



Historic Structures

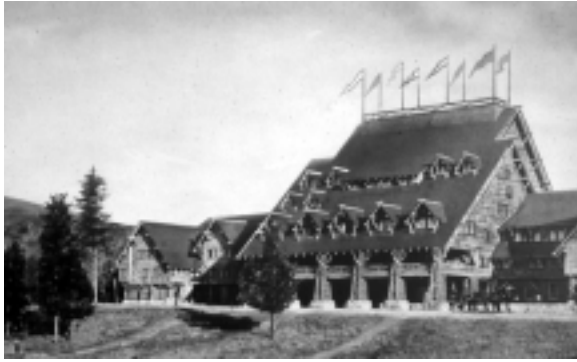
Within Yellowstone National Park are hundreds of stone, log, and wood-frame buildings that date from the 1890s through the 1950s and have historical and architectural significance. In addition to five buildings that have been designated as National Historic Landmarks, there are ranger stations, a network of backcountry cabins, fire lookout towers, Civilian Conservation Corps-built residences, barns, fire caches, hotels and lodges, stores, service stations, roads, and bridges. The vast majority of these historic structures are still in use.

The condition of the park's historic structures ranges from very good to very poor. Lack of funds, a harsh winter environment, and insufficient preventive maintenance have taken their toll. While some buildings have been at least partly stabilized during the last decade, others need to be strengthened to withstand seismic events, and some have deteriorated to the point where they require major replacement of historic materials. Many of the building interiors have lead-based paint that is in poor condition or deficient wiring that poses a fire risk; in some cases, structural failure is imminent. The use of inadequately trained staff has occasionally resulted in the removal of interior historic features and inappropriate alterations and treatment of historic materials.

The NPS is responsible for preserving Yellowstone's historic structures, which requires minimizing the rate at which material is lost while maintaining the historic character of the structures. As a way to enhance preservation, making use of these structures is important, even when it may appear more efficient to construct a new building that meets the need. Maintaining a historic building may be considerably more expensive than a non-historic structure because of the cost of materials, compliance requirements, and lower energy efficiency (which can be remedied). If a building is not being used, obtaining funds and personnel for its stabilization and maintenance is more difficult. Preserving a sense of Yellowstone's culture through preservation of historic structures and landscapes will result in keeping the "old" functioning in place of the "new."

OF SPECIAL CONCERN

National Historic Landmarks. The Old Faithful Inn, the Northeast Entrance Station, and the Norris, Madison, and Fishing Bridge museums, all of which exemplify park "rustic architecture," have been designated as National Historic Landmarks. As required by law, these buildings must be given the highest level of preservation treatment. Although stabilization work has been completed at each, additional funds are needed for preventive maintenance such as cleaning roofs, staining, painting, repairing windows, and replacing electrical wiring and shingles.



Historic lodging. In 1979, Congress approved \$19.9 million for the National Park Service to acquire the former Yellowstone Park Company's facilities, which are now operated by Amfac Parks and Resorts. In addition to the Old Faithful Inn, these facilities include six hotels and lodges, and many other buildings that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Another special congressional appropriation provided monies to correct sanitation and safety code deficiencies and to undertake long-term rehabilitation projects such as renovation of kitchens, public restrooms, dining rooms, lobbies, and guest rooms. Since 1979, the concessioner has been required to invest a portion of the company's gross annual revenue in capital improvements and cyclic maintenance on the facilities that it uses. This has provided more than \$130 million to date for projects such as restoration of the Lake Hotel guest rooms and dining area, the Roosevelt Lodge interior, and a new roof, kitchen, fire-safety system, and room furnishings at the Old Faithful Inn.

Although much has been accomplished and most of the hotels have undergone dramatic renovations, an estimated \$500 million is still needed for building repair, rehabilitation, and cyclic maintenance. Addressing safety concerns such as rewiring, constructing fire exits, and installing sprinkler systems and fire-rated materials has left few resources for basic priorities such as maintaining roofs and sidings. (See "Lodging and Restaurants," page 6–19.)



Fort Yellowstone. Once the headquarters for military administration of the park, Fort Yellowstone includes 40 structures dating from the 1890s and early 1900s that are significant for both their architectural style and their role in the development of the national park system. Today these buildings, which are being considered for National Historic Landmark status, continue to be used for park administration, residences, and visitor services. Some rehabilitation of the buildings has been achieved with the limited

funds available, but much more is required to bring these buildings to a maintainable condition while retaining their historic integrity. Roofs, chimneys, foundations, woodwork, porches, doors, windows, and electrical and mechanical systems should be repaired or replaced, and many of the buildings need painting. Engineers have recommended that the buildings be retrofitted for added protection during Yellowstone's occasional earthquakes.

