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: 12/10/2015
NRHP: 2/02/2016

1. Name of Property
Historic name: __Natural Bridge Historic District____
Other names/site number: __081-7147_____
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: _ U.S. Route 11 and Route 130_____
City or town: _Natural Bridge_____ State: _VA_____ County: _Rockbridge__
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

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 ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

__x_ A __ 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) [ ]

District [x]

Site [ ]

Structure [ ]

Object [ ]

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
40	0	buildings
2	1	sites
10	0	structures
3	0	objects
55	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Hotel; Single Dwelling; Institutional Housing: Staff Housing
COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store: Gift Shop; Restaurant
RECREATION AND CULTURE: Auditorium: Hall; Outdoor Recreation: Trail
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Animal Facility: Dairy Barn, Stable
LANDSCAPE: Natural Feature
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Waterworks: Reservoir and Water Tower; Energy Facility: Power Plant

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Hotel; Single Dwelling; Institutional Housing: Staff Housing
COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store: Gift Shop; Restaurant
RECREATION AND CULTURE: Auditorium: Hall; Outdoor Recreation: Trail
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Animal Facility: Vacant
LANDSCAPE: Natural Feature
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Waterworks: Reservoir and Water Tower; Energy Facility: Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH CENTURY AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival
NO DISCERNIBLE STYLE
LATE 19TH CENTURY AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/Craftsman

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

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 at the southern edge of the Shenandoah Valley in southern Rockbridge County near the James River, the Natural Bridge Historic District encompasses approximately 302 acres centered on the Natural Bridge (NRHP 1997; NHL 1998) of Virginia and the ensuing Natural Bridge Resort. The rural landscape is hilly and wooded with scrub forest and is cut through by the Cedar Creek valley, a steep gorge that carries Cedar Creek a total of six miles to the James River and through the Natural Bridge. U.S. Route 11 (South Lee Highway) travels over the Natural Bridge and through the resort before merging with State Highway 130 (Wert Faulkner Highway) from the east. In addition to the Natural Bridge landmark formation and U.S. Route 11, the Natural Bridge Historic District displays late 1940s to mid-1960s Colonial Revival-style resort buildings with scattered domestic and agricultural buildings dating from the late-18th to the mid-20th centuries. The two earliest buildings, both domestic resources, date from ca. 1790 and 1850, respectively. There are 43 primary resources and 14 secondary resources; all of the primary and secondary resources contribute to the historic district except for one site, which is a 1999 exhibit featuring a reproduction of a ca. 1699 settlement. The majority of the contributing resources are in good condition and the district as a whole retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Narrative Description

Located in Rockbridge County near the James River, the Natural Bridge Historic District centers around the Natural Bridge of Virginia, a natural limestone arch that rises approximately 200 feet above Cedar Creek and is often touted as one of the "Seven Natural Wonders of the World." The Natural Bridge was listed individually in the National Register in 1997 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1998. The historic district is situated 14 miles south of the county seat of Lexington, 1.5 miles east of Interstate Highway 81, 12 miles north of the town of Buchanan, and 2 miles west of Natural Bridge Station, a hamlet that overlooks the James River where two major railroad lines once intersected and shared a joint depot. Thomas Jefferson first purchased the Natural Bridge and 157 acres from King George III of England in 1774, but the property was not developed for tourism until after his death. It passed out of his family around 1835, at which time the first hotel, the Forest Inn, was built. Natural Bridge did not fully develop as a resort until after the arrival of the Richmond and Alleghany Railroad in 1881 and the Shenandoah Valley Railroad in 1883 at the joint depot at Natural Bridge Station, which served 12 daily trains. Under the ownership of Col. Henry C. Parsons from 1881 to 1894, the growing resort was transformed into a campus-like setting, with new buildings erected, existing ones expanded, a pond, gazebo, and miles of walking and bridle trails established, and long, sweeping vistas toward the Blue Ridge Mountains created. The resort layout was physically changed around 1935 when the new U.S. Route 11 was diverted through the resort and actually crossed the Natural Bridge formation. During the post-World War II economic boom and under new management of the Natural Bridge Company and its new General Manager James N. Hunter from 1946 to 1971, most of the remaining earlier buildings were destroyed by fire or by design. New buildings of a much greater scale that catered to tourism diminished the resort's bucolic late-19th century atmosphere. In 1988, Washington D.C. area real estate developer Angelo Puglisi bought the site, but made few physical changes in the coming decades. In mid-2013, Puglisi decided to sell the property and in February 2014, a complex conservation deal came to fruition with a total of about 1,600 acres transferred to the private Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund, created as an interim caretaker and owner. On May 12, 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe accepted the deed to Natural Bridge, transferring its ownership to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Once the note used to finance the purchase is retired, the Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund will donate all but the newly renovated hotel, cottages, and the Natural Bridge Caverns to the Commonwealth of Virginia for a new state park.

Detailed Architectural Descriptions

Early Resort Resources

The historic district includes two early domestic buildings, which are situated outside of the core resort area. The earliest building is the **Barclay Tavern (081-0002)**, also one of the oldest buildings in Rockbridge County. The ca. 1790 two-story, five-bay stone and Flemish-bond brick dwelling is attributed to early land owner Clay Barclay and served as a tavern. The building is in good condition with some interior modifications that occurred in the early 1990s when it was adapted as a bed-and-breakfast inn. The building is currently vacant. The former tavern and the

ca. 1880 **Red Mill (081-7147-0163)** as well as an associated ca. 1900 timber-frame barn are located in the Red Mill hamlet on Cedar Creek on the former Valley Road that traversed this hamlet before it was re-routed in the mid-1930s to go through the Natural Bridge resort.

The other early building in the historic district is the ca. 1850 **Shindle-Smith House (081-7147-0035)** that stands on the south side of U.S. Route 11 (US 11), on the west side of the bridge, just outside of the core resort complex. Built in two campaigns, the two-story, single-pile three-bay, main log section is clad with beaded-weatherboard siding on its façade (attached with both cut and wire nails) and with plain weatherboard siding on the remaining elevations. The building rests on a raised limestone basement. Its side-gabled roof is covered with standing-seam metal. The windows and exterior doors are boarded up and the full-width front porch is missing. The house is denoted on the 1860 Gilham Map as *Shindle* and on a 1954 Natural Bridge site plan as *Smith*. An image of a house in this location is visible in Edward Beyer's 1858 lithograph of Natural Bridge. Chester Reeds also described the house in his 1927 book *Natural Bridge of Virginia and Its Environs* as "The remodeled farm house ... serves as a lodge for the Natural Bridge Hotel golf course on Mount Jefferson" (Reeds 1927:20 and 47). The Natural Bridge Golf Course was located nearby on Golf Course Road off US 11 (also named the Lee Highway).

As the fledging resort took shape, a new private residence was built overlooking the resort to the west on a large wooded parcel. Norfolk, Virginia, businessman Leroy H. Shields and his wife, Mary Orra Novella Love Shields, had the large rambling frame and stone Queen Anne-style **Stonewall Lodge (081-5710** and **081-7147-0033)** built by the Lynchburg contactors Adams and Woodson in 1893 (Pezzoni 2014:7). This building served in various domestic and commercial capacities until it was destroyed by fire in April 2012. Beginning with this 1892 house and up to the completion of the new Natural Bridge Hotel in 1964, all major buildings on the resort property were built by contractors and/or designed by architects from Lynchburg, Virginia. This was probably due to Lynchburg's close proximity to Natural Bridge and the established historic economic connections that began with the James River & Kanawha Canal and the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad.

Early 20th Century Extant Resort Resources

None of the major resort buildings of the 19th century remain, but some resort buildings that were constructed during the turn-of-the-20th century do survive. Domestic buildings include the ca. 1890 two-story, symmetrical three-bay, single-pile, frame **Postmaster House (081-7147-0034)**, so labelled on a 1930s Natural Bridge site plan and the ca. 1920 one-story, three-bay, frame Folk Victorian-style **Washington Cottage (081-7147-0011).** The Postmaster House retains its weatherboard siding and standing-seam, metal-covered, side-gabled roof while the Washington Cottage, originally called the Wilson Cottage, has been clad with vinyl siding and its side-gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles.

An African-American community grew around the hotel, where many were employed. There was a black church on Shafer Lane, and numerous baptisms were performed on Sundays in Cedar Creek underneath the bridge. By 1920, a one-story, linear-shaped frame duplex was constructed behind the Natural Bridge Hotel on the edge of a wooded hillside. Labeled **Colored**

Quarters (081-7147-0019) on a 1954 Natural Bridge site plan, weatherboard siding clads the building and standing-seam metal covers its dilapidated side-gabled roof. The building is in ruinous condition.

Commercial, agricultural, and industrial buildings constructed during the turn-of-the-20th century include the frame **Livery Stable (081-0787** and **081-7147-0013)** on the east side of US 11 (the Lexington Road), the post-and-beam **Natural Bridge Dairy (081-0786** and **081-7147-0015)** that provided milk and beef for the hotel guests, and the 1921 concrete and stucco **Maintenance Garage (081-7147-0012).** The ca. 1920 **Livery Stable**, possibly remodeled and dating to 1880, is a strong example of an atypical vernacular form found in the Natural Bridge resort complex, and is one of its few buildings to retain all of its original materials such as weatherboard cladding and standing-seam metal sheathing. The ca.1920 Natural Bridge Dairy is the remains of a once extensive farm that was operated by Richard Siler for the Natural Bridge Company from the 1920s through the 1950s. The two-story heavy-timbered bank barn is clad with wood siding, and its medium-pitched, side-gabled roof is covered with standing-seam metal. The upper level was used as a hayloft or haymow, while the lower level was used for the feeding and milking of the cows with poured concrete and metal pipe railing stanchions.

The resort became solidified in 1925 when the previous Natural Bridge Company was transferred to the Natural Bridge of Virginia, Inc., and J. Lee Davis was appointed its president. On January 1, 1933, Davis became Treasurer and General Manager, and by 1935, had constructed his own home on the property, the 1 ½-story, frame Colonial Revival-style **Lee Cottage (081-7147-0010)**, then situated west of the 1906 Natural Bridge Hotel and behind the Jefferson Cottage (both non-extant). The Jefferson Cottage began in the mid-1830s and by 1890 had developed into a rambling, eclectically-designed, 2½ -story, Queen Anne-style frame house with a three-story corner tower. Although previous managers had lived in the Jefferson Cottage, Davis chose to build a new house, perhaps because the Jefferson Cottage was in disrepair or being used for guest lodging. The Jefferson Cottage was demolished in the mid-1960s.

Around 1935 when US 11 was improved from the old Plank Road (the former Valley Road), it was diverted 1.5 miles southeast from the Red Mill hamlet to run in front of the 1906 Natural Bridge Hotel (the site of the current hotel) and over the Natural Bridge. This maneuvering eliminated any competition from the well-established inns that fronted the Valley Road, such as the **Barclay Tavern** and the Rockbridge Inn (081-0399) (latter not included in this nomination). That section of the former Valley Road was renamed Red Mill Road/North Red Mill Road. President J. Lee Davis wrote that re-routing the road "…necessitated the moving of some of our stables, barns and a number of other outbuildings, to new locations. The grade between the Hotel and Gatehouse was raised some twelve feet" (Pierce 1994:11; Davis 1939:117). The Gatehouse was where visitors purchased tickets for the Natural Bridge as well as to socialize and enjoy a meal. This re-routing and grading obstructed the former sweeping easterly views from the Natural Bridge Hotel across the lawn toward the early 20th century Gatehouse. In 1935, a cast concrete **Underpass (081-7147-0008)** was constructed under the new road grade to allow for pedestrian access between the Hotel and Gatehouse. The exit of the Underpass led directly to the Gatehouse, which was also enlarged at this time with a kitchen and cafeteria, affirming its attraction to visitors.

The hotel's continued prosperity prompted the need for more permanent staff, and Davis oversaw the construction of various forms of staff housing, mostly along the periphery of the resort, and all within walking distance of the hotel. Located north above the hotel and with a narrow connecting road, five one-story, frame, vernacular dwellings were built by 1930. Three of these house types remain. The **Staff Housing (081-7147-0016/0018)** are one-story, three-bay, single-pile, frame houses built on a brick foundation with a one-bay side wing. Wood siding covers them, 2/2 wood windows light them, and twin, central brick chimneys heated them. The side-gabled roofs are covered with asphalt shingles. To the southeast of the hotel and off Route 130 (the former Lynchburg Road) stand two frame Colonial Revival style management houses, including the 1½-story **Managers House (081-7147-0030)** and the two-story **General Managers House (081-7147-0031).** In 1937, a two-story, 16-room frame wing was built off the rear of the 1906 hotel. This West Wing or **Washington Annex (081-7147-0003)** served for additional staff housing. The 5,544-square foot modified Colonial Revival-style wing (bricked over in 1964 with the building of the new brick hotel) was renovated in 1990 and provides first-floor meeting rooms and second-floor offices for hotel staff.

