

The Manhattan Project National Historical Park Memorandum of Agreement

(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on July 29, 2015)

This Historically Speaking column brings readers some really good news of progress being made toward implementation of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. This park has huge potential for Heritage Tourism in Oak Ridge and the sooner we get it in place the better, so this is indeed really good news!

The Bill creating the Manhattan Project National Historical Park that was signed into law on December 19, 2014, included a stipulation that a Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Energy and the Department of Interior be drafted within one year. I believe it is indicative of the desire on the part of both agencies to move as quickly forward as feasible with the establishment of the park, that the MOA has actually been drafted almost five months early! It is now ready for comment.

Here is the link to the MOA, <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/MPNHP>. The comment period is 30 days. I encourage you to take a look and provide feedback if you have suggestions to improve the agreement or if you think there are other considerations that should be addressed.

The stated purposes of the Act creating the park convey the key elements to be considered as the DOE and DOI move forward: *"The purposes of the Act are to preserve and protect for the benefit of present and future generations the nationally significant historic resources associated with the Manhattan Project; to improve public understanding of the Manhattan Project and its legacy through interpretation of the historic resources associated with the Manhattan Project; to enhance public access to the Park established under the Act consistent with protection of public safety, national security, and other aspects of DOE's mission; and to assist DOE, communities, historical societies, and other interested organizations and individuals in efforts to preserve and protect the historically significant resources associated with the Manhattan Project."*

The stated purposes of the MOA enabling the implementation of the park are: *"The purposes of this Agreement are to identify the facilities and areas under DOE's administrative jurisdiction that will initially be included in the Park and to establish a broad framework for the management and interpretation of those facilities and areas."*

A major initiative of the MOA is to identify the DOE facilities to be included in the Park. Here are the facilities at each of the three sites that are listed in the agreement:

"Oak Ridge, Tennessee:

All eligible DOE properties are in the park, including the X-10 Graphite Reactor, Buildings 9731 and 9204-3 at the Y-12 National Security Complex, and the K-25 Building site at the East Tennessee Technology Park.

Hanford Site, Washington:

The following eligible DOE properties are included in the park: B Reactor National Historic Landmark, Hanford High School in the Town of Hanford and Hanford Construction Camp Historic District, Bruggeman's Agricultural Warehouse Complex, White Bluffs Bank, and the Hanford Irrigation District Pump House.

Los Alamos, New Mexico:

*The following eligible DOE properties are included in the park: Gun Site Facilities: TA-8-1 Laboratory and Shop, TA-8-2 Shop and Storage, TA-8-3 Laboratory, TA-8-172 Portable Guard Shack
V-Site Facilities: TA-16-516 and TA-16-517 V- Site Assembly Building
Pajarito Site: TA-18-1 Slotin Building, TA-18-2 Battleship Control Building and TA-18-29 Pond Cabin"*

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The stipulation regarding other than DOE facilities is stated as: *"Decisions on which facilities outside the DOE-managed areas will be included in the park will be determined as the agencies move through the subsequent planning processes, and after a public process that engages the local communities and interested parties."*

This is of importance to Oak Ridge because of our "Hub and Spoke" concept. The "Hub" will be comprised of facilities in the center of the city. While the details are yet to be defined, some elements of the American Museum of Science and Energy as well as the elements of the Oak Ridge Public Library should make up that "Hub" which will be the entry point for visitors to the park.

It also is important for consideration of inclusion of The Children's Museum, the Alexander Guest House and maybe even several other historically significant elements of our city as "Spokes," in addition to the DOE site major "Spokes." BUT NOTICE, these decisions about facilities other than the DOE facilities will be made later and are NOT a part of this MOA.

As you will recall, we have seen substantial support for the creation of the MPNHP from many sources. Our elected officials at the city, state and national levels have strongly supported the passage of the Bill.

The local DOE/NNSA offices as well as their contractors and various civic and other organizations have provided support in their unique areas of responsibility. Support has ranged from providing tours to supplying resources as required to contributing letters of support or other actions as needed to help. Teamwork is evident throughout.

Oak Ridgers are pulling together to achieve the reality of the park and showing the kind of effectiveness that can be achieved when we set their minds together toward creating a future for the city. The park is coming at a most opportune time in the history of our city.

Complimentary activities are ongoing such as Main Street Oak Ridge, CVMR moving its headquarters here (and already talking about creating a barge terminal at the old S-50 Thermal Diffusion Plant site), plans moving forward for an airport at East Tennessee Technology Park and the potential for even larger initiatives being considered there. These mesh well with the park and its Heritage Tourism potential. Our city is poised for unprecedented economic growth.

And that is to say nothing about the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Y-12 National Security Complex initiatives of supercomputers and the Uranium Processing Facility! Much is happening now and in the near future in Oak Ridge!

As the DOE and DOI/National Park Service staff did their team visits, Oak Ridge was chosen as the first site to be visited of the three sites, the other two being Los Alamos, NM, and Hanford, WA. On that initial visit it was abundantly clear that the visitors were overwhelmed by the historic artifacts and potential interpretation of the most significant scientific and industrial accomplishment in the history of the world...yet this amazing history is woefully underappreciated by the general public.

Even the National Park Service personnel who were on the tour I was privileged to help lead were constantly amazed by what they saw. They were impressed by the authentic artifacts, but even more blown away by meeting Martin Skinner and Joe Tracy, individuals who worked with the Y-12 Calutrons and who spoke with first-hand knowledge of the science.

The DOE and DOI/NPS visitors on that first tour and the second and third visit by other NPS visitors, were impressed, however, the tours were really just a mere taste of what Oak Ridge can become to heritage tourists. Yet another visitor tour being planned for the near future will showcase our city and its heritage to the newly appointed Tennessee Commissioner for the Department of Tourist Development, members of

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his staff and the State Historian. Additional tours are also being scheduled for other DOE/NNSA headquarters personnel.

It is really rewarding to see the interest being generated by the new Park during the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. It is also good to see the National Park Service being brought on board as the nation's storytellers to help convey the tremendous heritage springing from the Manhattan Project. The amazing thing is that what is happening now is just the beginning.

As the next steps by the National Park Service begin to be understood, such as the interpretation of the history and the identification of historic artifacts, we will see even more significant progress. But for now, it is really good to see the DOE/DOI NPS team producing the MOA early!

Please do read the document, understand the implications and provide feedback. Again, the link to the document, appendixes, frequently asked questions and more is: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/MPNHP>.

The following reminder regarding your comments comes from the welcome letter from NPS team leader Victor Knox:

"When making comments please keep the following in mind:

- ☐ *This is a high level agreement between the Department of Energy and the Department of the Interior that establishes the roles and responsibilities for the two agencies for the management of the park.*
- ☐ *Details of the park interpretive themes, park facilities, visitor contact stations, park management structure, and specifics about what eligible properties outside the Department of Energy properties should be included in the park are not included in this agreement and will be identified in future planning efforts.*
- ☐ *Please see our Frequently Asked Questions about the agreement as you develop your comments about the Memorandum of Agreement.*

Yes, these are surely exciting times in Oak Ridge! Be proud, participate, and be a part of creating the future...

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Beta 3 Calutrons at Y-12 are one of the historic artifacts that take visitors back in time to 1945 and provide an amazing authentic experience!



Senator Albert Gore, Sr., Alvin Weinberg, ORNL Director, and Glenn Seaborg, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission unveil the plaque designating the historic Graphite Reactor as a National Historical Landmark on the National Register of Historic Places