NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

LISTED ON:
VLR 09/19/2013
NRHP 12/24/2013

1. Name of Property
Historic name: Three Hills
Other names/site number: VDHR File No. 008-0050
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location
Street & number: 348 Three Hills Lane
City or town: Warm Springs State: VA County: Bath
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: X

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national X statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A X B X C ___D

11/4/13

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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In my opinion, the property **X** meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___**national** **X** **statewide** **X** **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___**A** **X** **B** **X** **C** ___**D**

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	x
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	3	buildings
1	0	sites
1	2	structures
0	0	objects
6	5	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure
LANDSCAPE: Garden

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure
LANDSCAPE: Garden
OTHER: Conference Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Italian Renaissance
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; WOOD; STUCCO; ASPHALT

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Located on a hill east of the small town of Warm Springs, the county seat of Bath County in western Virginia, Three Hills is a 27-acre estate that contains a prominent two-and-a-half-story, frame and stucco, hipped-roofed dwelling located on the middle of three ridges that surround the property, thus the name Three Hills. The main house consists of a central block with flanking two-story wings and rear additions. Designed by Richmond architects Carneal and Johnston in the Italian Renaissance style with a Colonial Revival interior, the house was erected in 1913 for Mary Johnston, a popular early-twentieth-century novelist, who lived and operated an inn there until her death in 1936. The front elevation also features a single-story, flat-roofed portico; first-floor windows surmounted by round arches; a four-bay, two-story north wing adorned with pilasters; a recessed two-story, two-bay wing to the south; an asphalt-shingled hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves supported by paired and tripled narrow brackets; three hipped-roofed dormers; and tall stuccoed brick chimneys. The central block contains a central passage with an elegant double-flight staircase and flanking rooms featuring Colonial Revival-style mantels, architrave door and window trim, and paneled wainscot. The rear and north wings were divided into apartments in the late 20th century. In addition to the main dwelling, the estate features a small formal boxwood garden (a contributing site), a late-20th-century wooden gazebo (a noncontributing structure); three frame and stucco, one-story cottages (contributing buildings) built during the 1910s and 1920s, a Ranch-style house built in the 1960s (a noncontributing

building), a stone and brick freestanding chimney (a contributing structure) that appears to have been part of an unknown early-twentieth-century building that no longer survives, a 1997 polygonal-shaped frame conference facility (a noncontributing building), a small frame 1960s well house (a noncontributing building), and a round 1950s concrete water tank (a noncontributing structure). All of the contributing resources have good integrity of association, design, feeling, location, materials, setting, and workmanship. The non-contributing resources post-date the period of significance.

Narrative Description

Located just east of the village of Warm Springs, the entrance to the property known as Three Hills begins with a long gravel drive that leads from U.S. Route 220 at the base of a hill and winds up through forested land to terminate in a circle planted with shrubs and flowers at the top of the hill in front of the main house. A concrete walk, flanked by boxwoods and grassy lawns to the north and south, gradually rises to the portico.

Main House

The main house sits atop a small rise which is mostly cleared of trees, while forests frame the house at a short distance beyond. The two-and-a-half-story, frame and stuccoed main house consists of a central block flanked by a recessed two-story, two-bay wing to the south and a slightly recessed two-story, four-bay wing to the north. Both wings have flat roofs with stuccoed parapets. The house sits on a brick foundation, and a shallow, asphalt-shingled hipped roof caps the central block and features wide overhanging eaves supported by paired and tripled narrow wooden brackets. Between the brackets are rectangular tablets displaying carved swags, garlands, and ribbons--suggesting a frieze. Three symmetrically placed, hipped-roofed front dormers rise above the roof as do two tall stuccoed chimneys at the north and south elevations of the central block.

A one-bay flat-roofed portico, consisting of square stuccoed piers and fluted Roman Ionic columns below a denticulated full entablature, shelters the central entrance of the dwelling with its six-panel wooden door flanked by wide sidelights, each with eight lights. On each side of the portico is a pair of eight-over-sixteen, double-hung-sash wood windows surmounted by round arches. Second-story windows are six-over-six, double-hung sash without arches. Centrally located on the second-story façade is an eight-over-sixteen, double-hung-sash wood window flanked by narrow four-over-four, double-hung-sash wood windows. Raising the lower sash of the central window allows access onto the flat roof of the portico which is bordered by a solid stuccoed parapet.

The first story of the south wing appears to have been originally designed as a one-story open porch that was framed by piers with molded capitals. The porch was later enclosed and is now used as a bedroom. A two-bay, flat-roofed, second-story room was also added atop the original porch, perhaps at the same time the porch was enclosed. A four-bay, two-story, flat-roofed wing projecting north of the central block contains a dining room and enclosed porch on the first story and bedrooms on the second story. Like the south wing, the second-story room atop the former

porch was added later. A door with a three-light transom provides access from the dining room to a concrete terrace at the front. The wing's façade features a slightly projecting molded entablature between stories and is divided by plain pilasters along each story of the elevation.