Industrial improvements during the first few decades of the 20th century include the 1932 concrete **Bridge #1109 (081-5045)**, a short span where Route 130 merges into US 11 at the northern end of the current Rockbridge Center parking lot; and the 1937 cinder block **Boiler House and Smokestack (081-7147-0009)** that stands behind the hotel and along the Cedar Creek Cliff.

Mid-20th Century to Present Resort Resources

In 1945, a new general manager was hired. James N. Hunter arrived December 26, 1945, and began his duties as resident manager on January 1, 1946. Hunter, who was also named Secretary of the Corporation, was recruited from the Hotel Roanoke (Davis 1939:132-3). Most of the buildings currently present at the resort were erected during his tenure. Any campus- or bucolic village-feel that remained after the rerouting of US 11 in 1935 was lost after the construction of large-scale public buildings and parking lots during the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s.

Hunter began 1946 in earnest with three major construction projects. The quaint and attractive three-story frame Natural Bridge Hotel situated on a slope overlooking the resort to the southeast was "remodeled and enlarged" at a cost of $120,000, which included $25,000 for a new stainless steel kitchen (*Roanoke Times and World News* March 4, 1946, Roanoke Public Libraries Virginia Room). With an eye toward attracting additional visitors and tourism, **Washington Hall (081-7147-0004)** opened as a convention center with a 350-person capacity. The $40,000 brick auditorium opened in 1947 (Natural Bridge Archives; *Roanoke Times and World News* March 4, 1946, Roanoke Public Libraries Virginia Room). The 2,400-square foot building was renovated in 1990, including window and roof replacements. Washington Hall was the first of many buildings erected at Natural Bridge under Hunter's supervision and designed by the architectural firm Fred B. Fuqua and Company of Lynchburg, Virginia.

Along with the completion of Washington Hall in 1946, the Natural Bridge Motor Lodge and eight separate cottages also opened that year. Designed by Fuqua, the motor lodge and manager's

office building were built at the base of the hill on the north side of SR 130 near its merger into US 11 and facing the Natural Bridge Hotel. (This was the same location as the first hotel on the property, the 1835 Forest Inn). Built over a natural spring that originally flowed into Loch Bell (a former damned pond) and Cascade Creek (that flows into Cedar Creek along the visitors' path down to the Natural Bridge), these two vacant buildings were demolished in 2015. The remaining eight cottages (six duplexes and two triplexes) were built on top of the hill overlooking the 1953 Natural Bridge Baptist Church (which stands beyond the historic district boundary). These one-story, Colonial Revival-style brick **Natural Bridge Cottages (081-7147-0022/0029)**, all named for southern capital cities, remain in good condition.

In 1952, with the continued increase in auto-tourism, a three-story brick annex was added off the south elevation of the 1906 hotel. Also known as the Veranda, this 9,720-square-foot annex features 30 recently renovated guestrooms. Its lower-level brick arcade gave guidance to the design of the 1963 hotel. With increasing post-World War II tourism, a limestone entrance gazebo and paved pathway with limestone retaining walls were created for better access down to the Natural Bridge. The **Gazebo and Pathway (081-71747-0036)** accents the entrance to the pathway that winds down between Cascade Creek and a wooded hillside to Cedar Creek. This pathway ends at the **Summer House (081-7147-0037)**, a café that replaced an early-1900s cedar-post-constructed Ticket House or Summer House, where tickets were collected for visiting the Natural Bridge (tickets are still collected here). This 1950 Rustic-style, 1½-story limestone-veneered café is open on two sides supported by coursed limestone posts and topped with a side-gabled roof clad with asphalt shingles. The open-air dining area features a limestone fireplace. Overlooking Cedar Creek south of the Natural Bridge, the café and flagstone terrace were designed by architect Fred B. Fuqua and originally named The Pavilion. It was then known as the Cedar Creek Café, and now as The Summer House, or Summerhouse Café. South of the café is a 1953 **Water Treatment Plant (081-7147-0038).** The low concrete structure was built from Wiley & Wilson engineering plans.

The largest physical change to the resort was the construction of the $500,000 Rockbridge Center and parking lot in 1954. The **Rockbridge Center (081-7147-005)** (still referred to as the 'Gatehouse' or 'Gift Shop') replaced the early-1900s, rambling frame gatehouse that had been renovated and enlarged in 1935. The new, two-story, 50,990-square foot, brick-veneered, Colonial Revival-style 'Gatehouse' contains a gift shop and ticket sales, cafeteria, staff offices, and restrooms. The lower level contains a heated indoor swimming pool (not in use); a game room (vacant); the entrance to the pathway that leads to the bridge; and the Natural Bridge Post Office. The upper level contains eight vacant staff dormitory rooms.

A once-popular feature that was added on the east side of the Rockbridge Center was the **Skyliner** (a secondary resource to the **Gazebo**). This chairlift-style ride took visitors down to Cedar Creek over the wooded Cedar Creek Gorge and alongside Cascade Falls. Concrete support pads remain at the top and bottom of the gorge where passengers embarked and disembarked from the Skyliner. Another popular attraction was an outdoor skating rink that was added in the winter of 1963. The **Skating Rink Building (081-7147-0007)** is at the northern end of the Rockbridge Center parking lot. The 1961 brick-veneered building served as the skating shop when the ice-skating rink was added in front of it; its outline of poured concrete is still visible.

Under Hunter's tenure, new construction did not cease, and in 1957, the Wax Museum and the Texaco Gas Station were built. The brick-veneered, two-story, Colonial Revival-style **Wax Museum (081-7147-0006)** that stands perpendicular to the Rockbridge Center originally opened as the Motorama Building. Then known as the Museum of Motoring Memories, it displayed Bill Pettit's collection of over 30 "antique and classic automobiles." This "New Vacation Thrill for all the Family" continued from August 1958 into the 1960s. The building was then turned into a wax museum which closed in 2014. The **Texaco Gas Station (081-7147-0014)** faces southwest towards US 11 on the east side of the hotel. This one-story Colonial Revival-style building replaced a ca. 1940 Sinclair gas station and serves as the "Glasgow Life Saving & First Aid Crew Station #2."

Through all the changes that have occurred at the resort, some traditions continue, such as the nightly illumination of the bridge and the Drama of Creation Pageant, which has been held during tourist season since 1927 and 1932, respectively. Beginning in 1947, the Natural Bridge has been the backdrop of an annual Easter Sunrise Service that is held along the **Cedar Creek Trail (081-7147-0039)**, a meandering concrete and stone-lined path that follows Cedar Creek, before turning into a gravel-packed path. A choir sings from a set of elliptically arched concrete choir rows behind a stone-veneered **Pulpit** (secondary resource to the Cedar Creek Trail) for the minister. Also accessed from Cedar Creek Trail is the **Saltpetre Cave (081-7147-0041),** a deep rock shelter where saltpetre (also known as saltpeter or potassium nitrate) was mined for the manufacturing of gun powder during the Civil War and possibly during the War of 1812. Its entrance is 30 feet above Cedar Creek, and a stone-and-wood pedestrian bridge provides access to the cave, formerly a grotto or undercut developed by the waters of Cedar Creek when it flowed at a much higher level (Spencer 2011:24-25; Reeds 1927:30).

At the peak of the resort's popularity, the 1906 hotel along with its 1917 Stanhope Johnson-designed North Wing, caught fire on April 23, 1963, and was destroyed. The 1883 Appledore Cottage South Wing survived but was torn down. The rear two-story 1935 West Wing also survived the fire and was later connected to the new hotel. Hunter supervised the construction of the new $1 million hotel beginning in September 1964. Architect Garland Mason Gay, of Lynchburg, designed the new hotel that was loosely based on the colonnade detail of the adjacent 1954 Annex. The Annex was connected to the new hotel, and the rear West Wing was bricked-over in 1964 to emulate the new brick hotel. The hotel opened in June 1964. The large, three-story, Flemish-bond brick-veneered Colonial Revival-style **Natural Bridge Hotel (081-7147-0002)** features a temple-fronted center pavilion with a Tuscan portico. Its low-pitched hipped roof is accented by a modillioned cornice, roof balustrade, and interior end brick chimneys. The first floor of the 71,640-square foot hotel contains the main lobby, the Colonial Dining Room, the Red Fox Tavern, and the Jefferson Ballroom. The second and third floors contain 92 guestrooms, while the basement level is used for housekeeping, engineering, laundry, boilers, an equipment room, and an exercise room. The hotel's recent renovation was completed April 2015. No other new buildings have been erected since the 1964 Natural Bridge Hotel opened.

The **Natural Bridge (081-0415 and 081-7147-0001)** and its surrounding 5.86 acres was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register on May 7, 1997, and in the National Register on November 18, 1997. On August 5, 1998, it was designated as a National Historic Landmark by the U. S. National Park Service, the highest honor for a historic resource. In 1999, the **Monacan Indian Living History Exhibit (081-7147-0040)** was also created. Located 600 yards north of the Summer House along the Cedar Creek Trail, the exhibit is a recreated ca. 1699 Native American settlement that includes bark-covered dwellings enclosed by a woven stick palisade. Costumed interpreters use the exhibit to present the history of the Monacan Indians, who occupied this area 2,000 years ago and are now the largest state-recognized Indian tribe in Virginia (Spencer 2011:21-23). The exhibit was created using archaeological data from the actual village site to inform the design and layout, and it was built by and with input from several members of the Monacan tribe to allow accurate portrayal of traditional ways of building structures, making pottery, preparing hides, manufacturing stone tools, weaving baskets, and other activities.

INVENTORY

All but one of the 43 primary resources, and all of the 14 secondary resources, contribute to the historic district; they contribute because of their intact integrity and their date of construction that is within the period of significance. The one non-contributing primary resource, a 1999 site, does not contribute due to its late date of construction outside the period of significance. Resource locations are shown on the attached Sketch Map, and are keyed using the last four digits of their inventory number as shown in each inventory entry below.

Appledore Lane

15 Appledore Lane 081-7147-0002 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Hotel/Inn (Building), Stories 3, Style: Colonial Revival, 1964**
Contributing *Total:* 1

The large, three-story, Flemish-bond brick-veneered Colonial Revival style hotel reflects an Early Classical Revival style, five-part compound plan with a large central block connected to side dependencies by hyphens. The Natural Bridge Hotel features a temple-fronted middle pavilion with a Tuscan portico. Its low-pitched hipped roof is accented by a modillioned cornice, roof balustrade, and interior end brick chimneys. The wings have hipped roofs clad in asphalt shingles while the hyphens have flat roofs. Multi-light, double-hung, wood windows light the building, which is accessed through a projecting, elliptically arched arcade with a second-floor balcony. The first floor of the 71,640 sf hotel contains the main lobby, the Colonial Dining Room, the Red Fox Tavern, and the Jefferson Ballroom (5,600 sf) that is accessed via a smaller lobby. The second and third floors contain 92 guestrooms, while the basement level is used for housekeeping, engineering, laundry, boilers, an equipment room, and an exercise room. The main block of the hotel is currently undergoing renovation.

In 1952, with the rise of auto-tourism, a three-story brick annex was added off the south elevation of the ca. 1893 hotel. Known as the Veranda, it survived the fire and is connected to the 1963 hotel via a concrete and metal railing hyphen. The building features a projecting

elliptically arched arcade with second-and third-floor walkways above. The roof is a low-pitched, side-gabled roof and the windows are three-part sliding metal windows. The doors to the rooms are recessed in an alcove. The 9,720 sf Annex features 30 recently renovated guestrooms. The lower-level brick arcade gave precedence to its use in the 1963 hotel.
Secondary Resource : **Monument/Marker (Object) Contributing** *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource : **Pond (Structure) Contributing** *Total:* 1

90 Appledore Lane 081-7147-0018 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Secondary Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1930**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, three-bay frame house was built on a brick foundation with no side wings. Weatherboard siding covers the house, 2/2 wood windows light it, and central twin brick chimneys heat it. The side-gable roof with exposed rafter tails is covered with asphalt shingles. A two-bay screened-in porch has square wood columns and a shed roof covered with standing-seam metal. The building is occupied.

Appledore Lane 081-7147-0003 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Office/Office Building (Building), Stories 2, Style: Colonial Revival, 1937**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The 1937 Washington Annex (also known as the North Addition) is a rear frame wing of the former 1908 Natural Bridge Hotel. It was bricked-over in 1964 with the completion of the current brick hotel. The two-story, rectangular-shaped building has a steeply pitched hipped roof with two hipped roof dormers on each side covered with asphalt shingles. The side elevation windows are original 2/2 wood windows. An original, exterior wooden staircase and balcony is on the rear (north) elevation with a square balustrade and a first-floor room under the balcony. The 5,544 sf building was renovated in 1990 and features first-floor meeting rooms and second-floor offices.

