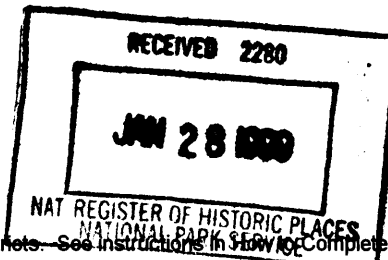
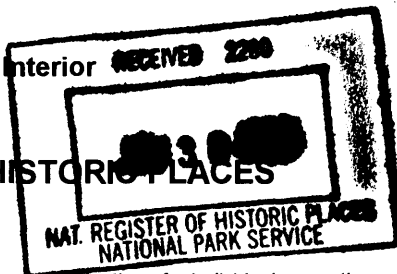


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



2576
Resub

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 Service. Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Fontainebleau State Park

other names/site number Tchefuncte State Park

2. Location

street & number 67825 U.S. Highway 190 NA not for publication

city or town Mandeville X vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county St Tammany code 103 zip code 70448

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jonathan Fricker

January 21, 1999

Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Date
Deputy SHPO, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the
National Register
- removed from the National
Register
- other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

M. J. M. Way

8/10/99

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
public-local
X public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
X district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values: Contributing (8, 2, 1, 11), Noncontributing (15, 0, 0, 15).

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Recreation & Culture

Sub. Outdoor Recreation

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Recreation & Culture

Sub. Outdoor Recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: French Colonial Revival
No Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete, brick
walls Brick, wood
roof Asphalt
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" next to 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.
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" next to all that apply.)

NA

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1938-1948

Significant Dates

1938 (park founded)

1943 (park opened)

1947-48 (first group camp opened)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

various architects/designers (buildings)

William W. Wells, landscape architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

NA

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

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
X Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository: Office of State Parks

Fontainebleau State Park

Name of property

St. Tammany Parish, LA

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 2,000 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 784620 3361420

3 15 786100 3357440

2 15 788060 3359820

4 15 782600 3360300

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date September 1998

street & number P.O. Box 44247 telephone (225) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS** map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Louisiana Office of State Parks

street & number P. O. Box 44226 telephone (225) 342-8110

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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SUMMARY

Fontainebleau State Park is located just east of Mandeville on Lake Pontchartrain, a huge brackish body of water extending some thirty miles from St. Tammany Parish on the north to New Orleans on the south. Today's park encompasses land on both sides of Highway 190, but only that portion south of the highway was developed for recreational use during the historic period. The roughly 2,000 acre parcel of land being nominated is bounded by the lake on the south, U. S. Highway 190 on the north, Cane Bayou on the east (the park boundary) and a park property line on the west. Beyond this property line are two contiguous, narrow and quite deep privately held in-holdings. Then the park property picks back up again with a roughly seventy acre parcel which was never developed for recreational use during the historic period. The only historic building in this area, the former park office building, is being nominated individually. The foregoing method of handling Fontainebleau was devised in consultation with the National Park Service.

The main portion of Fontainebleau was developed from 1938 to 1942 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Although group camps were intended from the very beginning, the first did not materialize until 1947-48. It is located on the eastern edge of the park at some distance from the main section. The park takes its name from a sugar plantation once located there, and whose sugar mill ruins are visible today. Work accomplished by the CCC included building access roads and other infrastructure and the construction of various buildings. Fortunately, despite the loss of one major building and isolated new construction, Fontainebleau would be easily recognizable to the CCC boys who built the bulk of it and patrons who enjoyed its facilities during the historic period.

METHODOLOGY

This nomination began with a request from the Office of State Parks that Fontainebleau be evaluated for Register status. The Division of Historic Preservation, a sister agency in the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, completed the necessary fieldwork and research and prepared the nomination materials. The following narrative constitutes the first comprehensive analysis of the park, at least for the historic period, and should be of considerable value to State Parks in future management decisions.

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Various primary sources are available for tracing the development of Fontainebleau. Original drawings are on file in the Office of State Parks. And while of inestimable value, they have to be used with great caution because various features and buildings were proposed and never realized. Hence the drawings had to be checked against other primary sources such as biennial reports of the State Parks Commission which detailed progress at Fontainebleau and provided photos of work completed and work in progress. Also of value were articles (with photos) in the *Louisiana Conservation Review* (a publication of the Department of Conservation).

INTRODUCTION

Fontainebleau State Park dates from the beginnings of the state parks movement in Louisiana. While the State Parks Commission (in the Department of Conservation) was created by legislative act in 1934, it did not receive any funding until 1936. Some \$20,000 of this initial appropriation was earmarked for the purchase of a state park -- money which soon was used to purchase what would become Fontainebleau State Park. Department of Conservation officials had reached an agreement with the Great Southern Lumber Company in September 1937 to purchase a 5800 acre tract on Lake Pontchartrain just east of Mandeville. Some of the land was to be set aside for a state park and the remainder was earmarked for other programs within the Department of Conservation such as reforestation, a wildlife preserve, etc. The purchase documents were signed on January 31, 1938; however, the State Parks Commission had begun planning the new park already. In November 1937, at the recommendation of the National Park Service, the commission hired landscape architect William W. Wells to prepare a preliminary master plan. The main part of the park one sees today reflects Wells' vision minus components of the original plan that were never realized.