Two two-story service wings project from the rear of the house and appear to be original to the design of the dwelling. The southernmost wing retains the decorative treatment of the central block with its hipped roof, hipped dormers, and bracketed cornice with tablets in the frieze. The northernmost wing is plain in comparison with only a stringcourse between stories and a parapeted flat roof. A third wing capped by a shed roof is situated between the original two wings and was added in the late twentieth century as a bedroom. The two original service wings appear to have been originally designed to house servants, storage rooms, a kitchen, and utility spaces. They were later divided into modern apartments in the mid- to late twentieth century.

On the interior, the central block consists of a wide central passage containing a double-flight, open-well staircase at the rear. The stair features paneling beneath the open stringer which is decorated with a scroll bracket below each tread. A balustrade consisting of slender turned balusters, a turned newel, and a molded handrail gracefully rises to the second floor. The room is finished with tall paneled wainscot below plastered walls, a denticulated and molded ceiling cornice, uniform-width pine flooring, and wide openings framed by double architrave trim containing pocket doors, one leading into a parlor to the south and the other into a library to the north. A striking leaded glass chandelier with frosted glass globes is suspended from the ceiling.

The focal point of the parlor is a Colonial Revival-style mantel consisting of fluted pilasters flanking the firebox surmounted by a plain frieze and a denticulated cornice below a molded mantelshelf. The room's most interesting feature is the unusual eight-over-sixteen-sash front windows whose lower sashes retreat up into the wall above each window when fully opened to allow access to a concrete terrace extending the length of the front elevation.

To the north of the central passage is a library featuring a finely executed Colonial Revival-style mantel consisting of engaged fluted Roman Doric columns flanking the firebox, a frieze decorated with carved fleurs-de-lis, swags, and ribbons, and a molded shelf above a denticulated cornice. Wooden bookcases, projecting a foot from the plastered walls and rising nearly a third of the room's height, are faced with hinged leaded glass doors with diamond-patterned tracery.

North of the library is the dining room which contains another fine Colonial Revival-style mantel—this one featuring paired freestanding fluted columns with Tower of the Winds capitals flanking the firebox and incorporating a plate rail supported by pendentive-like brackets into its mantelshelf. A paneled wooden wainscot topped by a plate rail lines the entire room.

The original room occupying the southeast corner of the central block has been divided into smaller spaces by partitions and is now used as an office. A butler's pantry and service stair occupy much of the northeast corner area of the central block, while the original rear kitchen wing was recently repurposed as a bedroom to accommodate more guests when the house was used as an inn. The current kitchen and food preparatory rooms occupy the central rear wing that was added in the mid- to late twentieth century.

During the mid-twentieth century, the northernmost section of the house (originally a porch that was later enclosed) and the northernmost rear wing (originally servants' quarters) were divided into apartments with kitchens, living rooms, and bedrooms.

The stair in the central passage rises to a landing lighted by three tall windows—a central nine-over-six, double-hung-sash wood window flanked by a narrower six-over-four, double-hung-sash wood window. The stair continues rising to a wide hall on the second floor that leads to four suites to the south, west, and north, each containing a sitting room, bedroom, and bath. Two suites are located in the central block, one suite in the south wing, and one in the rear southernmost wing. The sitting rooms of the southwest and northeast corner suites have identical Colonial Revival mantels that feature fluted pilasters, a plain frieze, and a denticulated cornice below a molded mantelshelf. Plastered walls, five-panel wooden doors, and six-over-six, double-hung-sash wood windows framed with architrave trim, pine flooring, and heavy baseboards are all common to the second-floor rooms.

A first-floor exterior entrance located on the northern elevation of the house provides access to two apartments on the first floor and to a staircase similar to the main stair with turned balusters and a molded handrail. The stair rises to a hall that leads to two second-floor apartments, both with kitchens and bathrooms added during the mid-twentieth century.

Another staircase near the butler's pantry leads to the second floor and eventually to servants' rooms in the attic. Lighted by five dormers, these attic rooms are simply finished with plastered walls, white painted wood trim, and several sets of storage drawers recessed into the knee walls.

Secondary Resources

Immediately to the rear of the central block is a small symmetrically designed formal boxwood garden (contributing site) that was probably laid out soon after the house was completed in 1913. To the east of the garden stands a hedge and a trellised entry that leads to a series of steps ascending a terraced hillside to an octagonal frame gazebo atop the hill. Although dating to the late twentieth century and, therefore, a noncontributing structure, it replaced a larger original gazebo on the same spot.