Appledore Lane 081-7147-0004 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Meeting/Fellowship Hall (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival, 1947**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The tall one-story, three-bay, rectangular-shaped, brick-veneered auditorium has a low-pitched, front-gabled roof that is clad with ribbed-metal panels and has a thick cornice and cornice returns. Four tall multi-light windows on both side elevations light the interior hall while double rows of two windows light the entry lobby, kitchen area, and restrooms. The double-leaf, raised panel wood door entrance is protected under a round arch recess. The 2,400 sf building's 1990 renovation included the window and roof replacements. The porte cochere that connects it to the Washington Annex was renovated in 1990 with a new metal panel roof.

Appledore Lane 081-7147-0009 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Boiler House (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1937**
Contributing *Total:* 1

The tall one-story cinderblock building has two open interior bays, a flat roof, and large multi-light industrial metal windows. The façade has three large window bays, with an original single-leaf wood pedestrian door; two of these window bays have been partially infilled with concrete block, and an area underneath the windows, that has also been partially infilled with concrete block, once received large amounts of coal that were delivered down the poured-concrete chute in front of the building. The interior west bay served as the boiler room, with two remaining metal furnaces (an older furnace and a more modern furnace); the east bay is used for the hotel's water system. A 1940 one-bay concrete block rear addition is not in use and is in poor to ruinous condition. Its terracotta smokestack (on the north elevation) was erected in 1945 by the Consolidated Chimney Company of Chicago, Illinois, and is in good condition.

Appledore Lane 081-7147-0010 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Secondary Dwelling (Building), Stories 1.5, Style: Colonial Revival, Ca 1935**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The 1 ½-story frame duplex guest cottage features a cross-gable roof. The duplex cottage has strong Colonial Revival style features such as a pedimented porch with Doric columns, paired 6/6 windows, and two pedimented gabled dormers, while the southern duplex cottage has a simpler shed-roof Doric porch and single 6/6 wood windows. The building rests on a ca. 1951 concrete block foundation. Asphalt shingles cover all roofs and dormers. The building may have been remodeled in 1936-37, which would explain the Colonial Revival style details. The building was again renovated in 1982 for two full-use apartments, which now function as offices for accounting and maintenance.

Appledore Lane 081-7147-0011 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Secondary Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Folk Victorian, Ca 1920**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, three-bay, frame, guest cottage features a side-gable roof with decorative pierced vents, 9/9 wood windows, a one-bay side addition with 6/6 windows, and a rockface concrete block foundation, the only example found in the Natural Bridge resort. A three-bay, shed-roof porch with thin turned columns protects the centered front door (replacement wood and multi-light door) and two-pane transom. While standing-seam metal covers the porch roof, asphalt shingles (1987) cover the main roof, and vinyl siding clads the cottage, thereby eliminating any architectural details. The standing-seam metal on the porch roof is a rare example in the Natural Bridge complex. The cottage is unoccupied.

Appledore Lane 081-7147-0012 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Garage (Building), Stories 1, Style: Craftsman, 1921**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, rectangular-shaped, poured concrete and stucco building is accented with a clipped gable roof with two pyramidal-roofed cupolas on its ridge. Its three-bay façade features sliding, x-braced, tongue-and-groove wood garage doors flanked by multi-light industrial metal windows, paneled pilasters, and paneled bands with diamond-shaped accents. Asphalt shingles

cover the roof (as of 1984). The interior has exposed metal trusses. The garage also served for valet parking of guest vehicles.

Appledore Lane 081-7147-0017 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Secondary Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1930**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, three-bay, frame, house was built on a brick foundation with one, one-bay side wing. Wood siding covers the house, 2/2 wood windows light it, and twin, central, brick chimneys heat it. The side gable roofs are covered with asphalt shingles. A three-bay replacement porch has square wood posts and a shed roof covered with standing-seam metal; the front door is a fiberglass door with multi-upper- lights. The building is unoccupied.

Appledore Lane 081-7147-0019 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Double/Duplex (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1920**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The linear-shaped, one-story, frame double-dwelling building rests on a wood post foundation with a concrete block foundation under its façade wall. The building had weatherboard siding, 2/2 wood windows, and four-panel wood doors. The remains of the side gable roof with exposed rafter tails was covered with asphalt shingles. The remodeled front porch has a concrete slab floor, concrete steps, and a metal pipe railing. The building has been vacant and neglected for an extended period of time.

Appledore Lane 081-7147-0020 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Multiple Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No discernible style, 1963**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The square-shaped, two-story on a raised basement, concrete block building has horizontal metal windows, no current exterior doors, and no evidence of a porch. The low-pitched, side gable roof appears to have asphalt shingles. The front door faces east towards the ca. 1920 Colored Quarters (081-7147-0019), while the south side door leads into a dormitory style bathroom, with a total of 12 rooms in the building.

Appledore Lane 081-7147-0021 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Water Tank/Tower (Structure), Stories , Style: No discernible style, Ca 1940**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The cylindrical water tower is metal with four metal reinforced legs supporting it.
Secondary Resource: **Reservoir (Structure) Contributing** *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: **Shed - Equipment (Building) Contributing** *Total:* 1

Appledore Lane 081-0788 *Other DHR Id#: 081-7147-0016*
Primary Resource: **Secondary Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1930**
Contributing *Total:* 1

The one-story, three-bay frame house with one-bay side wings was built on a brick foundation. Weatherboard siding covers the house, 2/2 wood windows light it, and central twin brick chimneys once heated it. The side-gable roofs with exposed rafter tails are covered with asphalt shingles. A two-bay porch has square wood columns and a shed roof covered with standing-seam metal; the front door is wood with multi-lights. The building is unoccupied.

Azalea Lane
Azalea Lane 081-7147-0030 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1.5, Style: Colonial Revival, 1935 Contributing** *Total:* 1
The 1½-story, symmetrical three-bay frame dwelling is flanked with a one-room wing on the east elevation and a screened-in porch on the west elevation. The moderately-pitched side-gabled roof with gabled dormers is covered with asphalt shingles. 8/8 double-hung wood windows with shutters light the house. The house features a front-gabled entry porch with square columns, a six-paneled solid wood entrance door, and exterior-end brick chimneys. Vinyl siding has been added over the original lapped wood siding.

Azalea Lane 081-7147-0031 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Colonial Revival, 1935 Contributing** *Total:* 1
The two-story, symmetrical three-bay frame dwelling is flanked with a one-room wing on the east elevation and a screened-in porch on the west elevation. The moderately-pitched side-gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. 8/8 double-hung wood windows with shutters light the house. The house features a front-gabled entry porch with square columns, a six-paneled solid wood entrance door, and exterior-end brick chimneys. Vinyl siding has been added over the original lapped wood siding.

Bell Tower Lane
431-434 Bell Tower Lane 081-7147-0022 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Motel/Motel Court (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival, 1949 Contributing** *Total:* 1
The one-story, single-pile, multi-unit hotel building has a symmetrical three-bay main block flanked by recessed, two-bay wings. The main block has two units, while each wing has one unit. The brick-veneered building has moderately-pitched side-gabled roofs covered with asphalt shingles. The four units of the building are lit by multi-light wood picture windows flanked by narrow four-over-four double-hung wood windows and entered through six-paneled wood doors. The main block features a front-gabled entry porch with square columns and a Chippendale wood railing. A centered brick chimney rises from the rear slope of the main roof. Vinyl siding has been added over the original lapped wood siding on the gable ends of the roof and porch.
Secondary Resource: **Outbuilding, Domestic (Building) Contributing** *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: **Tennis Court (Structure) Contributing** *Total:* 1

441-446 Bell Tower Lane 081-7147-0023 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Motel/Motel Court (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival, 1949**

Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, single-pile, multi-unit residential building has a symmetrical three-bay main block flanked by recessed, three-bay wings; each section contains two units. The brick-veneered building has moderately-pitched side-gabled roofs covered with asphalt shingles. The 6 units of the building are lit by multi-light wood picture windows flanked by narrow 4/4 double-hung wood windows and entered through a 6-paneled solid wood door. The main block and wings feature a front-gabled entry porch with square columns and a Chippendale wood railing. A centered brick chimney rises from the rear slope of the main roof. Vinyl siding has been added over the original lapped wood siding on the gable ends of the roof and porch.

451-456 Bell Tower Lane 081-7147-0024 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Motel/Motel Court (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival, 1949**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, single-pile, multi-unit residential building has a symmetrical three-bay main block flanked by recessed, three-bay wings; each section contains two units. The brick-veneered building has moderately-pitched side-gabled roofs covered with asphalt shingles. The six units of the building are lit by multi-light wood picture windows flanked by narrow four-over-four double-hung wood windows and entered through a six-paneled solid wood door. The main block and wings each feature a front-gabled entry porch with square columns and a Chippendale wood railing. A centered brick chimney rises from the rear slope of the main roof. Vinyl siding has been added over the original lapped wood siding on the gable ends of the roof and porch.

461-464 Bell Tower Lane 081-7147-0025 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Motel/Motel Court (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival, 1949**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, single-pile, multi-unit residential building has a symmetrical three-bay main block flanked by recessed, two-bay wings. The main block has two units, while each wing has one unit. The brick-veneered building has moderately-pitched side-gabled roofs covered with asphalt shingles. The four units of the building are lit by multi-light wood picture windows flanked by narrow four-over-four double-hung wood windows and entered through six-paneled wood doors. The main block features a front-gabled entry porch with square columns and a Chippendale wood railing. A centered brick chimney rises from the rear slope of the main roof. Vinyl siding has been added over the original lapped wood siding on the gable ends of the roof and porch.

471-474 Bell Tower Lane 081-7147-0026 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Motel/Motel Court (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival, 1949**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, single-pile, multi-unit residential building has a symmetrical three-bay main block flanked by recessed, two-bay wings. The main block has two units, while each wing has one unit. The brick-veneered building has moderately-pitched side-gabled roofs covered with asphalt shingles. The four units of the building are lit by multi-light wood picture windows flanked by narrow four-over-four double-hung wood windows and entered through six-paneled wood doors. The main block features a front-gabled entry porch with square columns and a

Chippendale wood railing. A centered brick chimney rises from the rear slope of the main roof. Vinyl siding has been added over the original lapped wood siding on the gable ends of the roof and porch.

481-484 Bell Tower Lane 081-7147-0027 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Motel/Motel Court (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival, 1949**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, single-pile, multi-unit residential building has a symmetrical three-bay main block flanked by recessed, two-bay wings. The main block has two units, while each wing has one unit. The brick-veneered building has moderately-pitched side-gabled roofs covered with asphalt shingles. The four units of the building are lit by multi-light wood picture windows flanked by narrow four-over-four double-hung wood windows and entered through six-paneled wood doors. The main block features a front-gabled entry porch with square columns and a Chippendale wood railing. A centered brick chimney rises from the rear slope of the main roof. Vinyl siding has been added over the original lapped wood siding on the gable ends of the roof and porch.

491-494 Bell Tower Lane 081-7147-0028 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Motel/Motel Court (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival, 1949**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, single-pile, multi-unit residential building has a symmetrical three-bay main block flanked by recessed, two-bay wings. The main block has two units, while each wing has one unit. The brick-veneered building has moderately-pitched side-gabled roofs covered with asphalt shingles. The four units of the building are lit by multi-light wood picture windows flanked by narrow 4/4 double-hung wood windows and entered through six-paneled wood doors. The main block features a front-gabled entry porch with square columns and a Chippendale wood railing. A centered brick chimney rises from the rear slope of the main roof. Vinyl siding has been added over the original lapped wood siding on the gable ends of the roof and porch.

495-498 Bell Tower Lane 081-7147-0029 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Motel/Motel Court (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival, 1949**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, single-pile, multi-unit residential building has a symmetrical three-bay main block flanked by recessed, two-bay wings. The main block has two units, while each wing has one unit. The brick-veneered building has moderately-pitched side-gabled roofs covered with asphalt shingles. The four units of the building are lit by multi-light wood picture windows flanked by narrow four-over-four double-hung wood windows and entered through six-paneled wood doors. The main block features a front-gabled entry porch with square columns and a Chippendale wood railing. A centered brick chimney rises from the rear slope of the main roof. Vinyl siding has been added over the original lapped wood siding on the gable ends of the roof and porch.