Fontainebleau, as described in the 1936-37 biennial report, was a place possessing "scenic beauty," "historical interest," and the "natural recreational features" of Lake Pontchartrain. Building upon these assets, Wells created a park where people came to swim, picnic and generally enjoy the outdoors. Although group dorms and other lodging facilities were planned from the beginning, buildings for overnight stays did not materialize until 1947-48, and then on a much reduced scale.

The development of Fontainebleau was carried out by the State Parks Commission in close consultation with the National Park Service. (Most drawings and

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specifications carry both names.) The labor was provided by Civilian Conservation Corps Camp SP 5, established on the western edge of the park in May 1938 with a capacity of 215 young men, four officers and four foremen. The large camp, which included four 20 x 30 foot barracks and various other buildings (per extant plans), was purpose-built and presumably removed once the CCC unit left. The only surviving historic building in the area is the former park office building -- now a group dormitory. As noted previously, this small section of Fontainebleau is separated from the main park by two contiguous in-holdings and is not being included in this submission. The former park office building is being nominated individually.

CCC boys built Fontainebleau's infrastructure and buildings from 1938 to 1942. The park, initially known as Tchefuncte State Park, received its official name, Fontainebleau, by act of the legislature in 1942. It formally opened on July 4, 1943.

SETTING/OVERALL LAYOUT

Most of Fontainebleau's flat terrain is heavily forested and undeveloped. Portions in the undeveloped area close to the lake are marshlands.

To facilitate a general understanding of Fontainebleau, the developed areas can be divided into two "clusters":

(1) the heart of the park, including the entrance, main road, sugar mill ruins and the intensive use area on and near Lake Pontchartrain

(2) a group camp developed in 1947-48 on the park's eastern perimeter

The main park road extends about one-and-a-half miles from Highway 190 to the intensive use area on and near Lake Pontchartrain. Near the park entrance the road crosses a paved bike path which follows a former rail line. Then it progresses in a gentle curve to the Fontainebleau sugar mill ruins where it executes a sharp curve to provide a vista down the plantation's oak allee toward the lake. After the curve it extends in a straight line the short distance to the intensive use area, where it ends, on axis with a bathhouse, in an oval driveway. Drawings reveal that the main road took its cue from an existing road bed (perhaps a plantation road); however, it did not follow the old road in all respects. For example, near the sugar mill ruins Wells deviated

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deliberately from the old road to provide the previously mentioned vista, including a pull-off area to each side.

A secondary road intersects with the main park road just beyond the sugar mill ruins (see map -- between the ruins and the intensive use area). It sweeps back toward the lake to what was suppose to have been a key component of the park -- a large lagoon, lodge and group camp area. The road was built, but the development at its end was never realized. Extending from this road (almost a continuation of it) is a long road providing access through the previously mentioned in-holdings and terminating where the former park office building is located (and where the CCC camp was built). Surviving primary documents do not reveal when this section of the road was built. Drawings dated October 1939 and October 1941 show it as proposed; one assumes it was built during the historic period.

For the most part, park roads are framed with trees. The predominant tree at Fontainebleau is the short leaf pine. There are also numerous large moss-draped live oaks in the day use area, particularly where the sugar mill and plantation buildings were once located. In places the live oaks form a canopy over the main park road.

When the park was purchased, some of the land near the highway recently had been cut over. A 1939 source noted that it was rapidly coming back in second growth pine, oak and sweet gum. Apparently very little was added to the park in the way of vegetation other than foundation plantings at new construction. As was noted at the time, the "proposed landscape effects will be gained primarily by selective cutting than by additional planting."

Fontainebleau today retains its lush landscape in most respects. Severe tree damage was caused by a hurricane in the mid-1940s, and more recently, some of the forest (along the main road near the entrance) has been denuded by a southern pine beetle infestation.

THE PARK'S ARCHITECTURE

While each of Fontainebleau's buildings will be described individually, an overall statement is appropriate at this point. Writing in the State Parks Commission's 1938-39 biennial report, William Wells observed: "All of the buildings are being kept in the early Louisiana style of architecture." Perhaps a more precise statement would be that most

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of the 1938-42 buildings are generally traditional and loosely evocative of Louisiana's early architectural heritage. On the whole, it is the use of prominent hipped roofs (sometimes with a flair at the end) which give Fontainebleau's buildings a Louisiana flavor. (Broad, umbrella-like hipped roofs were a signature of the state's early architecture.) Two of the park's buildings were specific references to the state's French colonial past -- a *pigeonnier* at the main entrance (extant) and, sadly lost to arson, a *faux* double gallery French Creole plantation house which served as a restaurant. Other features loosely evocative of the state's past architecture are columnar galleries on two buildings and one gable end building with a central chimney and a front "kick" to the roofline (in the manner of a Creole cottage in New Orleans).