Northeast of the garden is a two-story, hipped-roofed, frame and stuccoed cottage on a banked site. Known as the Garden Cottage (contributing building), it dates to the original construction date of the house or soon thereafter and was supposedly preferred as a writing place by original owner and novelist Mary Johnston. The cottage's entrance is on the east elevation and is sheltered by a single-bay, hipped-roofed porch with square bracketed posts. The asphalt-shingled hipped roof of the cottage, which also features an eyebrow-arched attic vent at the rear, has wide overhanging eaves supported by brackets similar to those on the main house. The cottage contains a living room, a kitchen, two bedrooms, two baths, and a small deck. Its simply finished rooms feature beaded-board walls, a pegged rail extending around the central passage, and five-panel doors typical of the 1910s and 1920s.

Northeast of the Garden Cottage is a one-story, frame and weatherboarded, hipped-roofed building known as Sycamore Cottage (contributing building). Constructed in the 1920s by Mary Johnston as a guest cottage, it displays single and tripled six-over-six, double-hung-sash wood windows and a multi-light central door. An open deck extends across the front of the building, and a solarium extends off the south elevation. The cottage contains a living room, dining room, three bedrooms, and two baths.

Northwest of Sycamore Cottage is a one-story, frame and stuccoed, hipped-roofed building known as Crabapple Cottage. Based on its exterior appearance, which includes eight-over-eight, double-hung-sash wood windows and bracketed eaves similar to the main house, it was built about the same time as the house. Like the Garden Cottage, it also features eyebrow-arched attic vents on the roof. The facade of the cottage faces west where a central entrance is sheltered by a wide, single-bay porch with square posts and a hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves supported by single brackets. Although the interior has been gutted, this building retains much of its exterior integrity and is, therefore, a contributing building.

Located south of the main house is a one-story, multi-sided, board-and-batten frame conference facility capped by a conical roof. Built in 1997, the noncontributing building has a wraparound open deck, meeting rooms, a kitchen, and restrooms. Another noncontributing building is a one-story, frame and wood-sided, gable-roofed, Ranch-style dwelling known as Cedar Cottage. Located northwest of the main house and built in the 1960s, it contains a living room, kitchen, three bedrooms, and a bath.

Just to the south of the house is a stone and brick freestanding chimney that appears to have been part of a building of unknown use. The stonework and stovepipe opening above the firebox, however, suggest an early-twentieth-century date of construction and, therefore, it is a contributing structure on the property.

North of the Ranch-style dwelling is a small one-story, two-bay, frame and wood-sided, gable-roofed well house that shelters a water pump and well that serves the property. Dating to the 1960s, it is a noncontributing building.

Located at a distance east of the main house on a hillside near the eastern boundary of the Three Hills property, a 10,000-gallon, round, concrete water tank gravity feeds water to the buildings on the property. Probably dating to the 1950s, it is a noncontributing structure.

Altogether, Three Hills contains a remarkably intact collection of buildings, sites, and structures representing the early-twentieth-century lifestyle of its original owner who must have been captivated by the beautiful views afforded by this hilltop location overlooking the village of Warm Springs and the mountains beyond.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [x] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
LITERATURE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1913-1936

Significant Dates
1913
1917
1936

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
Johnston, Mary

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Carneal and Johnston, Richmond, Virginia (architects)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Located on a hill at the outskirts of the village of Warm Springs, the county seat of Bath County in western Virginia, the estate known as Three Hills is significant at the statewide level under Criterion B in Literature for its association with nationally-renowned author Mary Johnston, who had the house built in 1913 as her private residence. Johnston, the first best-selling novelist of the 20th century, was best known for her popular historical romances featuring heroes and heroines of colonial Virginia. While Johnston faded from the canon of American authors in the mid-twentieth century, her stature has risen with the scholarly rediscovery of her early involvement in the women's suffrage movement in Virginia. Johnston lived in three residences in Virginia, two of which survive: her townhouse in Richmond's Linden Row (listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971); and Three Hills which encompasses the latter and most productive period of Johnston's life and career and where she wrote sixteen novels and her one book-length work of nonfiction. Johnston lived at Three Hills from 1913, the year the dwelling was completed, until her death in 1936, representing the period of significance.

Three Hills is also significant at the local level under Criterion C in architecture. An excellent example of the Italian Renaissance style with a Colonial Revival interior, the main house at Three Hills was designed by well known Richmond architects Carneal and Johnston and built in 1913, a time when many wealthy residents living in the Warm Springs Valley preferred the Neoclassical or Colonial Revival style to represent their tastes in architecture and lifestyle. Best known for designing public, commercial, and industrial buildings in the Richmond area, Carneal and Johnston designed few rural estate dwellings, and Three Hills is the only known example of their work in western Virginia. In addition to the main house, a remarkably intact assemblage of early-twentieth-century secondary resources complete the complex including a small formal boxwood garden (a contributing site), a stone and brick chimney (a contributing structure), and three Craftsman-like cottages (contributing buildings) that were built in the 1910s and 1920s for Johnston, in one of which, Garden Cottage, she wrote many of her works. Non-contributing resources include a 1960s well house, a 1960s Ranch-style house, and a 1997 frame conference facility, all non-contributing buildings; a 1950s water tank and a late-twentieth-century wooden gazebo (non-contributing structures).

