

Form No. 10-308 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES - COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

WR-103, THE COMPTON GAP SITE

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

LURAY

VICINITY OF COMPTON GAP

07

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

VIRGINIA

51

WARREN

187

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (if applicable)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STREET & NUMBER

143 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

CITY, TOWN

PHILADELPHIA

STATE

PENNSYLVANIA

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

N.A.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

N.A.

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED # DATE
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

#### Context:

WR-103, the Compton Gap Site, was located in the Fall of 1978 in a spot reconnaissance after the completion of an intensive study of the cultural resources of the Shenandoah National Park (Hoffman et al 1979) raised a number of questions concerning the far northern part of the Park. Examination of topographic maps and a knowledge of site distribution gained through previous experience allowed the "prediction" of a site at Compton Gap.

Compton Gap took on added importance because of the work of Gardner (1974) in the Front Royal area in the adjacent part of the Shenandoah Valley. That work has produced a number of stratified sites ranging in age from Paleo Indian through late Woodland which ultimately should have counterparts (except, perhaps, for Paleo Indian sites) in the Blue Ridge. It was felt that a survey of Compton Gap would enhance the comparability of the Blue Ridge material to that from the Front Royal area.

A brief foot inspection of Compton Gap produced artifacts datable to the Late Archaic (ca. 2500 - 1000 B.C. and a surprisingly varied lithic assemblage. Today most of the site is covered by secondary forest and is only readily visible in a slightly eroded road bed at the gate of the Compton Gap Fire Road.

#### Environment:

WR-103 lies at an altitude of about 2415 feet in the Compton Gap connecting

Although the original conditions of Compton Gap have been altered by the Skyline Drive, it is apparent that the site occupied an important place in prehistoric times. Today a spring and small marshy area lie across the Skyline Drive on the western edge of the site while Carson Mountain protects it from northerly winds. Most of the remaining portion of WR-103 (that has not been destroyed by the Skyline Drive) is covered in secondary forest.

#### Archaeological Investigations:

Exploration of WR-103 was both brief and productive. The site was located by surface inspection of a spot where it was "predicted" based on other distributional evidence and a small "grab" sample taken to document the presence of a site and range of materials present. A site survey form was prepared and the site's location marked on a 7.5 minute series USGS quad map. Visibility was restricted to the slightly eroded road bed at the gate to Compton Gap Fire Road so that the overall dimensions of WR-103 could not be determined. The western edge of WR-103 was destroyed in the 1930's during the construction of Skyline Drive. Originally, the site probably consisted of many horizontal components covering several thousand square meters.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES late middle Archaic BUILDER/ARCHITECT \_\_\_\_\_

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

WR-103, the Compton Gap Site, is a good example of an archaeological site, the significance of which is determined as much by its strategic location as by the extent and richness of artifactual data. As mentioned before, the extensive exploration of the nearby Front Royal area of the Shenandoah Valley by Catholic University archaeologists (Gardner 1974) has provided us with some of the best documented Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic sites in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Until the systematic exploration of the Shenandoah National Park, however, there was no comparative information from the highland zone to complement the picture of prehistoric development in the Valley (and Piedmont).

Secondly, the ideal location of WR-103 as a way station in north-south and east-west movement and exchange makes it a potentially valuable source of information concerning the relationship between cultural and environmental zones. The fact that the modern Appalachian Trail--long believed to be based on a prehistoric forerunner--runs through WR-103 as well as the presence of imported lithic material emphasizes the communications role played by the Compton Gap Site.

Finally, WR-103 is one of the northernmost prehistoric sites known for the Shenandoah National Park and complements the other prehistoric sites proposed for National Register nomination. When one considers the unhappy fate that has met many of the nearby Valley sites where developers have destroyed a number of valuable cultural resources, the preservation of such a site is all the more important. The fact that WR-103 occupies an ecological and cultural niche that was virtually unknown five years ago increases its importance to the prehistory of the mid-Atlantic region.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gardner, William M. (ed.)  
1974 The Flint Run Paleo-Indian Complex. occasional publ. no. 1,  
Archeology Laboratory, Dept. of Anthropology, The Catholic University  
of America, Washington, D.C.

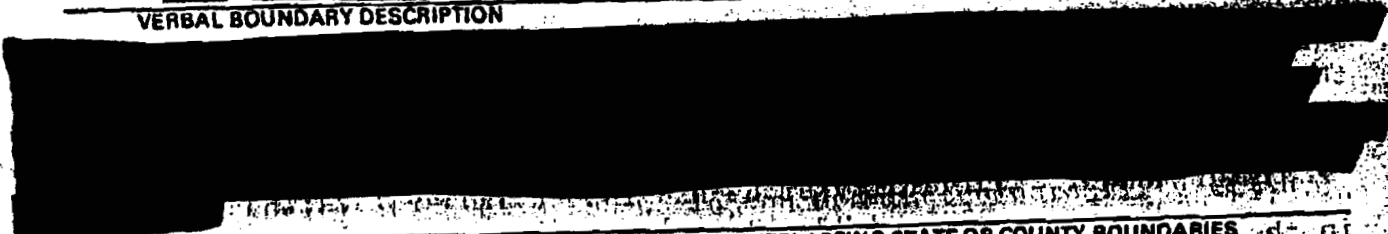
# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY unknown

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION



LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

DR. MICHAEL A. HOFFMAN, ACTING DIRECTOR

ORGANIZATION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH LAB, WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

STREET & NUMBER

201 TILLMAN HALL

CITY OR TOWN

MACOMB

TELEPHONE (309)298-1188

STATE ILLINOIS 61455

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National  National  State  Local

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Archaeological Investigations:

A striking characteristic of WR-103 is the variability of its lithic industry. In our brief survey a range of lithic debris was found that included: quartzite, quartz, jasper and blue-gray cryptocrystalline rock. Since most of these materials are imports (from both the Valley and Piedmont) and since Compton Gap rests astride both east-west and north-south routes of communication, it probably played an important role in the passage of peoples, goods and ideas throughout the mid-Atlantic region. Almost certainly, more extensive collection at the site would produce a wider range of chronologically diagnostic points and give a truer reflection of the date of WR-103. At present, the only diagnostic recovered from WR-103 is a late Middle Archaic Halifax point.

Intrusions and Data Limitations:

The construction of Skyline Drive in the 1930's destroyed the western edge of WR-103 and caused alteration of the local, intermittent springs and their floral communities. The site is also cut by Compton Gap Fire Road (unpaved)--a fact that enabled discovery of the site. Despite these intrusions, much of WR-103 remains intact and should be a valuable site if properly sampled.