Bell Tower Lane 081-5710 *Other DHR Id#: 081-7147-0033*
Primary Resource: **Lodge (Site), Stories 1.5, Style: Queen Anne, Ca 1892**

Contributing *Total:* 1
Virtually destroyed by fire in 2012, all that remains of the once-rambling Queen Anne-style limestone and frame house are its brick chimneys with limestone-veneered stacks, wide concrete porch steps, and remnants of the limestone-constructed porch and exterior walls.
Secondary Resource: **Outbuilding, Domestic (Building) Contributing** *Total:* 1

Lee Highway
South 6477 Lee Highway 081-7147-0005 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Colonial Revival, 1954**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The large 2 ½ story, brick-veneered, Colonial Revival style building reflects a Palladian three-part plan composed of a two-story central block flanked by one-story wings. The Rockbridge Center has a full-width Doric portico central block with a dual-pitched hipped roof covered with slate shingles accented by three pedimented dormers and paired interior end brick chimneys. The wings have flat roofs accented by a thick cornice. Multi-light double-hung windows with keystone lintels light the building that is accessed through a double-door wood and glass entrance with a full broken-pedimented surround. Tall lead-glass transoms accent the front entrance and flanking windows. One window to the east of the door has been replaced with an ATM machine. Multi-light double-hung wood windows with keystone lintels also light the four-bay wings. The massive main floor of the 50,990 sf building contains the gift shop (with ticket sales), a café (formerly a cafeteria that seated 350 people and former soda fountain), offices, and restrooms. The lower level contains a heated indoor swimming pool (not in use, with possible demolition), game room and former bowling alley (not in use), the entrance to the bridge path, and the Natural Bridge Post Office. The attic level contains eight vacant dormitory rooms.

South Lee Highway 081-7147-0007 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, 1961**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The low one-story, brick-veneered building fronts a section of the parking lot that was once made into an ice-skating rink for visitors in cold weather. A piping system was imbedded in its surface that froze the water that was poured onto it and controlled from within the building. The façade has two pedestrian door entrances and one double-leaf commercial metal door entrance and three four-light metal windows. The building's flat roof is covered with a concrete slab (with perimeter pipe-metal railings). The building also served as a Pro Shop for the skaters, for whom a brick-screened outdoor fireplace was provided on its north end elevation.

South Lee Highway 081-7147-0008 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Tunnel (Structure), Stories, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1935**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The underpass was built under US 11 when the road was improved and elevated 12 feet in the mid-1930s as to allow for safe pedestrian passage from the hotel on its west side to what was then known as the Gate House (and the entrance to the Natural Bridge) on its east side. Prior to

the construction of the 1954 Rockbridge Center, known as the Gift Shop (081-1747-0005), the 1930s frame Gate House greeted the guests as they exited the tunnel from the hotel. Flower beds and flowering trees accent the curving, asphalted entrance ramp to the tunnel.

South Lee Highway 081-7147-0014 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Service Station (Building), Stories 1, Style: Colonial Revival, 1959**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story Colonial Revival style building has a cross gable roof with a pedimented portico. The brick-veneered building has a three-bay storefront façade under the portico, and two service bays with overhead doors on the east side. The west side elevation features a storefront window and two bathroom doors with single-light transoms. The sign in the roof pediment reads "Glasgow Life Saving & First Aid Crew Station #2."

South Lee Highway 081-0787 *Other DHR Id#: 081-7147-0013*
Primary Resource: **Stable (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1920**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The one-story, rectangular-shaped, frame building retains much of its original material, including the only board-and-batten wood siding found in the Natural Bridge complex, and the only standing-seam metal to be found on a main roof in the complex. (The Washington Cottage [081-7147-0011] retains standing-seam metal on its shed-roof porch). Its three-bay façade features three double-leaf wood door openings (probably for transporting horses), and a narrower, center door opening that retains its angled, tongue-and-groove wood batten doors. Similar angled batten wood shutters cover the side elevation windows. The loft windows on the gable front façade are covered with painted black wood. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation. The building is boarded up and vacant.

South Lee Highway 081-0786 *Other DHR Id#: 081-7147-0015*
Primary Resource: **Dairy (Building), Stories 2, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1920**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The two-story, wood post-and-beam bank barn is clad with weatherboard siding, and its medium-pitched side-gabled roof is covered with standing-seam metal. The building rests on a poured concrete first floor, and a concrete silo foundation is located on the barn's northwest front elevation. The upper level of the barn was used as a hayloft or haymow, while the lower level was used for the feeding and milking of the cows with poured concrete and metal pipe railing stanchions. Sliding wood door openings and 6/6 wood windows and fixed light windows light the lower level. The hotel stores signage in the hayloft.
Secondary Resource: **Barn, Dairy (Structure) Contributing** *Total:* 1

South Lee Highway 081-7147-0034 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1890**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The two-story, single-pile symmetrical three-bay frame dwelling with a rear ell is clad with weatherboard siding. The moderately-pitched side-gabled roof is covered with standing-seam metal. 2/2 double-hung wood windows light the house. The house has a full-width, three-bay

front porch with square columns and a six-paneled solid wood entrance door, and one exterior-end brick chimney flue.

South Lee Highway 081-7147-0035 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1850 Contributing** *Total:* 1
Built in two campaigns, the two-story, single-pile three-bay, main log section is clad with beaded-weatherboard siding (attached with both cut and wire nails) on its façade with weatherboard siding on the remaining elevations. The building rests on a raised, coursed limestone basement (7'-0" interior height). Its moderately-pitched side-gabled roof is covered with standing-seam metal. The windows and exterior doors are missing; the second-floor openings are boarded while the first-floor openings remain uncovered. The full-width front porch has been removed. One exterior-end brick chimney stack rises from the east elevation. The rear has a one-room frame addition attached by a covered walkway. The first floor of the main log section contains one main room (16'-5" deep x 13'-0" wide x 7'-0" tall) decorated with 28-inch tall wainscoting that is Greek Revival in character and a side stair passage. The main room has an exterior door opening and a window opening. The passage contains a small foyer that leads either into the main room, a bathroom that is behind the staircase, or directly up the straight staircase to the second floor. The side-passage contains an exterior entrance that was probably converted from an existing window opening. The second floor contains a hallway that enters into one heated room (fireplace) that was at some point portioned into two bedrooms, which left the second bedroom unheated. Off the east elevation of the main log house, is a one-room, two-bay frame addition with a massive stone chimney (7'-7" at its base and 5'-5" at its shoulder). The interior room measures 16'-5" deep x 15'-0" wide; this room has a rear entrance to a porch with steps down to the rear addition (previously mentioned) and also an entrance into the log section.

South Lee Highway 081-0415 *Other DHR Id#: 081-7147-0001*
Primary Resource: **Natural Feature (Site), Stories , Style: Other, 1 Contributing** *Total:* 1
The Natural Bridge is a karst geological landform (where water dissolves bedrock) in which Cedar Creek, a tributary of the James River, carved out a gorge in the mountainous limestone terrain and over geologic time formed a natural arch. Consisting of horizontal limestone strata, the bridge essentially is the remains of the roof of a cave through which Cedar Creek once flowed. At 215-feet tall and a span of 90 feet, the Natural Bridge is the largest karstic bridge in North America.
Secondary Resource: **Shed (Building) Contributing** *Total:* 2

Red Mill Road
50 Red Mill Road 081-0163 *Other DHR Id#: 081-7147-0042*
Primary Resource: **Mill (Building), Stories 2, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1880 Contributing** *Total:* 1
The weatherboard clad frame building is two-stories in height, not counting the basement, and has a three-bay facade and front-gable roof clad with well-preserved standing-seam metal. Built into the steep, rocky bank of Cedar Creek, the building's lowest level is not visible from the

front. The first story, which slightly overhangs the stone-walled basement at the rear of the building and is surrounded on three sides by a wooden deck, measures 32' 3" across the front and 38' 3" along each side. Most of the weatherboards were replaced during a late 20th-century exterior restoration, but older boards fastened with cut nails survive in some areas. The windows were also replaced, and the new coat of red paint has weathered well. The rear elevation has a central first-floor door flanked by one window to each side. The second-floor is lighted by a single rear window and two front windows, all with six-over-six sash. Also lighting the first floor are two 1/1-sash windows on each side elevation. There are no side doors. The mill interior consists of large, open rooms on each floor. The first-to-second-floor staircase is in the northwest corner of the building. Oddly, there are no stairs leading to the basement, which is difficult to reach from the exterior because of the steep bank. The building has been vacant and neglected for several years—windows are broken and gutters have fallen—but the future is hopeful under new ownership.
Secondary Resource: **Barn (Building) Contributing** *Total:* 1

50 Red Mill Road 081-0002 *Other DHR Id#: 081-7147-0043*
Primary Resource: **Tavern/Ordinary (Building), Stories 2, Style: Federal/Adamesque, Ca 1790**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The two-story main block of the building measures 40’ 4” across the rear elevation and 29’ 9” along the south (side) elevation. The 23-foot-deep one-story north wing is set back 6’ 4” from the main façade and extends 23’ 4” to the north, including the 3’ deep x 9’ wide exterior end chimney. The 2-story front portico, a complete ca. 1990s reconstruction on the original stone base, measures 10’ 7” wide and 9’ 4” deep. The steps leading up to the porch are also limestone, capped with slate. To each side, at the foot of the steps are two 2’ diameter buhr millstones. Like the portico, the front door surround and all of the windows in the house are late 20th-century replacements.
Within the first-story rear stone wall of the main block are two former window apertures, carefully infilled with matching limestone, flanking the rear doorway. There were two windows on the north side of the door, but only one on the south side. Of particular interest are the three highly unusual, small round apertures in the main block’s north gable end, venting the attic. There appears to have been no sash or glazing of any kind. It seems likely that the south gable end was originally built in similar fashion, but the wall was later rebuilt with darker, more uniform hand-made bricks and two windows instead of round vents. Unlike the second story, laid in Flemish bond, likely in the late 18th century, the south gable was laid in 4-course common bond in the 19th century. The main block foundation, enclosing a full basement has stone walls 2’ 7” thick below the water table (a simple ledge) and 1’ 8” thick above the water table. The basement, entered from the front, has some unusual features including an uncommonly large hewn summer beam, measuring 14 inches square. Stone footers for the first-floor fireplace above extend out several feet from the north basement wall, approximating a huge fireplace that appears to have never been used as such, but was later fitted with a stove flue opening. There is no hearth or traces of one having been laid.
Interior: The first-floor interior plan has been modified somewhat, but there are two largely unmodified, though repointed arched stone fireplaces, lacking mantels, with exposed stone

chimney faces up to the ceiling. The stonework is of roughly coursed rubble. The stair rail and newel post likely date to the early 19th century. There are one or two small-fireplace mantels, a few two-panel doors, and some symmetrical-molded door and window trim, all remnants of the mid-19th-century Greek Revival era. Most of the flooring is very old if not original to the building. The second floor is the most heavily modified part of the house.

Wert Faulkner Highway
40 Wert Faulkner Highway 081-7147-0036 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Gazebo (Structure), Stories, Style: Rustic Revival, Ca 1950**
Contributing *Total:* 1
A ca. 1950 square-shaped gazebo constructed of narrow coursed limestone corner piers and topped with a front-gabled roof clad with asphalt shingles accents the entrance pathway down to the Natural Bridge. A 1998 National Park Service plaque on the left corner post depicts the Natural Bridge as a designated National Historic Landmark, while a plaque on the right corner post depicts it as a registered Virginia Historic Landmark. The concrete and asphalt pathway that descends to Cedar Creek meanders down between Cascade Creek and a wooded hillside with ancient arbor vitae trees (documented as 1600 years old).
Secondary Resource: **Street Object (Object) Contributing** *Total:* 1

40 Wert Faulkner Highway 081-7147-0037 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Restaurant (Building), Stories 1.5, Style: Rustic Revival, 1950**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The Summer House (or Summerhouse Café): The Rustic-style, 1½-story limestone veneered building is similar to a pavilion as it is open on two sides supported by narrow coursed limestone posts and topped with a side-gabled roof clad with asphalt shingles. The open-air dining area features a limestone fireplace. Overlooking Cedar Creek south of the Natural Bridge, the café and flagstone terrace was built in 1950 (Fred B. Fuqua Architect) and called the Pavilion. It later became known as Cedar Creek Café, and now as The Summerhouse (or Summerhouse Café). This building replaced the previous early-1900s cedar post-constructed Ticket House or Summer House, where tickets were collected after being purchased from the Gate House (now the 1954 Rockbridge Center). Based on the 1950 Fuqua floor plans and physical evidence, the two bays on the south elevation were once filled with metal casement windows, which are now covered with flush board siding. Two out of three smaller casement windows remain on the east elevation. Further, 1950s photographs denote the current kitchen area as being open with a built-in snack bar and souvenir sales area. Restoration of the building's fenestration is recommended.
Secondary Resource: **Dam (Structure) Contributing** *Total:* 1

70 Wert Faulkner Highway 081-7147-0006 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Museum (Building), Stories 2, Style: Colonial Revival, 1957**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The two-story, three-bay, brick-veneered, Colonial Revival style building rests on a projecting, raised basement with a temple-front with square wood columns and a lunette in the

pediment. The façade of the raised basement has semi-elliptical openings covered with wood-louvered vents. Multi-light double-hung windows light the building that is accessed through a centered single-leaf glass replacement door and transom. Slate shingles cover the front-gabled roof. A large, flat-roofed, brick-veneered annex sits lower and angles off the main building with a two-story brick and glass hyphen. The building including annex contains 71,640 sf and is leased to Dorfman Museums.