PARK ENTRANCE AND RANGER'S DWELLING (1938-39)

Fontainebleau's main entrance is located immediately on U. S. Highway 190 just east of the town of Mandeville. A stand of large pines lines the highway as you approach the park. The entrance, designed by Theodore L. Perrier of New Orleans, is defined by a brick pier on each side of the park's main road. From each pier a low brick wall extends to the side in a straight line and then turns toward Highway 190 in a curve. Asymmetry is provided by an octagonal brick *pigeonnier* at the end of the brick wall on the eastern side. Also, the brick wall on the eastern side extends back into the park for several yards while it does not on the west side.

Just inside the entrance is a small cottage (also designed by Perrier) which is identified on 1938 drawings as a ranger's dwelling. Today it is the park office. The one story building has a gable end roof punctuated by a central chimney. A secondary pitch provides a front porch (always at grade level with the columns resting on concrete bases according to the original drawings). On the south side is a secondary gabled section and an arcade leading to a small garage. The cottage is sheathed in brick veneer except for the gables which are covered in clapboards. Windows are multi-paned and a French door provides access. Regrettably, the cottage has lost its original traditional character on the interior.

PLANTATION FEATURES

In 1829, the legendary French Creole Bernard de Marigny de Mandeville acquired a large tract of land on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain which he named Fontainebleau plantation after the magnificent sixteenth century estate of French king

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Francis I. This was a country estate for de Marigny, who maintained his principal domicile in New Orleans. Originally the plantation had a main house, a large sugar mill, slave houses and other dependencies. Today all that remains (at least above ground) are the extensive ruins of the sugar mill along the park's main road (including two brick chimneys towering about thirty or forty feet) and the plantation's oak allee.

Written sources and site plans from the 1938-42 period show that more foundations and ruins were visible in the park's early years. For example, in the 1936-37 biennial report of the State Parks Commission, it was observed that "the ruins of the Marigny family's country home and other buildings may still be seen on the site." The previously mentioned site plans show a row of double chimney foundations along each side of the oak allee -- i.e., the quarters area. The main section of the sugar mill is estimated as measuring 50 by 135 feet, and numerous other foundations are shown. Another drawing shows the main house foundation in front of the allee (between the allee and the lake).

A report issued by Roy Edgar Appleman, Acting Regional Historian, National Park Service, in 1939 contains particularly valuable information about the ruins existing at that time. Interestingly, Appleman did not think the park's master plan paid enough attention to the "great number of historical ruins of the area." He specifically noted that they had not been mapped, which is perhaps the impetus for the drawings that were done. Paying particular attention to the "old plantation house," Appleman wrote that its foundations were still visible above ground (indicating a house roughly 40 by 70 feet) as were the lower portions of two inside chimneys. Wells, for his part, did not seem to be as preoccupied with the ruins. He wrote: "These [the ruins] will be preserved for those interested in the early history of Louisiana. They are not spectacular, but they do give a decided legend and added interest to the area."

INTENSIVE USE/DAY USE AREA

As mentioned previously, the main park road ends with an oval-shaped driveway on axis with the bathhouse (rear elevation). The oval forms a green punctuated by a few trees. The bathhouse is the center of a three-part composition. On one side is a long low colonnade with a pavilion on each end. On the other side was a long low colonnade culminating in a large two-story *faux* French Creole plantation house. Today about half of this building survives; the plantation house was destroyed by arson c.1970. Replacing it is a low-key pavilion.

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Immediately next to the oval green is Fontainebleau's historic parking area and a large picnic area with a styled restroom building dating from 1940. Also in the general picnic area is a moderate size picnic shelter added in 1946.

Bathhouse (1939)

Positioned facing "a fine sand beach" (per an early assessment), the large one story brick veneer bathhouse features a system of hipped roofs crowned by a slender cupola. The central section of the facade features a Doric gallery which projects forward under its own hipped roof at mid-point. A CCC-built brick walk leads to the lake, which is now only a few yards away. The rear of the bathhouse has a projecting arcaded porch with a decorative brickwork band above the arches. The bathhouse interior retains much of its original character, with changing and bathing facilities for each sex on either side of a central area. Walls and ceilings are sheathed in wooden boards, and changing stalls line each side of the main rooms. Originally the area behind the bathhouse was grassy; today there is a pool there.

