, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced that the Detroit area cemetery would be named Great Lakes National Cemetery.

September 2004, construction contract was awarded.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

October 2005 burials began.

Phase 1A construction contract has been re-awarded and the new contractor is moving along at a fast pace. The original contractor for Phase 1A was terminated for poor performance upon completion of the fast track burial section. The terminated contractor's bonding company has provided the funds to complete the remaining construction.

NEXT STEPS:

Completion of construction for this initial phase of development is planned for December 2006.

BUDGET:

In FY 2000, \$125,000 was made available for the site selection and EA.

The FY 2001 appropriation included \$500,000 for advance planning.

The FY 2002 appropriation included \$18 million for the purchase of land for new cemeteries in the vicinity of Detroit, Michigan; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Sacramento, California.

The FY 2003 appropriation included \$1.7 million for design and preparation of construction documents.

The FY 2004 appropriation included \$8.7 million for construction.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

SITE: South Florida National Cemetery (Miami, FL)

PAST ACTIVITY:

August 2000, visited the top three of 11 recommended sites.

Two top sites in Palm Beach County were selected.

October 2000, the firms of URS, Greiner, Woodward, and Clyde began the environmental assessment (EA) on both of the sites. The owner of one site removed it from consideration.

The EA continued with the remaining location and identified two factors that required further investigation. VA directed the EA consultant to expand their review to two additional sites.

Mid-January 2002, the EA was completed.

August 6, 2002, the preferred site (313-acres in West Palm Beach County) was purchased at a price of \$11,250,000.

July 2003, the architect-engineering firm, Miller Legg & Associates of Pembroke Pines, Florida, was hired to perform the master plan and design work, including preparation of a design for a fast track development.

March 14, 2006, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced that the Miami area cemetery would be named South Florida National Cemetery.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

VA has obtained all environmental clearances from the Corps of Engineers.

Evaluation of potential construction contractor's (technical qualifications, experience, and price). A June 2006 award for the Phase 1A construction is expected and completion slated for January 2007.

NEXT STEPS:

The contract for preparation of construction documents for Phase 1B is scheduled for June 2006. Construction is scheduled to begin in April 2007, and completed in December 2008.

BUDGET:

The FY 2000 appropriation included \$125,000 for the site selection and EA.

The FY 2001 appropriation included \$500,000 for advance planning of a new national cemetery and \$15 million for land acquisition.

The FY 2002 appropriation included \$2 million for design of a new national cemetery.

The FY 2003 included \$23.1 million for construction.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

SITE: Ft. Sill National Cemetery (Oklahoma City, OK)

PAST ACTIVITY:

Four hundred acres were acquired from the Department of Army.

October 2000, the master plan was completed.

July 2001, construction documents were completed.

A "fast track" burial section for interments, prior to completion of all construction activities at the new Ft. Sill National Cemetery, was completed and a dedication ceremony was held in November 2001.

November 2001, first burials occurred.

March 13, 2002, Phase 1 construction contract was awarded.

May 2004, Phase 1 construction contract was completed.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

NA

NEXT STEPS:

NA

BUDGET:

The FY 2001 appropriation included \$12 million for construction. All Phase I development costs are fully funded.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

SITE: National Cemetery of the Alleghenies (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)

PAST ACTIVITY:

October 2000, toured the top three of 11 proposed sites.

Identified the Morgan Farms site, 15 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, as the preferred site.

December 2000, contract for an environmental assessment (EA) of the Morgan Farms site was awarded.

September 2001, EA was completed.

May 2002 Marshall-Tyler-Rausch of Pittsburgh completed the cemetery master plan and design documents.

December 2002, first parcel was purchased for \$2,310,000.

March 2003, second parcel was purchased for \$1,761,700. The combined acreage of both properties is 275 acres.

November 29, 2004, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced that the Pittsburgh area cemetery would be named National Cemetery of the Alleghenies.

April 2005, Washington County tax officials improperly sold the northern 139 acres for delinquent taxes. VA contacted the Washington County Solicitor, as well as the U.S. Attorney. The issue has been resolved in VA's favor.

August 2005, fast track construction was completed and first burials began.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

Planning for Phase 1B, which will finish the initial 10-year burial phase of this cemetery, is underway. A solicitation for construction bids has been issued and award is slated for August 2006.

NEXT STEPS:

Completion of construction is projected for August 2008.

BUDGET:

The FY 2000 appropriation included \$125,000 for the site selection and EA.

The FY 2001 appropriation included \$1 million for advance planning.

The FY 2002 appropriation included \$18 million for the purchase of land for new cemeteries in the vicinity of Detroit, Michigan; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Sacramento, California.