Wert Faulkner Highway 081-5045 *Other DHR Id#: 081-7147-0032*
Primary Resource: **Bridge (Structure), Stories, Style: No discernible style, 1932**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The 23-foot concrete bridge spans a tributary creek that has flowed south alongside US 11and then underground before emerging here through a concrete culvert. The creek continues under the adjacent parking lot of the Rockbridge Center before emerging into Cascade Creek.

Wert Faulkner Highway 081-7147-0038 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Processing Plant (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, 1963**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The 1953 sewage treatment plant is a low structure built of concrete with metal tube railings on top (Wiley & Wilson site plans).
Secondary Resource: **Processing Plant (Building) Contributing** *Total:* 1

Wert Faulkner Highway 081-7147-0039 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Trail (Structure), Stories, Style: No discernible style, Ca 1950**
Contributing *Total:* 1
The .7-mile long Cedar Creek Trail has developed over time. The current, ca. 1950 trail begins at the Summerhouse Café with a poured concrete path and rubble limestone retaining walls. As the trail continues north along Cedar Creek, it turns into a packed crush-and-run path without any retaining walls. Earlier historic photographs denote a wooden rail fence as opposed to the current limestone walls. Along the trail are permanent markers that denote information about geologic features. Located under the Bridge is a National Geodetic Survey vertical control mark and slightly past the Easter pulpit is a naturally occurring flat-faced rock that has a carved inscription that quotes J.R.R. Tolkien.
Secondary Resource: **Landscape Object (Object) Contributing** *Total:* 1

Wert Faulkner Highway 081-7147-0040 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Cultural Landscape (Site), Stories , Style: No discernible style, 1999**
Non-contributing *Total:* 1
The exhibit of a recreated ca. 1699 settlement includes bark-covered dwellings (wigwams) enclosed by a woven stick palisade. Costumed interpreters use the exhibit to present the history of the state-recognized Monacan Indians, who settled in this area 2,000 years ago and are now the largest Indian tribe in Virginia. This resource is classified as non-contributing because it postdates the historic district's period of significance, but the exhibit is based on archaeological investigations, and several members of the Monacan tribe assisted with its design, construction, and interpretative displays.

Wert Faulkner Highway 081-7147-0041 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Landscape Feature, Natural (Site), Stories , Style: Other, 1 Contributing** *Total:* 1
Saltpetre Cave is a deep rock shelter where saltpetre (also spelled saltpeter) was mined for potassium nitrate (saltpetre), a prime ingredient for the manufacturing of gun powder that was made here during the Civil War and also the War of 1812. The cave was formed mainly by stream erosion when the creek bed was at the level of the cave. The cave does not extend any distance beyond what is visible.

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.)

- [x] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] 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.)
COMMERCE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
ARCHITECTURE
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
Ca. 1700-1965

Significant Dates
1774
1964

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Gay, Garland Mason (Architect, Lynchburg, VA)
Fuqua, Fred B. and Company (Builder, Lynchburg, VA).
Johnson, Stanhope S. (Architect, Lynchburg, VA)
Eliot, Charles (Landscape Architect, Brookline, MA)

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.)

The Natural Bridge Historic District is significant at the state level under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for development of the Natural Bridge Resort that was directly related to the commercialization of the geographic feature, the Natural Bridge of Virginia, considered one of the "Seven Natural Wonders of the World." The Natural Bridge was listed individually in the National Register in 1997 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1998. The rock formation began to be commercialized after the property left the possession of the Jefferson family, with Thomas Jefferson being its first owner. The resort grew with its first hotel in ca. 1835 and continued to prosper with the erection of a large three-story Colonial Revival style brick hotel in 1964, after the 1906/1917 hotel was destroyed by fire. The Natural Bridge Historic District is also significant at the state level under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/ Recreation for its role in the commercial development of the Natural Bridge Hotel and Washington Hall, and the development of the trail system associated with the Natural Bridge itself. Additionally, the Natural Bridge Historic District is significant at the state level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its strong assemblage of Colonial Revival-style domestic buildings, as well as a scattering of late-18th to mid-19th century domestic buildings. Early 20th-century commercial buildings also remain in the core area of the historic district that relate directly to the Natural Bridge Hotel. Finally, the Natural Bridge Historic District is significant at the state level under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture for its association with landscape architect Charles Eliot and its development into a park-like setting in the 1880s under the ownership of Col. Henry C. Parsons. Its period of significance spans from ca.1740 to 1965, encompassing the earliest known European discovery of the Natural Bridge (for the same reason, the period of significance for the NHL-designated Natural Bridge begins ca. 1740) through completion of the Natural Bridge Hotel, which is the most recently constructed contributing resource within the historic district.

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

Acknowledgments
The author wishes to thank the following for their contributions to this nomination: Tom Clark, President of Kissito Healthcare, Inc., a subsidy of the Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund, Inc.; Jennifer Bell, Director of Operations and COO of the Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund, Inc.; Kurt Russ, Executive Director of Mountain Valley Preservation Alliance; Dan Grim Rockbridge County GIS Manager; and the staff of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, especially Michael J. Pulice, Architectural Historian of the Western Region Office, and Lena McDonald, Register Coordinator and Carey Jones, Survey Manager.

Justification of Criteria

Criterion A – Commerce

The Natural Bridge Historic District is significant at the state level in the area of Commerce as a successful resort that has prospered since ca. 1835 with the establishment of its first hotel that benefitted from the commercialization of the geographical icon, the Natural Bridge of Virginia. Located in what was once Virginia's backcountry, the resort slowly grew and began to evolve with the coming of the railroad that delivered a continuous influx of fascinated tourists. The Natural Bridge was advertised as the main attraction of the excursion trains that travelled the Shenandoah Valley during the mid-to-late-19th century. The resort was a destination of the wealthy who could afford the time and expense to get to and spend a "season" at the hotel. The development of the automobile and improvements to the road systems created a greater mass appeal and the resort catered to vacationing families. The resort and the attraction of the bridge and its unspoiled mountainous surroundings continue to delight visitors, and its renewed focus on conservation and recreation will provide a diverse, sustainable, and economically viable future.

Criterion A – Entertainment/Recreation

The buildings and landscape of the Natural Bridge Historic District have intrinsically provided entertainment and recreational opportunities for countless families and individuals since the bridge's discovery by Euro-Americans, and the district is significant at the state level in the area of Entertainment/Recreation. Its appeal, once limited to the rich and privileged, has offered various forms of recreation; the Natural Bridge has never lacked in popularity with visitors coming from throughout Virginia as well as far beyond the Commonwealth's borders. The series of hotels, along with the Washington Hall auditorium, have provided invaluable benefits to the community and the county as a continued source of revenue and tourism for generations. Under the leadership of Col. Parsons beginning in 1883, the resort developed into a bucolic park-like setting, with miles of walking and bridle trails established and framed by sweeping vistas of the surrounding mountains. A more established walking trail with limestone retaining walls was built for visitors to the bridge in the 1920s with a coffee and gift shop added by the early 1930s. Visitors have enjoyed this trail down Cascade Falls to Cedar Creek, and under the bridge and beyond. With the imminent creation of a new state park near the bridge and along the hillsides outside of the resort boundaries, entertainment and recreational opportunities will abound for generations to come.

Criterion C - Architecture

Significant at the state level in the area of Architecture, the Natural Bridge Historic District displays strong examples of the Colonial Revival style throughout the complex, mostly typified in domestic buildings, such as the 1964 Natural Bridge Hotel and the 1949 Natural Bridge Cottages and commercially as well with the 1961 Rockbridge Center, that replaced the ca. 1935 "Gift Shop" and is still locally referred to by that name. The district includes domestic and agricultural resources on the perimeter of the resort that are of a vernacular form. One of the earliest houses recorded in Rockbridge County is located at the northern edge of the boundary, the ca. 1790 Barclay Tavern, a two-story brick building overlooking Cedar Creek. The ca. 1850

two-story log Shindle House that is located just west of the core resort area may have also functioned as an early tavern. The majority of the buildings in the district are, however Colonial Revival in design and are all directly related to the functions of the hotel and the bridge. Several hotel ancillary buildings that date from the late 19th century to the early 20th century range in construction material from frame, post-and-beam-construction, to cinder block and stucco. Although five domestic resources have been recently demolished, all other buildings, except for three, remain in good-to-excellent condition, conveying a preserved sense of scale, massing, material, and feeling.

Criterion C – Landscape Architecture

Perhaps the resort's greatest asset is its unparalleled beauty, with unspoiled view sheds of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the southeast and Short Hills Mountain to the northwest that include the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. Mid-to-late-19th century published travel descriptions and artwork show that the scenic surroundings of the Natural Bridge have always been a large part of its allure as a destination. Set in the backcountry and in a steep gorge, the Natural Bridge remained forested and difficult to access until the mid-19th century. In 1883, Col. Parsons bought the resort and a year later, he and his wife Nellie deeded approximately 2,000 acres to the Natural Bridge Forest Company, although he continued to manage the resort. Parsons also hired landscape architect Charles Eliot of Frederick Law Olmstead's firm to study and evaluate the property. Still under Parson's tenure, in 1890 the Natural Bridge Forest Company transferred 1,060 acres of this property to the Natural Bridge Park Company, excluding the Jefferson Cottage, the Gate House, and the bridge, thus dividing ownership into two separate companies and creating what at the time was the largest private park in America The resulting landscape design by Eliot warrants the historic district's significance at the state level in the area of Landscape Architecture, and reflects the naturalistic landscape design principles of the late 19th century. Although the immediate tourist area to the north of the Natural Bridge has been commercialized, much of the resort's natural beauty remains with established trails and scenic views. Owing to the rugged terrain, the south side is too steep for development. The VCLF's donation of about 1,300 acres of land for a new state park ushers in a renewed period of outdoor recreation in which the resort's conservation is paramount. The roads are in good condition and the view sheds have remained unspoiled. The Jefferson National Forest encompasses the Blue Ridge Mountains to the southeast and Short Hills Mountain to the northwest.

Historical Overview

The first settlement in the area occurred in the rich bottom lands of the confluence of the Maury (then North River) and James rivers in what is now the Town of Glasgow, a small industrial town incorporated in 1892, six miles east of Natural Bridge. Various Indian tribes had used the land for hunting with an agreement among the different tribes that the Valley of Virginia was to be used as a common hunting-ground. Multiple tribes, such as the Delawares and the Iroquois from the north, the Shawnees from the West, and the Catawbas and the Cherokees from the South, came there annually to hunt the buffalo and elk upon which they depended for their food

(Tompkins 1939:2). The various tribes travelled on the "Great Warrior Path" that traversed the Shenandoah Valley between the Blue Ridge and the Allegheny mountains. Thomas Jefferson recorded in his 1784 published *Notes on the State of Virginia* that there was a Monacan encampment there in 1669 with 30 warriors and a total of no more than 120 residents (Crotty 2002:21). The Monacan Indian Nation was culturally affiliated with the Eastern Siuoan-speaking peoples, such as the Tutelo, and is related to the Occaneechi and Saponi peoples now located in North Carolina and the Mannahoac who occupied Virginia's northern Piedmont. The territory of the Monacans and their allies once encompassed more than half of Virginia, including the piedmont region and parts of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Monacan Nation now is based in Amherst County (directly southeast of Rockbridge County) and is one of the oldest indigenous groups still existing in their ancestral homeland; they also are the only group of Eastern Siouan people still in Virginia (Wood 2007: 30).

The earliest Euro-American explorers did not appear in the Natural Bridge vicinity until the mid-1730s and knew almost nothing of the landscape. In 1741, John Salling [Salley], a German weaver, and his brother, Peter Salling, settled on a 400-acre tract in present-day Glasgow. John Salling kept a diary, which provided the first English description of the Natural Bridge. His 1742 diary entry stated: "We set off from my House went to Cedar Creek, about five miles, where is a Natural Bridge over said Creek, reaching from the Hill on one side to the Hill on the other. It is a solid Rock and is two hundred and three feet high, having a large Spacious arch, where the water runs thro" [Tompkins 1939:1; Crotty 2002:50].

The Great Wagon Road that developed from Philadelphia south during the decade after 1745 remained undeveloped and it would be another decade before wagon traffic increased and only as far as Lexington, with little settlement beyond there (Mitchell 1977:149-51). In 1777, Rockbridge County was formed from parts of Augusta and Botetourt counties, and Lexington (14 miles north of Natural Bridge) became its courthouse town the following year. Despite the number of towns in the Shenandoah Valley after 1775, the entire region remained rural. As a new settlement, Lexington in 1800 had about 300 people, and the now-extinct village of Springfield, an important crossroads community west of Natural Bridge, had 86 (Mitchell 1977:198). While the lower valley traded with Alexandria, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Richmond, Rockbridge County relied on Richmond and other trading centers along the middle James River, especially Lynchburg (Mitchell 1997:227). The trading and economic ties with Lynchburg remained during the development of the Natural Bridge resort.