The history of the beach development in front of the bathhouse is not documented completely in available primary sources. There was a natural beach there already, but it is clear that this was expanded. For example, the biennial report for 1942-43 has a picture with the caption "newly completed beach," although the same report calls attention to the need for funding to purchase sand. Undated drawings at State Parks show the extent the beach had been encroached upon by Lake Pontchartrain. In summation, the strip of beach at Fontainebleau today is not as extensive as what was there at one time.

Picnic Colonnade/Pavilion (1940)

On one side of the bathhouse is a long low colonnade with a hipped roof open pavilion at one end and a large open octagonal pavilion with a faceted roof at the lake end. The building is formed of brick piers with an openwork brick balustrade. A distinctive feature of Fontainebleau, the decorative brickwork forms cruciform cutouts. The colonnade with its pavilions is completely unchanged, including exposed truss ceilings and a brick fireplace in the hipped roof pavilion.

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United States Department of the Interior
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CONTINUATION SHEETSection 7 Page 8Flanking Colonnade (non-contributing)

As noted previously, this colonnade originally ended (on the land side) in a handsome two-story *faux* French Creole plantation house. While about half of the original construction survives (lake side), due to this serious loss, the building is being counted as non-contributing for the purposes of this nomination. The hipped roof pavilion on the lake side with its signature openwork balustrade and the first seven bays of the colonnade survive. The remaining colonnade bays are reconstructed, and the present hipped roof pavilion is where the plantation house-cum-restaurant stood.

Picnic Area Restroom (1940)

This hipped-roof brick veneer building with a "kick" at the eaves is very Louisiana in overall feeling. Actually very little space is for bathrooms, with most of the building being given over to a columnar porch across the front and down most of each side. The Doric columns rests on concrete bases with a concrete floor at grade level.

Picnic Shelter (1946)

While this moderate size building has received some alterations, it still retains most of its character-defining appearance and hence is being considered a contributing element. The main hipped roof rectangular part of the shelter terminates at one end in a faceted section containing a fireplace with a chimney. There is also a forward-projecting section with its own hip roof. All roofs have a flare, or "kick," at the eaves. Originally, the shelter had a largely open character, with the exception of sections which were "enclosed" by decorative openwork brick of the type found elsewhere at the park. Today, the previously open sections between piers have been enclosed with wood and screening, and the openwork brick walls on the faceted end section have been bricked in.

Unrealized Plans in the Day Use Area

Unrealized elements of Wells' grand design for the day use area are being mentioned to present a complete record of the park -- most notably, to avoid confusion should a researcher view only the proposed plans. A key component of Wells' master plan was a large irregularly shaped lagoon to be located beyond the parking lot and picnic area (where the previously mentioned road ends). The lagoon would have been

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large enough for boating. A lodge was to be located there as well as a group camp with various buildings. It is not known why these plans were never realized. Perhaps it was a combination of funding, the demise of the CCC and the onset of WWII. Even as late as the 1950s, Wells, who is then director of the State Parks Commission, has the work on his "wish list." Presently there is a very small fairly regularly shaped lagoon immediately adjacent to the bathhouse area. When it was created is not known.

GROUP CAMP

A small group camp on the eastern perimeter is the last of the park's components to be added during the historic period (using the Register's fifty year cutoff). Built in 1947-48 in a secluded spot near Cane Bayou at some distance from the park's day use area, this development marked the beginning of group camp facilities at Fontainebleau, the lack thereof having been a considerable weakness. As noted previously, the master plan provided for various group camp facilities, although in another location.

Work consisted of building a road to the site, building a dam and creating "a naturalistic swimming lake," and the construction of three buildings -- all of which survive. The road leading to the group camp is about one mile from the main park entrance. It extends in a curving fashion about half a mile from Highway 190 to the camp site, ending at the dam. The "naturalistic lake" is shaped like one of New York's "finger lakes." Located between it and nearby Cane Bayou is the group camp, which enjoys a peaceful setting among large pine trees. The surrounding area is heavily forested.

The three wood frame one-story buildings are grouped around an open area, which is now crisscrossed with sidewalks and has a paved barbecue area. The two long dorm buildings are sheathed in board and batten and originally had a deep inset screened porch at the center. (The porches are in the process of being enclosed in board and batten.) The main roof is gabled, with a hipped roof section at each end. The dorms retain their original floorplans and spartan interiors. A large dorm room, accessed from the porch, is on each side. Off the rear of each dorm room is a tiny counselor's room and a bathroom. The walls are sheathed in boards with a slight bevel, the ceilings are sheathed in flushboards, and the flooring is wooden. Interior modifications have been confined to the conversion of the counselors' rooms in one

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building to bathrooms and general bathroom modernization. On the exterior, in addition to the porch enclosures, handicapped access ramps have been added to both dorms.

Extant drawings show that the group camp's kitchen/dining room building is a 1948 remodeling and expansion of a small building on site. Essentially the roofline of an existing gable end building was raised, and a long lower gable end wing was added. The former contains the kitchen and two bedrooms, the latter the dining room. It appears that the existing building was completely renovated on the exterior, with the bungalow-style screened porch dating from that time.