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

CRITERION B: LITERATURE, MARY JOHNSTON

Born in Buchanan, Virginia, in 1870, Mary Johnston became the first best-selling novelist of the twentieth century with her historical romance set in Jamestown, *To Have and To Hold* (1900). The daughter of a Confederate veteran, Johnston grew up in Georgia and Virginia. Prone to illness and malady, she attended school only sporadically, instead acquiring an education through

autodidactic browsing of her father's extensive library. The reading, and her travels in Europe, fired her imagination and Johnston began to experiment with fiction in a series of short stories. Her writing endeavors also served "as a therapeutic relief from continuing illness."[1] Johnston wrote her first novel, *Prisoners of Hope* (1898) in New York City, where her father was working at the time. Her next novel, *To Have and To Hold,* was written in Europe and resorts in the mountains of Virginia; when it came out it became a best-seller. When her father moved to Richmond in 1902, Johnston moved with him into a house on Grace Street (no longer extant).

After her father's death in 1905, Johnston suffered a protracted illness brought on by her intense grief and moved into a house of her own in Richmond's Linden Row. She also experienced what she called a "psychic incident," which helped plant the seeds for her later transcendentalist thought. At Linden Row, according to her biographer, Johnston devoted herself to "continue and expand work especially dedicated to" the "memory" of her father, "the values for which he stood, and the cultural heritage with which these values were identified."[2] These efforts would culminate in two novels set during the Civil War, *The Long Roll* (1911) and *Cease Firing* (1912). While fitting within the tradition of the Lost Cause and the valorization of the Confederacy, in these works Johnston rejected a romanticized view of combat and instead concentrated on portraying "the horrors of the Civil War, and, by extension, war in general."[3] Her realistic narration of battle scenes impressed some early critics, one of whom compared her works to the writing that appeared during World War I, favorably noting: "her description will shirk nothing but will be free from such hopeless embitterment of as [Henri] Barbusse's" novel of World War I, *Le Feu* (1916).[4]

Also after her return to Virginia, Johnston became more involved in public causes. Living near Lila Meade Valentine and other suffragists, Johnston became involved in the push to get women the vote. She helped found the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia and took an active role in the organization. As one biographer has noted, "Johnston was extremely valuable to the suffrage movement precisely because…[s]he was both a respected—indeed, revered—southern lady and an advocate for women's rights."[5] Eventually, Johnston would break with the larger suffrage movement in the South in 1915 over the racist statements of Kate Gordon, the president of the Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference.[6] Content to fight for racial justice through her

[1] C. Ronald Cella, *Mary Johnston* (New York: Twayne, 1981), 21.
[2] Cella, 16.
[3] Sarah E. Gardner, "Every Man Has Got the Right to Get Killed? The Civil War Narratives of Mary Johnston and Caroline Gordon," *Southern Cultures,* Vol. 5 No. 4 (Winter 1999), 22. See also: Gwendolyn Jones Harold, "Rebel With a Cause: Mary Johnston and the Virginia Tradition: Part I," *Ellen Glasgow Journal of Southern Women Writers* Vol. 2 (2009): 75-199; Gwendolyn Jones Harold, "Rebel With a Cause: Mary Johnston and the Virginia Tradition: Part II," *Ellen Glasgow Journal of Southern Women Writers,* Vol. 3 (2010): 49-104; and Wallace Hettle, *Inventing Stonewall Jackson: A Civil War Hero in History and Memory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011), 108-119.
[4] "The Literary Spotlight: Mary Johnston," *The Bookman: A Review of Books and Life*, Vol. 55 No. 5 (July 1922), 495.
[5] Mary Johnston, *Hagar*, edited by Marjorie Spruill Wheeler ([1913] Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), xii.
[6] Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, "Mary Johnston, Suffragist," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* Vol. 100 No. 1 (January 1992): 99-118.

writing, Johnston would retreat largely from the public view with her move to Three Hills. She set aside political causes and focused on her theosophical transcendentalism, a "belief" in "a universe of the future in which space and time are dissolved as all conflicts are reconciled" with "tolerance as the key ethical standard for human behavior."[7]

Using the proceeds from her popular novels, Johnston purchased property in Bath County. While writing her earlier novels, she had sojourned at resorts in the mountains of Virginia and West Virginia and felt an affinity for the area.[8] From 1913 until her death in 1936, Johnston lived at Three Hills along with her sisters. Although a dream property for Johnston, she spent more money on the house than she could afford. Financial constraints forced Johnston to take on boarders beginning in 1917; several times Johnston became convinced she would have to sell the property. Despite these struggles, Johnston maintained ownership of Three Hills.