Beginning around 1750, Thomas Jefferson's father, Peter Jefferson, and Joshua Fry surveyed the area in preparation for their 1775 publication of the *Fry-Jefferson Map of Virginia*. The area was isolated, with only a trail over the bridge, which was also known as the Rock Bridge (the origin of the county's name). Thomas Jefferson may have first heard about the Natural Bridge from his father, and his initial visit coincided with his budding law practice. As a 25-year old attorney-at-law, Jefferson first practiced law in the Augusta County courthouse town of Staunton, and it was from there that he detoured to visit the bridge. After his first court proceedings, Jefferson began his 38-mile journey to the bridge on August 21, 1767. Jefferson spent the second night at Paxton's Tavern in Glasgow, which was operated by John Paxton Sr. and his two sons, who most likely brought Jefferson to the bridge (Crotty 2002:6 & 15-21).

Jefferson Era: 1774-1835

Jefferson's legal career spanned from March 1767 to August 1774, a time period that coincided with his introduction to and purchase of the Natural Bridge. In 1773, a year before his purchase, Jefferson and his wife Martha inherited the Bedford County plantation Poplar Forest from her father. Also in 1773, Jefferson paid James Tremble to survey what would become his 157-acre Natural Bridge tract, an irregularly shaped tract with boundaries that resulted from no one else claiming the property. Apparently the surrounding property owners, such as the Cloyds, McGavocks, Barclays, Greenlees, and Houstons, had no interest in acquiring the non-productive land. On July 5, 1774, Lord Dunmore signed the Crown Grant issued to Jefferson in the Botetourt County Patent Book for 1773-1774. The grant describes several waterways and a path, but no road traversing the bridge (Crotty 2002:54-55). After purchasing the property, Jefferson did not visit it again until 1781. Afterward he made only three more recorded visits, all of which occurred while he was in retirement from public office and retreating at Poplar Forest—in 1815, 1817, and 1821.

As Jefferson was a rare visitor to his property, his neighbors inevitably encroached on his unoccupied land, and in 1815 Jefferson hired Patrick Henry, a free African American man, to live on the property as a caretaker and provisional tour guide. In 1816, Henry purchased, freed, and married a slave named Louisa and the following year constructed their two-room log house on a stone foundation less than 150 yards northwest of the arch [Coffey 2002:143-145]. Aside from this dwelling, there were no other buildings or improvements on Jefferson's 157-acre property.

In 1821, at age 78, Jefferson made his last recorded trip to Natural Bridge. After Jefferson died in 1826, Patrick Henry, Louisa and their two children, Joseph and Eliza, were allowed to remain in the cabin at Natural Bridge as long as it remained property of Jefferson's heirs. In 1831, Patrick Henry died and Louisa Henry and their children apparently continued to stay in the house (Coffey 2002:145). The property passed to Jefferson's grandson Eppes and then to Thomas J. Randolph, who sold it on November 2, 1835, for $1,200 to Revolutionary War Capt. Joel/Joseph Lackland. That same year, Lackland built the first substantial building on the property, the Forest Inn, and the commercial development of the Natural Bridge began. Louisa Henry stayed on with Lackland as a domestic and a quasi-docent for the bridge. Several visitors reported the delight of meeting an elderly African American woman there who had known Jefferson (Davis 1949:57; Coffey 2002:145).

Post-Jefferson Era: 1835 to 1869

The ca. 1835 three-story frame Forest Inn fronted the main road that led southeast to Glasgow and Lynchburg (the Lynchburg Road) and north to Lexington (the Lexington Road), now known as Route 130. With the establishment of the hotel, the Natural Bridge's popularity increased with Americans as well as Europeans, and the bridge became the subject of numerous paintings, lithographs, decorative wallpaper, and editorials. Frederick Church, of the Hudson River School of American landscape painters, depicted a panoramic view of the bridge in 1852, followed by

German artist Edward Beyer's lithograph of a similar view in 1858. Both views depict what appears to be the ca. 1850 **Shindle-Smith House (081-7147-0035)**.

Published travel descriptions and artwork show that Natural Bridge's surroundings have always been a large part of its touristic allure. Set in the backcountry and in a steep gorge, the Natural Bridge remained forested and difficult to access until the mid-19th century. The approach was often mentioned by early visitors. Harriet Martineau described an 1838 excursion by stagecoach and horse and the high anticipation of the traveling party. She noted the road turned off through a wood and there was so much foliage that they were "warned in fact that we should get over the Bridge without knowing it." There was too much foliage to see the bottom. "I went on to the inn, deposited my horse, and returned on foot to the Bridge…the way to the Glen is through a field, opposite the inn, and down a steep, rough, rocky path, which leads under the Bridge and a few yards beyond it. I think the finest view of all is from this path just before reaching the Bridge" (Parsons 1891:8).

Many of the visitors' descriptions mention not just Natural Bridge itself but such experiences as the deep forested approach, the ancient arbor vitae trees, the waterfalls, and the caves. Starting with a 1780s Chastellux drawing of a picnic in the pines, artists created a long succession of renderings depicting the vicinity's pleasant nature. From this period forward, "the Bridge surroundings seem, to the lover of nature, almost as admirable as the Bridge itself" (Parsons 1891:31). The first major map that denoted the Natural Bridge area is the *William Gilham 1860 Map of Rockbridge County*. Lusters Hotel appears on the map, even though the Forest Inn had been established since 1835. The James River and Kanawha Canal is depicted on the map, but no rail lines yet. Clearly the resort had been established by 1860, but was still difficult to reach, situated a day's journey between Lexington, Lynchburg, and Buchanan. Ultimately, in these periods, the bridge remained a destination of the privileged and determined.

Railroads, Reconstruction, and Consolidated Resort Era: 1870-1925

The railroad played a significant role in the development of the resort during the latter half of the 19th century. The newly formed Richmond and Alleghany Railroad arrived at Natural Bridge Station in 1881 and the Shenandoah Valley Railroad followed by 1883, as depicted on the 1883 *Carmichael Map.* Constructed on the vacated James River and Kanawha Canal towpath, the Richmond and Alleghany tracks ran along the James River for 220 miles from Richmond through Natural Bridge to Clifton Forge; the company merged with the Chesapeake and Ohio in 1890 and served as its James River Division. The Shenandoah Valley Railroad, which ran from Hagerstown, Maryland, to Roanoke, Virginia, later merged with the Norfolk and Western (N&W). Between these two railroads, there were12 daily stops at the Natural Bridge Station, where stagecoaches transported visitors to the Forest Inn, still the main hotel at that time.

The trains provided a continuous influx of tourists during the spring and summer when the numerous railroad excursion routes ran through the picturesque Shenandoah Valley with Natural Bridge being one of its main attractions. An 1890 Shenandoah Valley Railroad brochure highlighted a trio of stops that focused on the natural curiosities of Luray Caverns (Page County), Natural Bridge, and the Grottoes of the Shenandoah (Grand Caverns in Augusta

County) (brochure at Virginia Historical Society). The Natural Bridge was well-publicized and often compared to its arch rival Niagara Falls, which is 55 feet shorter.

The coming of the railroad not only brought prosperity to Natural Bridge, it brought a new owner, Col. Henry Chester Parsons, who forever transformed the Natural Bridge resort. While working for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, Col. Parsons formed a company to build the Richmond and Alleghany Railroad, of which he became vice president, and was transferred to the Natural Bridge area. At that time, he lived in Richmond, Virginia, with his wife, Nellie Loomis Parsons, and their three young daughters, Katherine, Grace, and Maude. Upon his visit to Natural Bridge, Parsons became so enamored with the area that he not only purchased the Rockbridge Inn (081-0399), north of Natural Bridge on the Valley Road, but he also bought the Natural Bridge and 200 acres ($14,000) and moved his family into the Jefferson Cottage. The Jefferson Cottage was built on the site of Patrick Henry's ca. 1817 two-room log house and over the course of the 20th century, grew into a rambling, eclectically-designed, 2½ -story, Queen Anne-style frame house with a three-story corner tower.

Parsons went immediately to work, building the side wings to the Forest Inn; the two-story Appledore Cottage (1881-8182) a small hotel that became the South Wing of the 1906 Natural Bridge Hotel; the two-story frame Pavilion with full wraparound porches; a small, frame ornamental gatehouse on the approach to the bridge; and a store that was run by the Bargers. Parsons also enlarged the Jefferson Cottage and created "ten miles of carriage roads and bridle paths [that] lead over these summits and through the great arches" (1885 Brochure and 1891 Booklet at Virginia Historical Society). He built new stables, and enlarged existing ones to house 40-50 horses, and even encouraged women to ride (Pierce 1994:11; Tompkins 1939:47).

The Parson family lived at the Jefferson Cottage, their "summer home," and at the Rockbridge Inn, which Col. Parsons also enlarged. Parsons provided jobs for craftsmen, drivers, cooks, and waiters, as well as arranged with the local farmers to supply food for the guests and hay for the horses (Tompkins 1939:47). An 1885 foldout brochure for Natural Bridge stated "The Hotels are new, commodious and comfortable. They are handsomely furnished. The tables are supplied and served in the manner of a country home. The gardens furnish fresh vegetables, and the blue grass farms in the neighborhood supply chickens, eggs, butter, milk, and real cream. For the sick a special kitchen is provided, and a trained nurse is engaged" (brochure at Virginia Historical Society).

But perhaps Parsons' greatest contribution was his conservation efforts. On January 10, 1884, Col. and Nellie Parsons deeded ownership of the Natural Bridge property, 2,000 acres more or less, to the Natural Bridge Forest Company (for $100,000), although he continued to manage it. And on August 2, 1890, the Natural Bridge Forest Company transferred 1,060 acres of this property to the Natural Bridge Park Company (for $160,000), thus creating the then-largest private park in America (Pierce 1994:11; Davis 1949:30 and 83). Further, Parsons hired Charles Eliot, then a new landscape architect apprentice with Frederick Law Olmsted's firm in Brookline, Massachusetts. Eliot was from a prominent Boston family; his father was the president of Harvard University. Considered to be the first full-time landscape architecture office, Olmsted's firm had already designed Central Park in Manhattan, Prospect Park in

Brooklyn, and would soon be working on the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Photographs of the Natural Bridge resort during this time period portray its park-like setting emphasized by natural features, winding pathways, fence-lined roadways, and well-sited, eclectically designed, and appropriately scaled buildings.

The Parsons' era was coming to an end in 1892 when the Forest Inn succumbed to fire, the first of two major fires that would change the landscape at Natural Bridge. On June 29, 1894, the era abruptly ended when Parsons was shot to death by Thomas A. Goodman, a disgruntled conductor on the Chesapeake and Ohio. Col. H. C. Parsons was buried in nearby Springfield at the High Bridge Church cemetery (Natural Bridge Archives). Nellie Parsons inherited the property, including the Rockbridge Inn (081-0399), but continued living at the Jefferson Cottage.

After the Forest Inn burned, construction on a new hotel began, but in a different location. The central section of the new Natural Bridge Hotel was added onto the north side of Parsons'1891-1892 Appledore Cottage and the Appledore Cottage became known as the South Wing. Owing to the Economic Panic of 1893, the hotel was not completed until 1906. This new hotel was built in the same general location as the current Natural Bridge Hotel. Also in 1906, stockholders of the Natural Bridge Development Company amended the charter to change the name to the Natural Bridge Company, Inc. In 1916-1917, the Natural Bridge Company built the north wing of the hotel from plans drawn by architect Stanhope S. Johnson of Lynchburg.

Mainstream Resort and Auto Tourism Era: 1925-1945

In 1925, the Natural Bridge Company was transferred to the Natural Bridge of Virginia, Inc., and J. Lee Davis was appointed its president. They commenced work immediately, and in 1926 the large three-story frame Natural Bridge Hotel was remodeled. Gardens, orchards, and dairies located in the rear of the hotel property offered fresh food for the increasing number of guests. Davis remained president of the Natural Bridge Company until 1950, and his long-term tenure coincided with the Auto Tourism Age; the property developed into a viable destination resort as opposed to a stop along an excursion route. With the advent of the radio, the development of a state and national road system, and the consequential improvements of highways, the resort became more popular and accessible to the general public. The N&W continued daily stops at the Natural Bridge Station, where now a hotel motor bus picked up guests.

In 1927, Dr. Chester A. Reeds, Ph. D., of the American Museum of Natural History published his relevant and often-referenced history and geology book, *The Natural Bridge of Virginia and Its Environs*. Reeds described the early-20th-century resort best when he stated that "The view from the Natural Bridge Hotel is a charming one. Beyond the well-kept lawns, shrubs and driveways appear the timbered walls of Cedar Creek and its tributaries. The James River, however, is hidden from view by the nearby slopes of Mount Jefferson and its encircling golf links. The distant Blue Ridge Mountains and National Forest rise up beyond the James River Valley to form an inviting background" (Reeds 1927:8). Reeds described the bucolic view of the resort prior to the re-routing of US 11 through it in 1935: "After a brief rest at the Natural Bridge Hotel most tourists are anxious to see the Bridge. The walk is a delightful one. After crossing the spacious hotel grounds and the Lee Highway, the visitor writes his name in the register at the

entrance gate and proceeds along the foot path, which crosses the lawn to the cascades and arbor-vitae trees of Cascade Creek. The Bridge is still hidden away in the bosom of Mother Earth" (Reeds 1927:6). When US 11 was improved in 1934-1936, and the road was diverted from the Valley Road 1.5-miles north and rerouted through the resort and over the Natural Bridge, the subsequent grading obstructed the sweeping easterly views from the Natural Bridge Hotel across the lawn toward the gatehouse.