The kitchen/dining room building is very well preserved on the interior, including even its bathroom. The dining space is one long room with numerous windows down each side which open upward to the ceiling where hooks hold them in place. The kitchen section with its two small bedrooms and a bathroom definitely has the feel of a rustic park. There is a massive brick fireplace in the kitchen and distinctive wooden window and door frames throughout. The wide, grooved frames curve at the corners.

NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

There are several buildings scattered here and there about the park's 2,000 acres which are non-contributing (either built within the last fifty years or altered older buildings, with almost all being in the former category). Many are quite small.

Non-contributing buildings include the following

- (1) one of the colonnades flanking the bathhouse (due to loss of integrity)
- (2) a 1950s board and batten one-story residence along the road to the group camp
- (3) four one story bathroom stations, three in the non-historic camping area and one in the historic group camp
- (4) four concrete tee-pee shaped buildings. These peculiar buildings were constructed by the Boy Scouts for group camp use when this organization owned the parcel of land in question. (This in-holding was near the other two in-holdings. It is now owned by State Parks.) Although completely

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inappropriate, the tee-pees are not very noticeable because of their out-of-the-way location, and very importantly, because they are set back from the road in a clearing surrounded by woods. As can be seen from the enclosed view taken from the road, because of the trees, the tee-pees are glimpsed only briefly as one drives along.

- (5) a long low one-story building which is either less than fifty years old or an altered older building and an asbestos sided one story residence – both within the former Boy Scouts property.
- (6) A small entrance station has been added on the main park road, about one-fourth of a mile from Highway 190.
- (7) In the maintenance area are two non-contributing buildings, both one story. One was built recently. The other is a historic maintenance building which has been added to over the years.

OTHER NON-HISTORIC ELEMENTS

The following are the major additions to the landscape other than buildings:

- (1) A pool has been added behind the bathhouse, as noted.
- (2) A campground has been added (see map). While this meant creating a pattern of roads to access camp sites and the construction of latrines (3), the effect is otherwise minimal by the very nature of camping (i.e., tents and recreational vehicles that come and go).
- (3) Of course, it is impossible to delineate changes to the vegetation over the years. As noted previously, forested areas were damaged in a mid-1940s hurricane and more recently from a southern pine beetle infestation.
- (4) The beach has eroded over the years as the lake has encroached upon it.

ASSESSMENT OF INTEGRITY

All in all, given the fact that the park has been in continuous use for sixty years, it is surprising that it retains the bulk of its historic appearance. The old roads are still

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there and the overall configuration of the day use area is the same, including the grassy oval, the parking lot in the same location, the picnic area with its distinctive bathroom, etc. And while the loss of the *faux* French Creole plantation house is indeed a major one, it is the only missing building. It is also of particular importance to note that new construction at Fontainebleau has been very limited, all things considered.

Finally, one cannot assess the integrity of Fontainebleau by numbers alone. For example, while there are various non-contributing buildings, it should be emphasized that a 2,000 acre park can absorb a few new buildings fairly easily, especially when most of them are quite small. And, fortunately, new construction has not impacted the park's principal public areas -- i.e., the entrance, along the main road or in the intensive use area (with the exception of the replacement for the French Creole plantation house, which continues the design of the remainder of the colonnade). Also, there is much more to Fontainebleau than buildings -- there is the entire site with its roads and culverts built by the CCC, the lake and dam created in 1947-48, and the park's natural setting of pines, live oaks, marshlands and Lake Pontchartrain. In short, even with losses and some new construction, there is no question that CCC alumni and people who used the park in the historic period would recognize it today.

CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS

While the focus of this nomination is that portion of the park developed by the CCC, the Division of Historic Preservation believes that any fifty year old building (1948 or earlier) which retains sufficient integrity should be considered a contributing element. To recap, the following historic features postdate the 1938-42 CCC work: a 1946 picnic pavilion in the intensive use area and the 1947-48 group camp on the eastern edge (road, dam, lake and three buildings). It should be remembered that Fontainebleau was always a work in progress. When the park officially opened in 1943, various projects were still being completed and much more was proposed. The picnic shelter, added in 1946, mirrors the architecture of the park's CCC-built structures (signature hip roof and openwork brick design). As noted previously, a group camp was a key component of the original plans. It just happened to have been built a little later on a reduced scale in a different location. Its rustic wood frame appearance is similar to that of the original park office.

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As explained in Part 8, the post-CCC buildings are also important because Fontainebleau continued to be a major regional park in the state parks systems up to and past the current 50 year cutoff (1949), and they are a part of its history in this period. The construction of the group camp filled a particularly critical need (see Part 8).

INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL PHOTOS

Donna Fricker
Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office
July 1998

SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTING/NON-CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS

Contributing sites: the park itself (including roads, lake, etc.)
sugar mill site

Contributing structures: entranceway (with pigeonier)

Contributing buildings:

ranger's dwelling (now park office)
bathhouse
picnic colonnade adjacent to bathhouse
picnic area latrine
picnic pavilion (in general picnic area)
3 buildings at group camp

Non-contributing buildings: see above

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Fontainebleau State Park is of statewide significance in recreational history because it represents the beginnings of the state park movement in Louisiana. And, as a major regional park with the heaviest use in the system, Fontainebleau continued its important recreational role up to and past the present Register fifty year cutoff (1949). Of particular importance in the late 1940s was the construction of the park's first overnight facilities -- the group camp on the eastern edge. Fontainebleau also is significant in the area of politics/government because it represents the critical role of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the establishment of Louisiana state parks. Finally, there is the overall legacy of the CCC in Louisiana to consider. Operating from an average of 30 camps across the state, the CCC engaged in a variety of projects such as reforestation, park development, levee work, soil erosion control, etc. However, besides forests, very few tangible resources survive to represent this massive federal relief program in Louisiana.

Role of CCC in Creating State Parks System

The most popular, least criticized New Deal agency, the Civilian Conservation Corps existed from 1933 to its phaseout 1942-43. A favorite of FDR's and one that was largely his personal creation, its purpose was to provide employment to young men in conservation related work. "CCC boys" enrolled for six month periods, for a maximum of two years. The pay was \$30 per month, \$22 of which had to be sent home. Under the supervision of Army officers, CCC boys operated out of camps typically consisting of about twelve wooden buildings. During the decade of its existence, some three million young men were employed across the nation in 4500 camps. They performed a multitude of tasks under the general mission "to conserve and develop natural resources." The largest number of camps were assigned to national and state parks, with Fontainebleau being one of 800 new parks developed nationwide by the CCC.

Throughout the country, the CCC played a critical role in state parks development. As one historian of the subject observed: "State parks are products of the Great Depression more than any other historical period, for no other type of recreation has been intensely developed in so condensed a time frame." The need was particularly acute in the South, where there were no state parks at the beginning of the Depression. However, by 1939 the CCC had developed more than 300 parks in the region and had increased state parks acreage by more than 200%.

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In the case of Louisiana, the role of the CCC in creating the state parks system cannot be overestimated. It is generally held that state parks in Louisiana would not have developed until after World War II had it not been for this considerable infusion of federally funded labor. As mentioned in Part 7 of this nomination, the Louisiana State Parks Commission did not exist until 1934 and received no funding until 1936. But within the space of the next six years, thanks to CCC labor, Louisiana boasted three major recreational parks and one small park centered upon a historic house. The three major parks were Fontainebleau in southern Louisiana, Chemin a Haute in the northern part of the state, and Chicot in the central part. The other park developed by the CCC, Longfellow-Evangeline near St. Martinville, is actually the state's first. Its historic house and 157 acres had been donated to the state in 1930, before there was even a State Parks Commission. The CCC worked there for about a year beginning in late 1933 and then returned in 1936. Chemin a Haute was built by the CCC from early 1936 to March 1938, when the camp was transferred to Fontainebleau. The land for Chicot was acquired in 1938 and two CCC camps were located there.

By the early 1940s, all four parks were open for business. A state that began the 1930s with only one small donated property and no organizational framework to develop it, let alone acquire others, ended the decade with four state parks encompassing over ten thousand acres -- an increase in park acreage of over 3,000 percent as compared to a 200% increase nationwide.

And this was no small accomplishment considering that the idea of state-funded recreational development was a relatively new one in Louisiana -- one that was still being justified in the 1940s in State Parks Commission documents. The chairman wrote in 1940:

Those who are not familiar with the purpose and character of state parks may ask themselves why the state should assume the obligation of developing and maintaining state-owned recreational areas Our answer would be, that just as the Federal Government has acquired and developed lands classes as wonders of Nature, . . . so in each state there are certain areas which should be preserved for the enjoyment of all the people of a state The function of a state park may be considered as supplying to the average working man the opportunity of enjoying at reasonable cost the privileges which ordinarily only the

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wealthy, who can afford a private lodge, enjoy in the restful and invigorating atmosphere of Nature's woodlands." Continuing this theme in his 1942 report, the chairman termed the new state park system "the most democratic of all State institutions.

The Overall Role of the CCC in Louisiana

CCC boys, of course, did much more for the state than build parks. The first young men were enrolled in New Orleans in April 1933 and by the end of the decade the number of camps had averaged between 30 and 39. Fifty-six million dollars of federal relief funds were pumped into the state through the CCC, and a total of 51,820 people were employed. Camps were located at Kisatchie National Forest (a large forest in the central part of the state), on state and private forest property, and at state parks. In addition, there during the course of the decade there were four "levee road" camps and five "drainage" camps. Of prime importance in Louisiana was the work of the CCC in reforestation. In fact, during this period, the state was first in the South and second in the nation in reforestation efforts.