The FY 2003 appropriation included \$16.3 million for construction.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

SITE: Sacramento, California

PAST ACTIVITY:

October 2000, visited nine sites in the Sacramento area. Several potential cemetery sites were identified and the best three were chosen for evaluation in the environmental assessment (EA). A 1,133-acre tract in Solano County, known as the Hayman site was designated as the preferred alternative.

August 16, 2002, the EA was completed and resulted in A Finding of No Significant Impact.

July 2004, 561 acres on the Hayman site was purchase for \$6,000,000.

September 2005, master planning and documents for construction of the fast track development were completed.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

Construction of Phase 1A (fast track) was awarded in February 2006 and completion is projected for September 2006.

NEXT STEPS:

Award of a contract for construction of Phase 1B is scheduled for March 2007, with completion in September 2008.

BUDGET:

The FY 2000 appropriation included \$125,000 for the site selection and EA.

The FY 2001 appropriation included \$500,000 for advance planning.

The FY 2002 appropriation included \$18 million to be available for the purchase of land for new cemeteries in the vicinity of Detroit, Michigan; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Sacramento, California.

The FY 2003 appropriation included \$1.7 million for design of a new national cemetery and preparation of construction documents.

The FY 2005 appropriation included \$21.4 million for construction.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

**Status of New Cemetery Development
National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, Public Law 108-109**

Major Process	Bakersfield	Birmingham	Columbia/ Greenville	Jacksonville	Southeastern Pennsylvania	Sarasota
Potential Sites Identified (within the primary 75- mile service radius)	Completed Dec 2004	Completed Dec 2004	Completed Jan 2005	Completed Mar 2005	Completed Apr 2004	Completed Dec 2004
National Environmental Policy Act Compliance	Completed Mar 2006	Estimated May 2006	Completed Mar 2006	Completed Feb 2006	Completed Nov 2005	Completed Dec 2005
Final Site Selected	Estimated Jun 2006	Estimated Jul 2006	Estimated Jun 2006	Estimated Jun 2006	Completed Feb 2006	Completed May 2006
Land Acquisition	Estimated Sep 2006	Estimated Dec 2006	Estimated Dec 2006	Estimated Sep 2006	Estimated Sep 2006	Estimated Sep 2006
Master Planning & Design Development Contract Award	Estimated Dec 2006	Estimated Feb 2007	Estimated Feb 2007	Estimated Dec 2006	Estimated Dec 2006	Estimated Dec 2006
Phase 1 Construction Documents Preparation Contract Award	Estimated FY 2008	Estimated FY 2008	Estimated FY 2008	Estimated FY 2008	Estimated FY 2008	Estimated FY 2008
Phase 1 Construction Contract Award	Estimated FY 2008	Estimated FY 2008	Estimated FY 2008	Estimated FY 2008	Estimated FY 2008	Estimated FY 2008
Phase 1 Construction Completion	Estimated FY 2010	Estimated FY 2010	Estimated FY 2010	Estimated FY 2010	Estimated FY 2010	Estimated FY 2010

Note: Letters in **BOLD** indicate that the major process has been completed.

**Status of New Cemetery Development
National Cemetery Expansion Act of 2003, Public Law 108-109**

BACKGROUND: On Veterans' Day, November 11, 2003, President Bush signed P.L. 108-109, authorizing the establishment of six national cemeteries within four years in the areas of the country with the greatest need, according to a recent demographic study of veteran population.

SITE: Bakersfield, California

PAST ACTIVITY:

December 2003, NCA sent a letter to State and local representatives and Veterans' Groups, soliciting possible cemetery site locations.

Only one site has been offered as a potential site for the national cemetery, a 500-acre tract just east of Bakersfield.

The Tejon Ranch Company has identified 2,000 acres of their land for consideration. VA will accept the best 500 acres, out of the 2,000 offered. VA has identified the two best, 500-acre parcels for environmental assessment (EA). The URS Group, Inc., was retained to prepare the EA, which was published in March 2006.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

The 30-day public comment period for the EA ended on April 15, 2006. Final site selection is in process.

NEXT STEPS:

Site acquisition to be completed in FY 2006. Development of a cemetery master plan and initial design to begin in FY 2007.

BUDGET:

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

The President's budget for FY 2007 includes \$2 million for master planning and design development.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

SITE: Birmingham, Alabama

PAST ACTIVITY:

December 2003, NCA sent a letter to State and local representatives and Veterans' Groups, soliciting possible cemetery site locations.

Four sites, adjacent to the American Village complex in Montevallo, Alabama, were offered for VA's consideration.