Following her move to Three Hills and her two novels of the Civil War, Mary pursued increasingly idiosyncratic and esoteric themes in her novels. Enamored with the idea of transcendentalism, she wrote novels that espoused her increasingly radical beliefs. At Three Hills, Johnston penned sixteen novels: *Hagar* (1913), *The Witch* (1914), *The Fortunes of Garin* (1915), *The Wanderers* (1917), *Foes* (1918), *Michael Forth* (1919), *Sweet Rocket* (1920), *Silver Cross* (1922), *1492* (1922), *Croatan* (1923), *The Slave Ship* (1924), *The Great Valley* (1926), *The Exile* (1927), *Hunting Shirt* (1931), *Miss Delicia Allen* (1933), and *Drury Randall* (1934). Unfortunately for Johnston, the reading public preferred historical romances and her sales declined. Of the most importance critically of these sixteen was the novel *Hagar*, which presented a semi-autobiographical account of a Southern woman of social standing who became involved in the women's suffrage movement and other social causes.

Even despite the declining commercial success of her novels--as well as a poor reception of them among critics--Johnston's peers still considered her a stalwart of Southern literature. A letter to the editor in the *New York Times* in 1923 argued for the existence of Southern literature and included Johnston's name among a catalogue of writers that included Edgar Allan Poe, William Gilmore Simms, and John Esten Cooke.[9] Another writer in the same paper classed Johnston as one "of the best known signatures in American fiction."[10] Beyond the pages of the press, Johnston also enjoyed acclaim among other authors and academics in the 1930s. Urged by the writer Ellen Glasgow, Dr. Edwin A. Alderman, president of the University of Virginia, organized a Southern writers' conference in 1932. Johnston made the trip from Bath County to attend, making an appearance alongside Sherwood Anderson, James Branch Cabell, William Faulkner, Glasgow, and Allen Tate, among others.[11] Despite her stature among her contemporaries, after her death in 1936, Johnston's works faded from critical notice until the late twentieth century.

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[7] Cella, 30.
[8] "Skyland Greets Miss Johnston, Noted Writer: Two of Her Novels Were Written in Bungalow at Resort," *Washington Post*, 24 August 1930, S7.
[9] "No Southern Literature!" *New York Times*, 8 July 1923, book review, 24.
[10] "The Fiction Writer's Copy Book," *New York Times*, 7 October 1923, book review 6.
[11] Donald Davidson, "A Meeting of Southern Writers," *The Bookman: A Review of Books and Life* Vol. 74 No. 5 (January/February 1932), 494.

Her stature since has risen due to the scholarly rediscovery of her early involvement in the women's suffrage movement in Virginia.

CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Three Hills contains a remarkably intact complex of domestic buildings that retains much of its character-defining features and architectural integrity. As an assemblage of mostly early-twentieth-century buildings, it represents the tastes and lifestyle of the estate's original owner, popular novelist Mary Johnston. The main house is a two-and-a-half-story, frame and stuccoed, hipped-roofed dwelling consisting of a central block flanked by south and north wings and with service wings at the rear. Three cottages near the main house are modest one- and two-story guest houses built in the 1910s and 1920s for Mary Johnston and her guests. A small formal boxwood garden and a gazebo are also a part of the estate.

The main house at Three Hills, designed in the Italian Renaissance style by the Richmond, Virginia, architectural firm of Carneal and Johnston, was erected in 1913.[12] Known for designing many commercial, industrial, domestic, and educational buildings primarily in the Richmond area, Carneal and Johnston designed few estate dwellings in Richmond or elsewhere in the Commonwealth that are comparable in size and sophistication to the main house at Three Hills.

William Leigh Carneal, Jr. (1881-1958) and James Markam Ambler Johnston (1885-1974) established their firm around 1908 after spending a year working independently out of the same office space. The firm went on to become one of the most prolific and long-established architectural practices in Virginia.

Carneal, born in Richmond, Virginia, on October 24, 1881, graduated in 1903 from Virginia Military Institute. He began his architectural practice around 1906 following a three-year stint as a clerk in his father's company. Johnston, born in Rockbridge County, Virginia, on May 18, 1885, studied engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (now Virginia Tech) in Blacksburg, Virginia, and Cornell University, in Ithaca, New York, before moving to Richmond in 1906. He worked at the Richmond Cedar Works for one year until he began his own architectural practice.