Today the tangible resources to represent this significant work relief effort and its benefits to the state (other than acres and acres of trees) are the above mentioned four state parks, two lodge buildings built on state forests, and a few buildings in Vernon Parish within the confines of what is now Fort Polk. All of the purpose-built buildings from the campsites are believed to be gone (about 12 buildings each at 30 camps). Of the four state parks, Longfellow-Evangeline's centerpiece was always a historic house. Today, there are two or three small buildings (picnic shelters/latrines) remaining there from the CCC period. Fontainebleau, Chemin a Haute, and Chicot all retain a number of buildings, their overall layout and other features from the CCC period. Collectively, these parks are the most graphic reminders of the CCC in Louisiana in addition to representing the beginnings of the state park movement in Louisiana and the critical role of the Civilian Conservation Corps in its development.

Fontainebleau's Role in Recreation (1943-1949)

During the historic period (from 1943 when the park opened to the Register fifty year cutoff of 1949) Fontainebleau was one of three major regional state parks in operation in Louisiana (the others being Chicot and Chemin a Haute). Regional state

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parks, the cornerstone of the system, were large recreational parks intended to serve a particular region of the state. They were intentionally placed near highly concentrated population centers. They are in contrast to small, limited audience parks of either a recreational or historical nature. Of the three major regional state parks, Fontainebleau was the second largest in size, and more importantly, with its proximity to New Orleans, it was the most heavily used.

It is important to remember that the state parks system was still in its early growth period in the 1940s, only having begun when funding was secured in 1936. While four parks had been opened by the early '40s, they were "works in progress" – with various elements still on the drawing board. And at the same time attendance at state parks was increasing rapidly, making the needs more acute. With World War II over and gasoline rationing lifted, visitation increased fourfold in 1945 (from 1943). A September 1945 document noted a 31.4% gain over August 1944 in registration at major tourist attractions in the state, noting that "state parks once more proved drawing cards and accounted for the overall increase." Monthly attendance figures for the summer of 1945 show Fontainebleau with 30,000; the next closest in the ranking is Chicot with 10,000.

State Park Commission biennial reports for the 1940s make it clear that overnight facilities (particularly group camps) were an acute need at the top of the system's "wish list." At the close of WWII, as visitation began to escalate, there were only two parks (Chicot and Chemin a Haute) with overnight facilities. Chemin-a-Haute had 5 cabins and a small lodge. There were 9 small cabins at Chicot. The 1944-45 biennial report noted that these limited facilities were "inadequate" – that this condition "seriously limits the vacation use of our parks." The 1944-45 state park report also emphasized that special uses such as overnight lodging, concession stands, etc. were the system's only revenue producers (admittance was free), and that they were "meager" because the parks were not yet fully developed. The 1946-47 report made the development of organized camps for youth groups a priority in recognition of "the pressing need and the lack of recreational facilities for young people."

Considerable progress was made from 1946 to 1948 as group camps were constructed at Chicot, Longfellow-Evangeline and Fontainebleau. As noted previously, group camps had been an important component of Fontainebleau's master plan, but they were not realized until 1947-48 -- and then at a much reduced scale than that envisioned in the initial plan and in another location. The group camp had two cabins with a total capacity of 64 campers plus a dining hall and a purpose-built lake.

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Combined biennial reports for 1948-49 and 1950-51 note that "tremendous crowds" visited Fontainebleau and that the "most important addition" to the park in recent years was the construction of an organized group camp which was used "every day" during the summer and "very frequently" for weekend camping during the school year. Referring to all of the group camps recently completed, the report noted that "no other facilities have been so immediately successful," concluding that the "demand for this type of service is even greater than originally anticipated."

The state parks system continued to grow in the 1950s but not as dramatically as the 1936-late 1940s period. By 1943, for example, there were three large regional parks (the cornerstone of the system). By 1960, only two more had been opened (Bistineau and Sam Houston).

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE

There is no question that Fontainebleau State Park possesses tremendous potential for archaeological investigation. In addition to plantation features both above and below ground, numerous prehistoric shell middens have been recorded on the property. Future documentation and analyses of these resources should make it possible to include significance under Criterion D.