Hotel and Conference Center Era: 1946-1975

In 1945, Scott, Horner & Mason of Lynchburg and C. F. Cassell & Company of Charlottesville, along with others, purchased the controlling interest in the Natural Bridge of Virginia, Inc. and hired a new general manager (Davis 1939:132-3). James N. Hunter arrived on December 26, 1945, and began his duties as resident manager on January 1, 1946. Hunter, who was also named Secretary of the corporation, was recruited from the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke. Most of the extant buildings in the resort were erected during his tenure.

After three major construction projects changed the landscape of the resort, the public became concerned with the exploitation of the Natural Bridge and in 1948, Governor William Tuck wanted to buy the bridge for $2 million, but legislators thought the price too high (*Roanoke Times* 5-26-94). Construction and improvements continued throughout the 1950s and into the beginning of the 1960s when on April 23, 1963, the 1906 hotel and its 1917 North Wing caught fire and were destroyed. The rear two-story 1935 West Wing survived the fire and was connected to a new hotel. Hunter supervised the construction of this $1 million hotel beginning in September 1964. Architect Garland Mason Gay, of Lynchburg, designed the three-story, Flemish-bond brick-veneered Colonial Revival-style **Natural Bridge Hotel (081-7147-0002)**, which opened in June 1964. The hotel's most recent renovation was just completed in April 2015.

After over 30 years of continuous service as Vice-President and General Manager of the Natural Bridge of Virginia, Inc., James N. Hunter died in early April 1976 (*Roanoke Times & World News* 4-5-1976). No new buildings have been built since the erection of the 1964 Natural Bridge Hotel. Further, no other major 19th or early 20th century resort building remains standing; the earliest buildings that remain in the core resort area are the 1920s and 1930s staff housing. In the mid-1960s, perhaps in connection with the 1963 demolition of the burnt 1906 Natural Bridge Hotel, the Jefferson Cottage was demolished.

Recent Era: 1976 to Present

In 1976, Natural Bridge once again came to the attention of state officials, when then-Governor Mills Godwin considered "buying it for $4.3 million when critics were complaining that commercial interests were exploiting a natural monument. But the legislation was killed after the state Chamber of Commerce and other groups objected to the state's competing with private tourism" (*Roanoke Times* 5-26-94). In 1987, the property was still operated by the Natural Bridge of Virginia, Inc., with net sales of $3.3 million. However, the property went up for sale, and in 1988, Washington D.C.-area real estate developer Angelo Puglisi headed a group that

bought the property for $6.5 million (*Roanoke Times & World News* 11-4-1988). In 1997, Puglisi tried unsuccessfully to sell the property for $39 million, and continued operating the property. During this same year, the owners successfully pursued historic designation for the Natural Bridge. The **Natural Bridge (081-0415)** was listed individually in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places in 1997 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1998, the highest honor for a historic resource.

In 1999, the **Monacan Indian Living History Exhibit (081-7147-0040)** was developed based on professional archaeological investigations of a Monacan village site within the vicinity. In addition to the archaeological data, the exhibit's design, layout, and construction of bark-covered dwellings enclosed by a woven stick palisade were created with assistance from members of the Monacan tribe. Costumed interpreters use the exhibit to present accurate portrayals of traditional ways of building structures, making pottery, preparing hides, manufacturing stone tools, weaving baskets, and other activities.

In mid-2013, Puglisi decided to try to sell the resort again and the 1,600-acre property, including the Natural Bridge, was scheduled to be auctioned on November 13, 2013. Due to the surveying logistics as well as great local and statewide interest in pursuing conservation options, the auction was postponed until December 18, 2013; a long process of fact-finding and negotiations followed. The auction was cancelled, and in February 2014, the Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund, created as an interim caretaker and owner, received about 1,600 acres. Once the $9 million note used to finance the purchase is retired, the Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund (VCLF) will donate all but the hotel, cottages, and caverns to be run by the Commonwealth as a Virginia state park (*Roanoke Times* 9-15-2013 & 10-4-2013; Kastning 2014:125-126).

Figure 1: Edward Beyer's 1858 lithograph of Natural Bridge from his *Album of Virginia,* Plate 36. View west from Shafer Lane that led down to Gilmore Mills on the James River. Note the **Shindle-Smith House (081-7147-0035)** in the upper left corner. The ca. 1835 Forest Inn (non-extant) is to the upper right corner. Short Hills Mountain is in the distance. (*Edward Beyer's Travels Through America*. 2011).

Figure 2: A ca. 1909 panoramic view of the Natural Bridge resort after the completion of the 1906 Natural Bridge Hotel. View looking northwest from the bridge, which is behind and to the right. From left to right, is the Jefferson Cottage, the former Lee Cottage, Marshall Cottage, the Natural Bridge Hotel, the Pavilion, the "Road to Buchanan" over the bridge, the Gatehouse, and the Bathhouse. (Photograph courtesy of Washington & Lee University).

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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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
__x_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: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _DHR No. 081-7147__

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property __302___

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: 37.384078 Longitude: 79.333148

2. Latitude: 37.375169 Longitude: 79.325665

3. Latitude: 37.371923 Longitude: 79.322969

4. Latitude: 37.388730 Longitude: 79.342270

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The nominated boundaries include the land that is owned by the Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund, and three privately owned parcels, that are historically associated with the Natural Bridge resort. These are the same parcels that are denoted in the attached Rockbridge County, Virginia, tax map, which include the following 10 tax parcel identification numbers: 105-7-1A, 106-50-7, 106-50-16, 106-50-17, 106-50-21, 106-50-30, 106-50-31, 106-50-32, 106-50-33, and 106-50-34 that are owned by the VCLF; and the three parcels 105-5-1,105-5-1A, and 105-5-2B that are privately owned.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The boundaries of the Natural Bridge Historic District include the 302 acres that are historically associated with the Natural Bridge resort and now owned by the Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund. The boundaries encompass the Natural Bridge of Virginia, and the resulting resort area and all of its contributing resources and one non-contributing resource described in the nomination, as well as the historic and natural setting that remains today.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: __Anne Stuart Beckett, Architectural Historian_____
organization: _____N/A_____
street & number: __1024 Hamilton Avenue_____
city or town: Roanoke_____ state: __VA_____ zip code:_24015____
e-mail: __asbeckett@cox.net_____
telephone:__540-354-7827__date:_August 28, 2015_____

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.)

Nomination Photographs

All photographs are common to: Natural Bridge Historic District, VDHR File Number 081-7147 **Location:** Natural Bridge, Rockbridge County, Virginia.
Photographer: Anne Stuart Beckett **Date Photographed:** January and March, 2015
Digital Repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia.

Photo 1 of 12: VA_RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0001
View: View west of the Natural Bridge of Virginia (081-0415) from the Cedar Creek Trail.

Photo 2 of 12: VA_ RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0002
View: View south of the arch of the Natural Bridge of Virginia (081-0415) with US 11 on top.

Photo 3 of 12: VA_RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0003
View: View south of the Cedar Creek Trail (081-7147-0039) alongside Cedar Creek.

Photo 4 of 12: VA_ RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0004
View: View north from US 11 with the Natural Bridge Hotel (081-7147-0002). From left to right is the former Texaco Gas Station, the hill in the background includes the Stonewall Inn site, the smaller hill includes the Natural Bridge Cottages, then the Skating Rink Building, and the Underpass.

Photo 5 of 12: VA_ RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0005
View north of the Natural Bridge Hotel (081-7147-0002).

Photo 6 of 12: VA_ RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0006
View south of the Rockbridge Center (081-7147-0005).

Photo 7 of 10: VA_ RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0007
View south of the resort with Washington Hall (081-7147-0004) in the foreground, then the Washington Annex (081-7147-0003), that is connected to the Natural Bridge Hotel. The Blue Ridge Mountains are in the background.

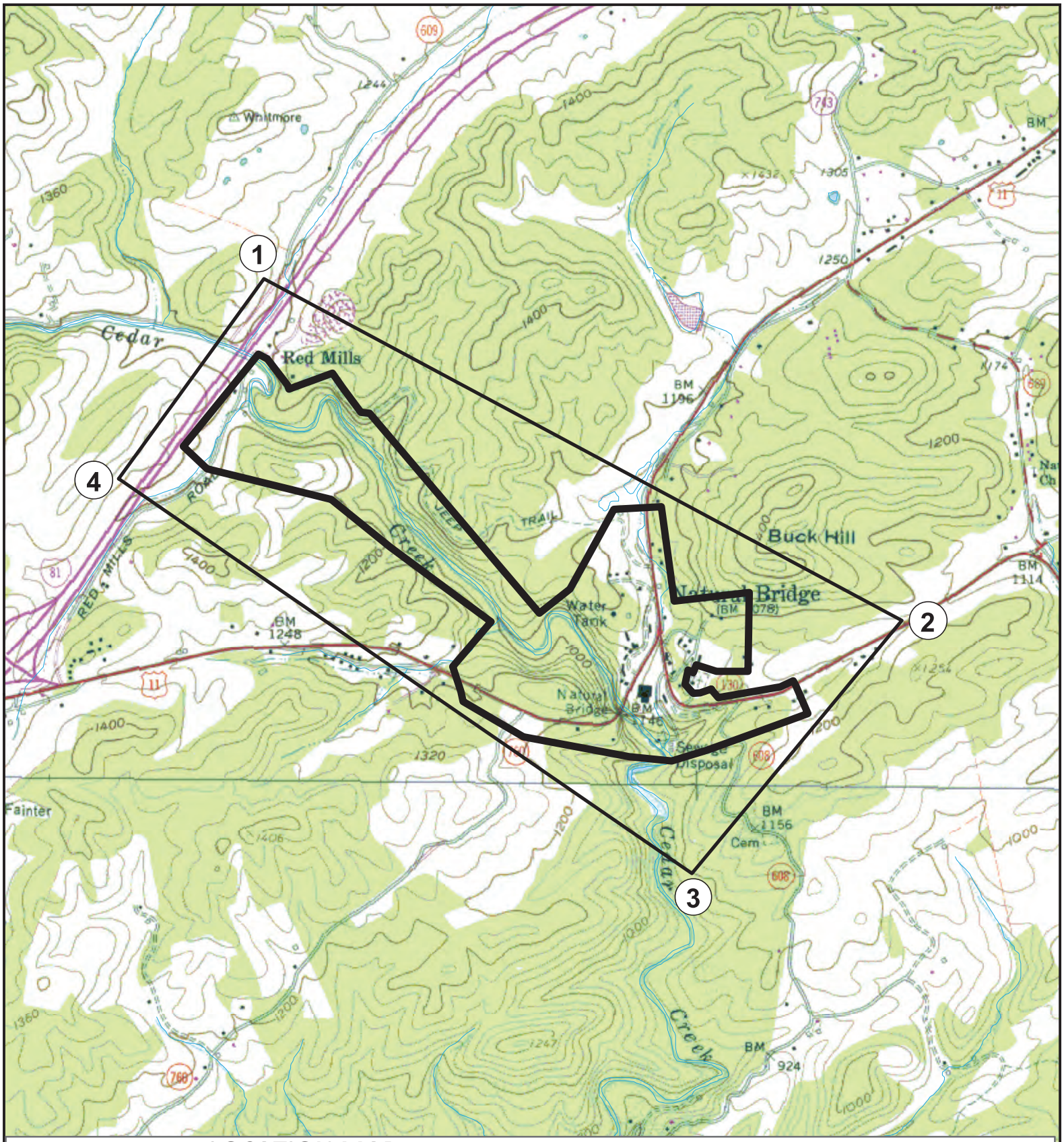
Photo 8 of 12: VA_ RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0008
View south along US 11 (the former Road to Lexington) with the Maintenance Garage (081-7147-0012) to the right and the tributary that flows under the resort to Cedar Creek.

Photo 9 of 10: VA_ RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0009
View south of the Natural Bridge Cottages (081-7147-0022/0029) (and the privately owned Natural Bridge Baptist Church). The Blue Ridge Mountains are in the distance.

Photo 10 of 12: VA_ RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0010
View north of the Livery Stable alongside US 11.

Photo 11 of 12: VA_ RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0011
View north of the Natural Bridge Dairy off of US 11.

Photo 12 of 12: VA_ RockbridgeCounty_NaturalBridgeHistoricDistrict_0012
View: View west of the Staff Housing behind the hotel and off of US 11.