From 1908 until 1950, the firm of Carneal and Johnston helped to mold the architectural environment of central Virginia, especially Richmond. Responsible for over 1,300 buildings, Carneal and Johnston practiced in a wide range of project types, from the mundane to the monumental. While they did execute some residential buildings, the firm generated a far greater number of public, commercial, and industrial structures. Some of their most notable works are in Richmond, Virginia, and include First Virginia Regiment Armory (1913), the Virginia Mutual Building (1919-1921), the Virginia State Office Building (1922-1923), Saint Joseph's Villa (thirteen buildings, 1930-1931), the Virginia War Memorial (1932), and various buildings and

[12] Wells, John E. and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects 1835-1955: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1997), 68.

structures on the campuses of Richmond College (now the University of Richmond), and Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia.[13]

The choice of the Italian Renaissance style for the main house was not a popular one for early-twentieth-century estates in the Warm Springs Valley in Bath County, Virginia. Most wealthy residents chose the Colonial Revival or Neoclassical style for their imposing mansions which best represented their tastes in architecture and in their ideal concept of fine living. Although these styles dominated in the early 1900s, the Tudor Revival and French Renaissance are among other styles popular for dwellings built in the area during the 1920s.

Other Warm Springs Valley dwellings such as Barton Lodge, built in 1900; The Pillars, built ca. 1910; Broad Lawn, built ca. 1912; and Maple Ridge Farm built circa 1915, are all excellent examples of the Colonial Revival and/or Neoclassical style. Celebrating the nation's colonial past and successfully promoted as the ideal American style by the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, the Colonial Revival style was especially popular in the original thirteen colonies. In Virginia, by the second decade of the twentieth century, the Colonial Revival was decidedly the most popular style for new dwellings in the state and was especially favored by the wealthy who patronized well trained architects to design their Colonial Revival-style residences.

Nevertheless, Mary Johnston or her architects chose the Italian Renaissance style for Three Hills, and no other dwelling of equal or larger size built in the Warm Springs Valley during the 1910s and 1920s so well represents the Italian Renaissance style as does the house at Three Hills. Although the exterior of the residence features stuccoed walls, windows surmounted by round arches, a portico with Ionic columns, a hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves supported by narrow brackets, and flat-roofed wings with parapets--all characteristics of the Italian Renaissance style--the architects (or Miss Johnston) chose the Colonial Revival style to characterize the interior of the grand house. Such features as the gracefully executed double-flight main staircase, architrave window and door trim, heavy paneled doors, and several mantels with columns or pilasters flanking the firebox and displaying classical friezes with carved swags and garlands are all hallmarks of the Colonial Revival style.

Johnston occupied four main residences during her productive career: a house in Birmingham, Alabama, where she lived when she wrote two novels, a house in Richmond where she lived with her father and wrote two novels, a house in Richmond where she lived by herself and wrote four novels, and her own house, Three Hills, where she wrote sixteen novels and her one book-length work of nonfiction. Of these four residences, two survive: her townhouse in Richmond's Linden Row (listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971) and Three Hills. Only Three Hills encompasses the latter period of Johnston's life and career.

After Mary Johnston's death in 1936, the house continued to be operated as an inn by her sister Eloise and her brother Henry until 1950. Rene Crouzet and his wife purchased the property in

[13]Carneal & Johnston Architectural Drawings and Plans, 1911-1990, Business records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

1956, running a successful inn at Three Hills until 1970. Among several late-twentieth-century owners of the property, Peter and Ruth Worthy also operated Three Hills as an inn beginning in 1986. Most recently acquired by Three Hills Inn LP, the 27-acre estate is currently (2013) for sale.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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_____. "No Southern Literature!" *New York Times*, 8 July 1923, book review, 24.

_____. "Skyland Greets Miss Johnston, Noted Writer: Two of Her Novels Were Written in Bungalow at Resort," *Washington Post*, 24 August 1930, S7.

_____. "The Fiction Writer's Copy Book," *New York Times*, 7 October 1923, book review, 6.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:
_X__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR File No. 008-0050

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 27.24 acres_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.048333 Longitude: -79.785802
2. Latitude: 38.048659 Longitude: -79.783881
3. Latitude: 38.046676 Longitude: -79.780893
4. Latitude: 38.043934 Longitude: -79.780774
5. Latitude: 38.045923 Longitude: -79.785682

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:
2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Overlooking the village of Warm Springs in Bath County, Virginia, Three Hills is a 27.24-acre property comprised of eights tracts of land as defined by Bath County Tax Maps 63-0-32, -32A, -32B, -32C, and -32D; 63-0-33; 63-0-34, 63-0-35, and 63-0-36 found in the Bath County Department of Planning and Zoning, Warm Springs, Virginia.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the property nominated are the historical boundaries of the Three Hills estate as known by the original owner Mary Johnston who purchased the property in 1911 (Bath County Deed Book 25, page 270).