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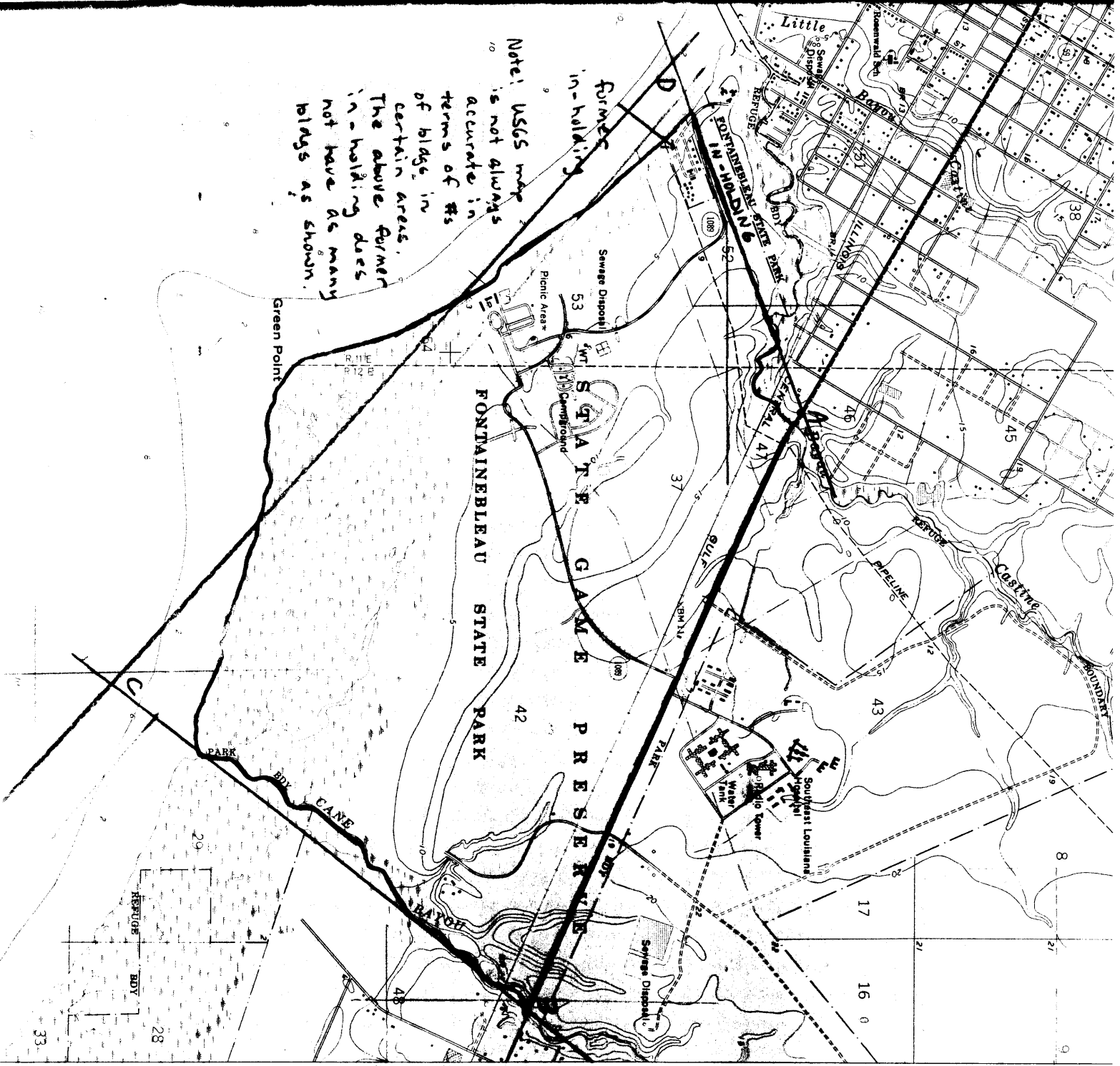
Humphreys, Hubert D. "In a Sense Experimental: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Louisiana." Masters thesis, Department of History, Louisiana State University, 1964.

Boundary Description:

The boundary is shown as a solid line on the attached USGS map. As shown, the nominated area is bounded by U.S. Highway 190 on the north, by Cane Bayou on the east, by Lake Pontchartrain on the south, and by a park property line on the west.

Boundary Justification:

As explained at the beginning of Part 7, the boundaries recognize that portion of Fontainebleau State Park that was developed for recreational use during the historic period. Cane Bayou and Lake Pontchartrain were and are the park's boundaries. While today's park also occupies land on the other side of Highway 190, this portion was not developed for recreational use during the historic period and hence is not being included. The boundary to the west follows the property line of an in-holding, again as explained in Part 7. Beyond the in-holding is a small section of park which was not put into recreational use during the historic period. Historically it contained the CCC camp and the park office. The CCC camp is long gone; a group camp was built in the 1960s on its site. The former park office retains sufficient integrity and is being nominated separately as a rare CCC built resource in Louisiana.



Note: USGS map
 is not always
 accurate in
 terms of its
 of blgds. in
 certain areas.
 The above former
 in-holding does
 not have as many
 blgds as shown.

(LACOMBE)
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Fontainebleau State Park

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- B: 15/788060/3359820

St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana

- C: 15/786100/3357440
- D: 15/782600/3360300

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