Historic structure inventory. Until recently, many buildings in the park had not been adequately inventoried according to NPS standards, and of the 952 structures that have been inventoried, many are only partially evaluated for National Register eligibility. For example, Yellowstone has 33 backcountry patrol cabins that may be eligible for listing.

SAVE THE HOUSE OR THE HOT SPRING?

The Executive House in Mammoth Hot Springs, originally known as "H.W. Child's Residence," has traditionally been occupied by the president of the park's primary concession company. Built in 1908 in the Frank Lloyd Wright "Prairie School" style by Robert Reamer, who also designed the Old Faithful Inn, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. But a hot spring that broke out in 1926 formed travertine terraces that have grown toward the house. Despite qualms about tampering with the new Opal Terrace, sandbags were positioned to keep the hot spring and its travertine from running into the house. Little is known about underground geothermal activity in the area.



While the spring vacillates unpredictably between dormancy and spectacularly bright colors—a result of algal growth and minerals natural to thermal waters—staff continue to debate whether it will be financially and logistically feasible to save the thermal feature or the historic building, or whether both could be preserved, possibly by relocating the house. Due to the sloping terrain, Opal Terrace is likely to take over more land and could ultimately ruin the house. But then, many of the park's buildings are at the mercy of its natural underground plumbing; much of Fort Yellowstone is built on old travertine terrace formations and other features that could become active again.

In 1996 and 1997, the park received funds to undertake cabin inventories and prepare historic resource studies that will help evaluate each building's local, regional, or national significance. When complete, the information will be used to determine appropriate preservation and maintenance activities for historic structures.

Stabilization of other buildings. Many of the park's historic buildings require extensive work to prevent structural damage, including the Bechler Ranger Station, the former Fishing Bridge and West Thumb ranger stations (now used as winter warming huts), the Lake Fish Hatchery buildings, the Mammoth carpenter shop, the Norris bunkhouse, and the Lamar residence and bunkhouse. Many backcountry cabins, fire towers, and bridges are seriously deteriorated, having rotted wood and shingles. Rodents, insects, and birds threaten structural integrity and human health and safety in some buildings.

RECENT PROGRESS

In recent years, park employees have gained skills in preservation maintenance, and the concessioner has formed a preservation maintenance crew. Significant work has been done to help maintain the Old Faithful Inn and restore historic residences occupied since the Army days.

Program Needs

- **CYCLIC MAINTENANCE.** Like the park's other buildings, the historic structures that are in use should be on a regular cyclic maintenance schedule. Structures that are not now in use, such as the former Fort Yellowstone powerhouse, tend to be in especially poor condition.
- **STAFF AND TRAINING.** Although technical assistance is available from regional NPS staff, the quantity and variety of historic structures in Yellowstone call for more specialized professional expertise to help train and guide craftsmen in badly needed historic preservation work.





HISTORIC STRUCTURES

STEWARDSHIP GOALS



Professional staff oversee an interdisciplinary program to inventory, preserve, and cyclically maintain historic structures.



The most significant resources are evaluated and preserved according to standards for structures on the National Register of Historic Places. Visitor appreciation of park history is enhanced through interpretive efforts.



Partners and cooperators share responsibility for managing historic structures still in use for visitor services.

CURRENT STATE OF RESOURCES/PROGRAMS



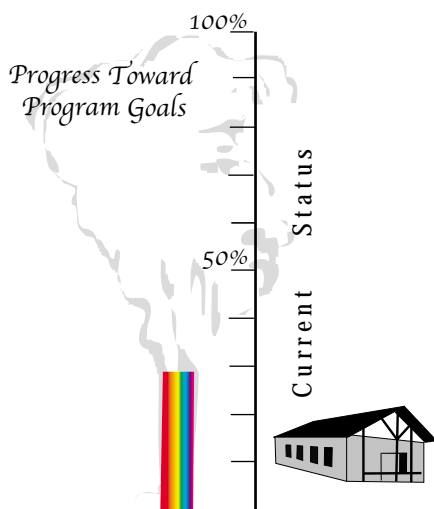
The park lacks trained staff devoted to this program, but interdisciplinary efforts of other historians, architects, and trained craftsmen have accomplished some much needed preservation maintenance.



The park has five National Historic Landmark structures; others await evaluation of their status. Staff knowledge of historic structures is growing, but only limited interpretation of historic landmarks has been done.



Capital improvement funds from concession contracts has provided major restoration at Old Faithful, Lake, and Roosevelt lodges and other historic structures; future restoration is planned in other areas.



1998 FUNDING AND STAFF

Recurring Funds	
Yellowstone N.P. Base Budget	\$ 38,800
Non-Recurring Funds	
One-time Projects	\$ 22,900
Staff	0.84 FTE

The human resources and funding necessary to professionally and effectively manage the park to stewardship levels will be identified in the park business plan.