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: David Edwards and Peter Luebke
organization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources
street & number: 2801 Kensington Avenue
city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23221
e-mail: david.edwards@dhr.virginia.gov
telephone: 540-868-7030
date: August 16, 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

All photographs are common to:

Name of Property: Three Hills

City or Vicinity: Warm Springs

County: Bath County State: Virginia

Photographer: David A. Edwards

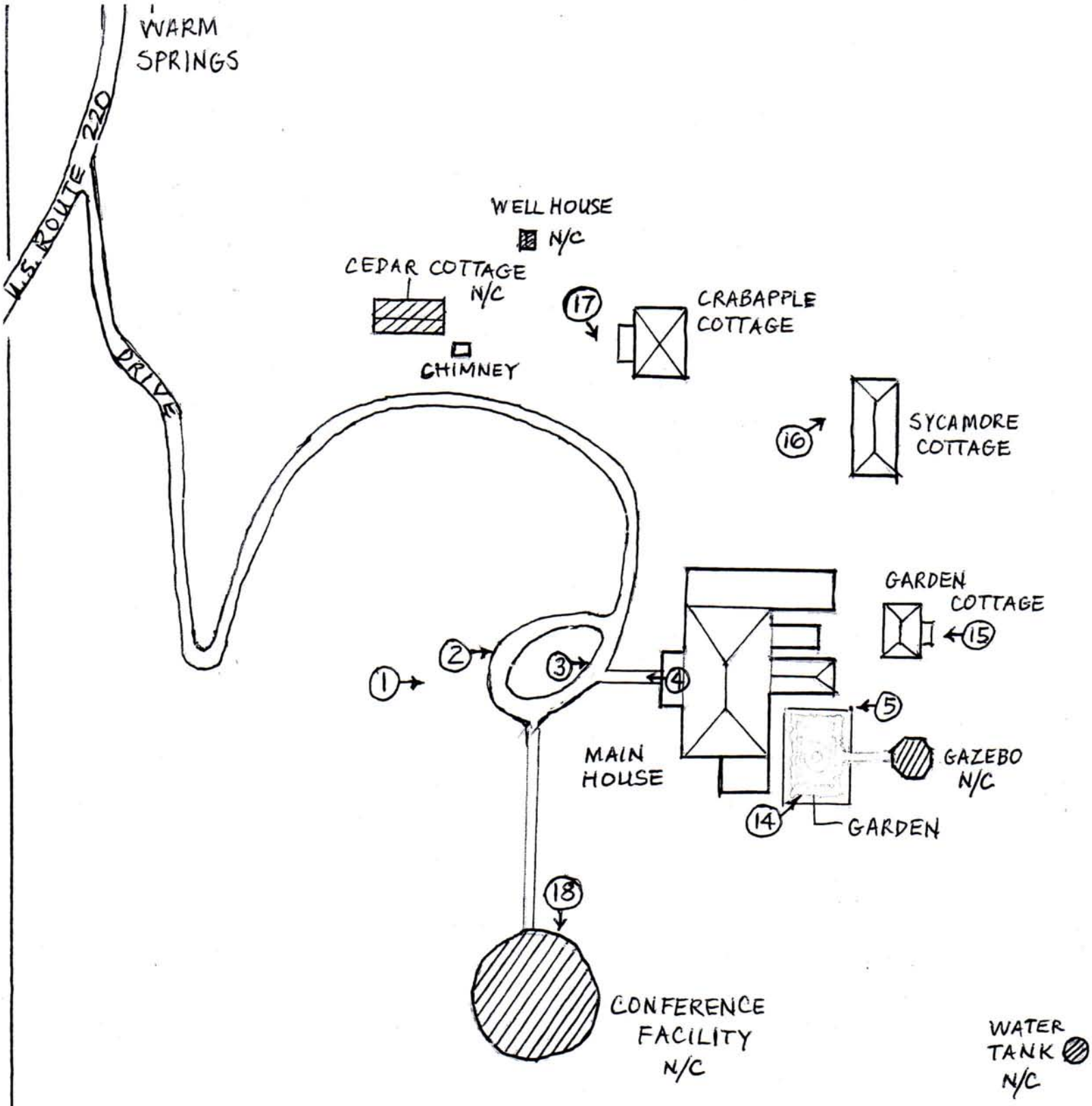
Date Photographed: July 2, 2013

Location of Digital Images: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 18 Main House, Front (west) Elevation, looking east
Photo 2 of 18 Main House, Front (west) Elevation, looking east
Photo 3 of 18 Main House, Front Portico, looking east
Photo 4 of 18 Main House, View looking west from Front Portico
Photo 5 of 18 Main House, Rear (east) Elevation, looking west
Photo 6 of 18 Main House, Central Passage, looking east
Photo 7 of 18 Main House, Stair in Central Passage, looking east
Photo 8 of 18 Main House, Central Passage, looking north to Library
Photo 9 of 18 Main House, Parlor Mantel, looking southeast
Photo 10 of 18 Main House, Library Mantel, looking northeast
Photo 11 of 18 Main House, Staircase Landing, looking northeast
Photo 12 of 18 Main House, Second-Floor Southwest Suite Sitting Room, looking south
Photo 13 of 18 Main House, Second-Floor Southwest Suite Bedroom, Access to Portico Roof, looking east
Photo 14 of 18 Boxwood Garden, looking northeast
Photo 15 of 18 Garden Cottage, Front (east) Elevation, looking west
Photo 16 of 18 Sycamore Cottage, Front (west) Elevation, looking northeast
Photo 17 of 18 Crabapple Cottage, West and North Elevations, looking southeast
Photo 18 of 18 Conference Facility (Noncontributing Building), looking south