December 2004, a contract to prepare the Environmental Assessment (EA) of the optimum site(s) was awarded. The four sites, ranging from 40 to 500-acres are undergoing preliminary environmental analysis.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

The EA is being completed and the public comment period is expected to begin in June.

NEXT STEPS:

Site acquisition to be completed in the first quarter of FY 2007. Development of a cemetery master plan and initial design to begin in FY 2007.

BUDGET:

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

The President's budget for FY 2007 includes \$2 million for master planning and design development.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

SITE: Columbia/Greenville, South Carolina

PAST ACTIVITY:

December 2003, NCA sent a letter to State and local representatives and Veterans' Groups, soliciting possible cemetery site locations. A total of four sites have been offered for consideration in Union, Newberry, and Richland Counties. The Richland County site is a 500-acre tract within Fort Jackson in the city of Columbia, that may be available for transfer from the Department of Army at no cost. It has been determined that three sites are suitable for analysis in the Environmental Assessment (EA).

January 2005, a contract was awarded the task to prepare the EA.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

The EA was completed and published. The public comment period began on March 24, and ended on April 24, 2006.

NEXT STEPS:

Site acquisition to be completed in the first quarter of FY 2007. Development of a cemetery master plan and initial design to begin in FY 2007.

BUDGET:

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

The President's budget for FY 2007 includes \$2 million for master planning and design development.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

SITE: Jacksonville, Florida

PAST ACTIVITY:

December 2003, NCA sent a letter to State and local representatives and Veterans' Groups, soliciting possible cemetery site locations.

Site visits in July 2004 and January 2005 identified a total of 14 potential sites. Two sites in Duval County, near the airport have been determined to be the best suited for the national cemetery.

March 2005, a contract to prepare the Environmental Assessment (EA) of these sites was awarded.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

The EA was completed in February 2006, and the 30-day public comment period concluded on April 6, 2006. Comments received are being reviewed before determining a preferred site for acquisition.

NEXT STEPS:

Site acquisition to be completed in FY 2006. Development of a cemetery master plan and initial design to begin in FY 2007.

BUDGET:

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

The President's budget for FY 2007 includes \$2 million for master planning and design development.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

SITE: Southeastern Pennsylvania

PAST ACTIVITY:

Twelve possible sites were evaluated in the vicinities of Norristown, Valley Forge, Embreeville, Pennhurst, Graterford and Bucks County.

Environmental consultant completed a preliminary assessment of the Pennhurst site, a former mental hospital containing 35 buildings. They found that significant environmental clean-up, asbestos abatement, and building demolition would be required to make the site useable for a national cemetery. Pre-construction costs for this remediation were estimated at \$14 million to \$24 million.

A tract in northern Bucks County at Riegelsville owned by the Catholic Church was offered for consideration. Toll Brothers Corporation also offered a 200-acre tract at Dolington in southern Bucks County at Upper Makefield Township for consideration. Sale of the Dolington site to VA was conditioned on the ability of Toll Brothers to obtain zoning variances, to allow higher density residential construction on their other properties in the vicinity.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed in November 2005, addressing the three sites: Pennhurst, Riegelsville, and the Toll Brothers property. The public comment period concluded in late December 2005 and VA selected the Toll Brothers site as the preferred alternative.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

NCA is awaiting final zoning and variance actions by the Upper Makefield Township on the Toll Brothers properties, which will allow the sale of the 200-acre parcel to VA to proceed.

NEXT STEPS:

Site acquisition to be completed in late FY 2006. Development of a cemetery master plan and initial design to begin in FY 2007.

BUDGET:

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

The President's budget for FY 2007 includes \$2 million for master planning and design development.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None

SITE: Sarasota County, Florida

PAST ACTIVITY:

December 2003, NCA sent a letter to State and local representatives and Veterans' Groups, soliciting possible cemetery site locations. A total of 23 sites were identified for consideration. Three sites were selected as suitable for cemetery development.

December 2004, a contract to prepare the Environmental Assessment (EA) of these three sites was awarded.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

The EA was completed and published in early December 2005, and the public comment period concluded on January 17, 2006. Appraisals of the values of the properties have been obtained and VA is evaluating which of the sites is best suited as the preferred alternative.

NEXT STEPS:

Site acquisition to be completed in late FY 2006. Development of a cemetery master plan and initial design to begin in FY 2007.

BUDGET:

Appropriation for FY 2005 includes approximately \$150,000 in the Major Construction, Advanced Planning Fund for site selection activities and preparation of an EA.

Appropriation for FY 2006 included \$41 million for the purchase of land for the six new cemeteries.

The President's budget for FY 2007 includes \$2 million for master planning and design development.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

None