LOCATION MAP

Natural Bridge Historic District Boundary
Rockbridge County, VA
DHR # 081-7147

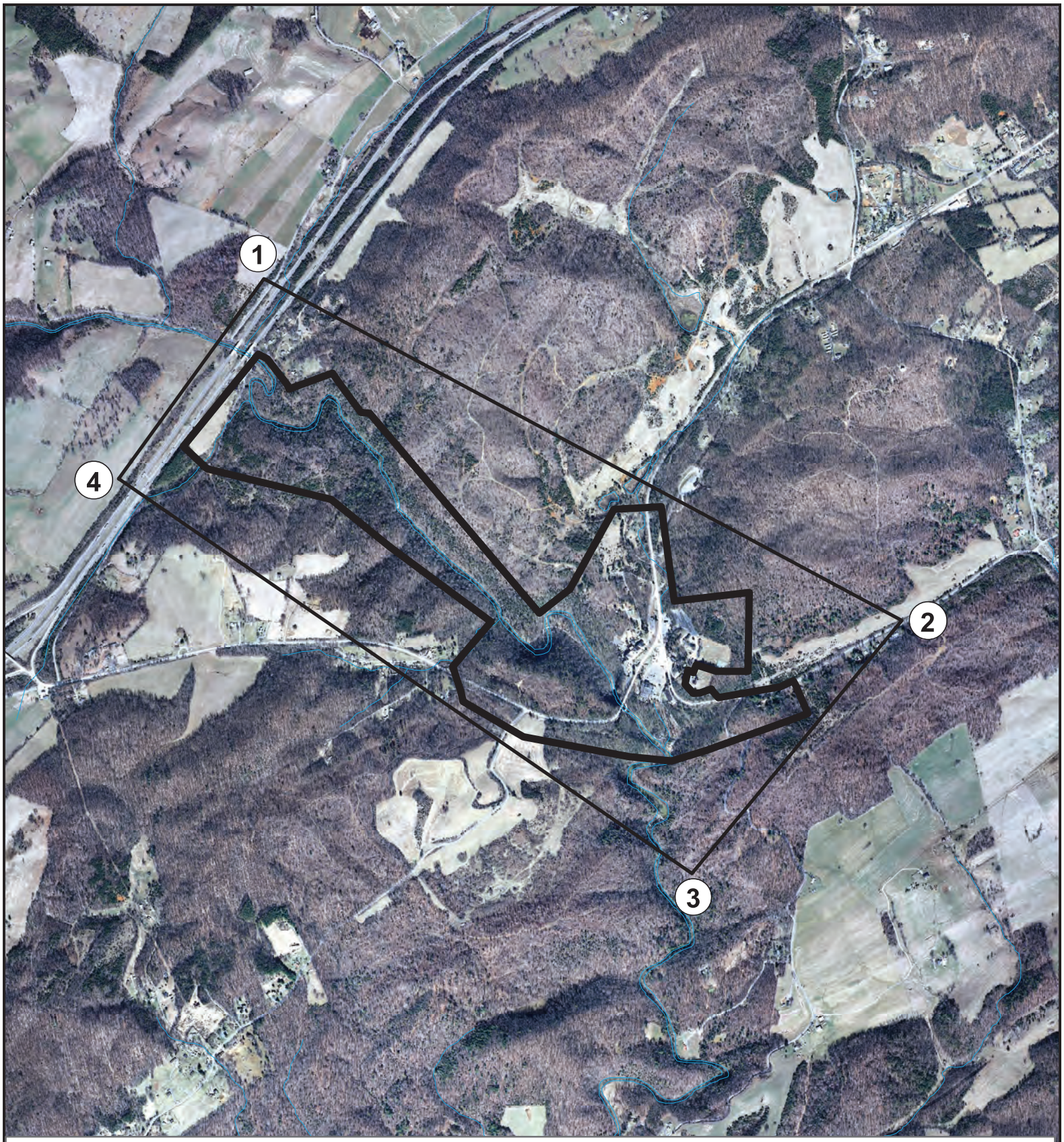
1. Latitude: 37.384078 Longitude: 79.333148
2. Latitude: 37.375169 Longitude: 79.325665
3. Latitude: 37.371923 Longitude: 79.322969
4. Latitude: 37.388730 Longitude: 79.342270

Historic District Boundary
CoordinatePolygon

N

0 1,250 2,500 Feet

Rockbridge County GIS August 2015



Aerial View

Natural Bridge Historic District Boundary
Rockbridge County, VA
DHR # 081-7147

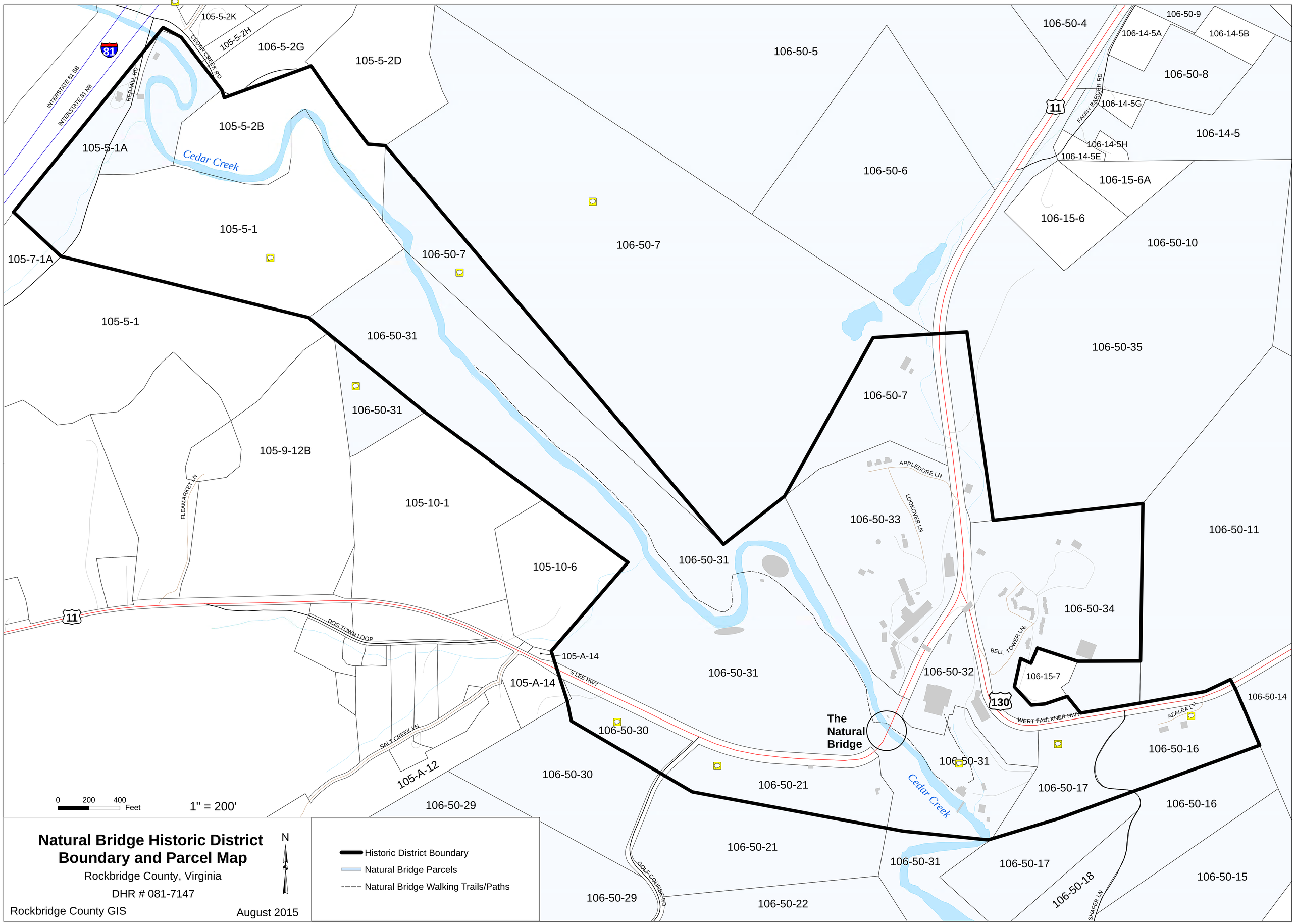
1. Latitude: 37.384078 Longitude: 79.333148
2. Latitude: 37.375169 Longitude: 79.325665
3. Latitude: 37.371923 Longitude: 79.322969
4. Latitude: 37.388730 Longitude: 79.342270

Historic District Boundary
CoordinatePolygon

N

0 1,250 2,500 Feet

Rockbridge County GIS August 2015 Imagery VGIN 2011



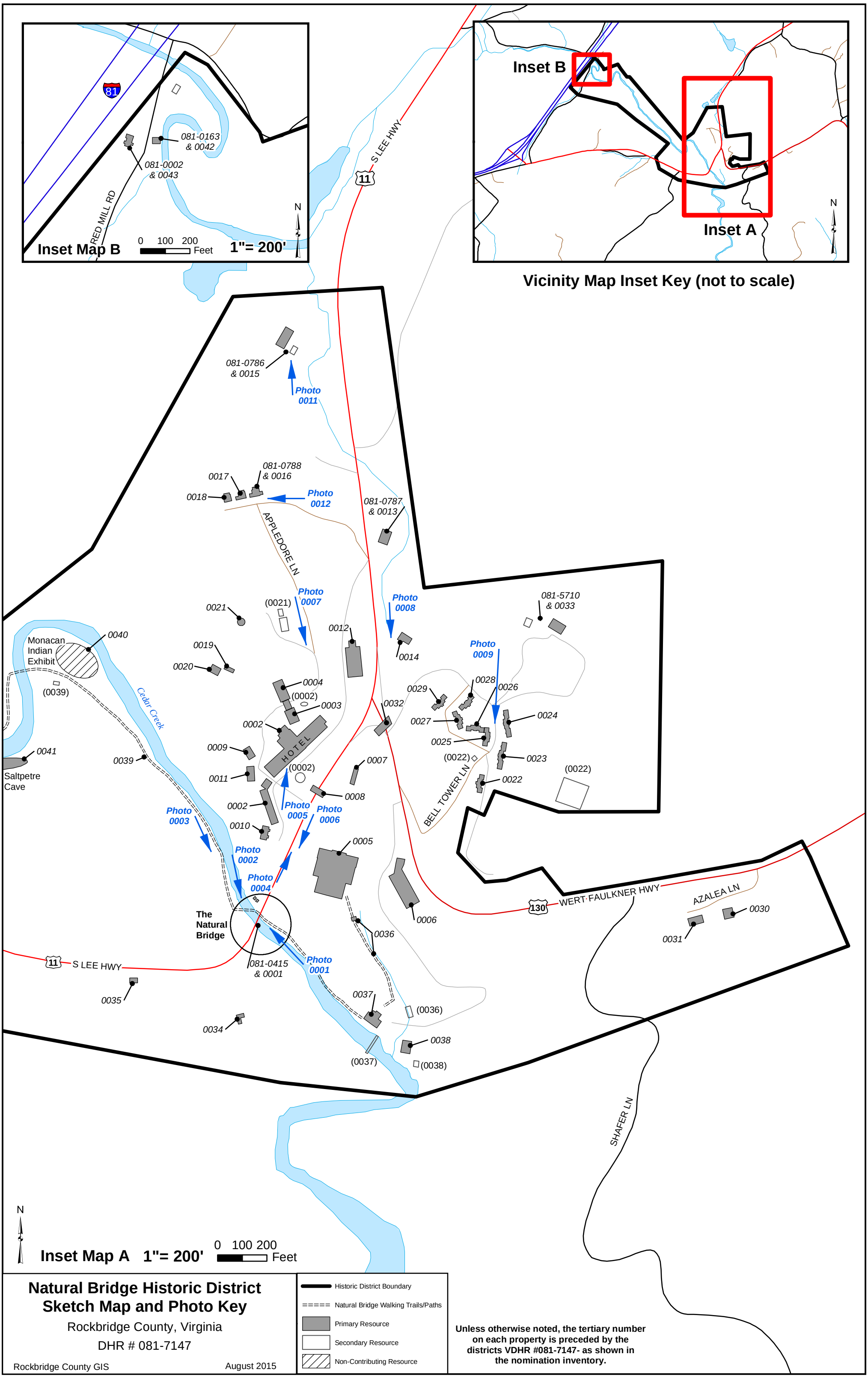
Natural Bridge Historic District Boundary and Parcel Map

Rockbridge County, Virginia

DHR # 081-7147

Rockbridge County GIS

August 2015



Natural Bridge Historic District Sketch Map and Photo Key

Rockbridge County, Virginia

DHR # 081-7147

Rockbridge County GIS

August 2015

Unless otherwise noted, the tertiary number on each property is preceded by the districts VDHR #081-7147- as shown in the nomination inventory.