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



THREE HILLS, BATH COUNTY, VIRGINIA

SKETCH MAP (NOT TO SCALE)

= NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES (N/C)

1 = PHOTO NO. AND DIRECTION

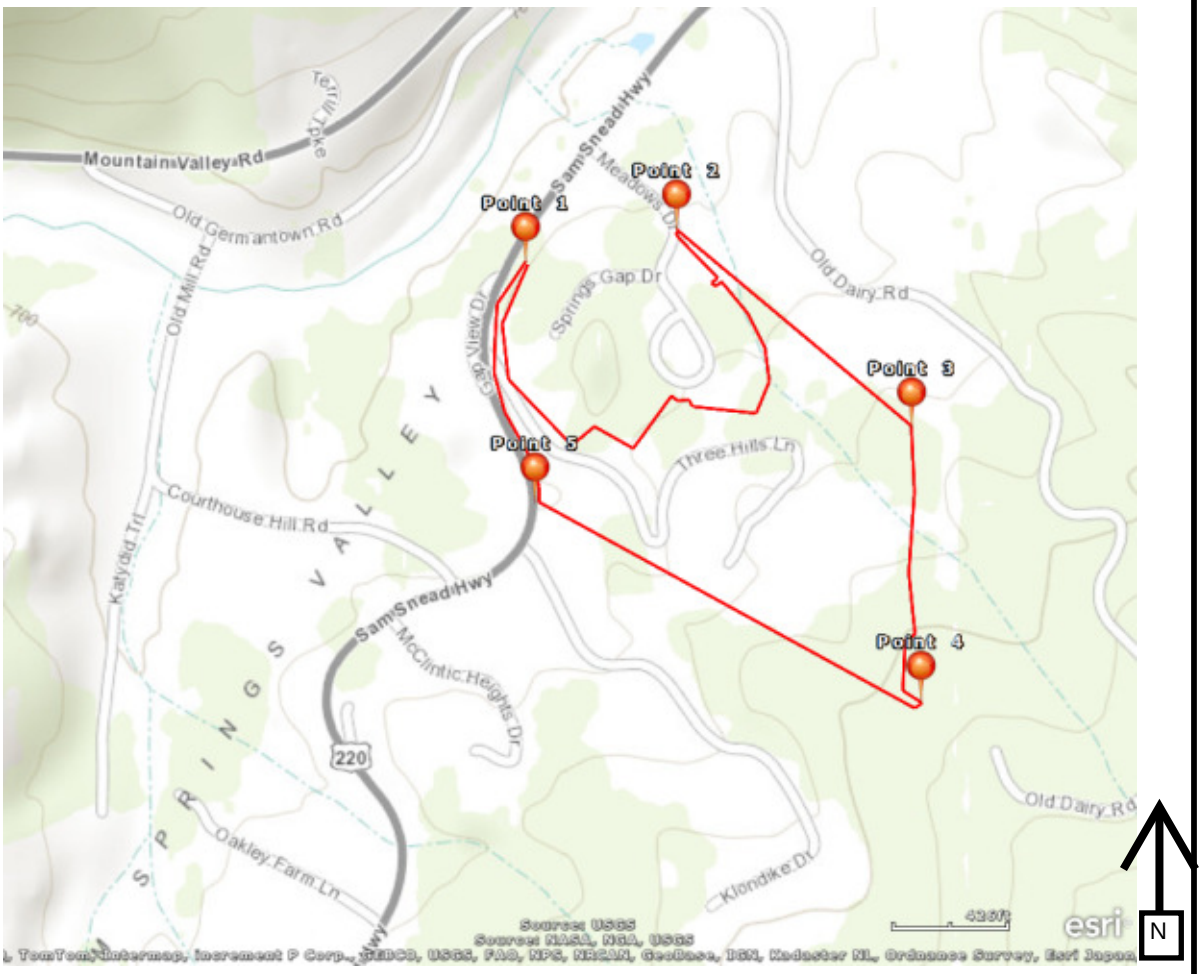
N

Tax Parcel Map

Three Hills
Bath County, VA

DHR #008-0050

Three Hills, Bath County, VA



Three Hills
Bath County, Virginia
DHR #008-0050

Location Map

1.	L atitude: 38.048333	Longitude: -79.785802
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