



# **Brickett Place Historic Structure Rehabilitation Project**

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

White Mountain  
National Forest

Saco Ranger District

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## **Decision Memo**

### **Saco Ranger District**



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## **Decision**

### **Project Area and Background**

The Brickett Place is a 1 ½ story Federal period brick farmhouse located along Highway 113 south of Evans Notch. The Brickett Place (c. 1830) has been part of the White Mountain National Forest since 1918 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This unique building has had many uses in its storied past including serving as a dwelling for the family of John Brickett, a Civilian Conservation Corps work center, an Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) Hut, and a Boy Scouts of America facility. The Brickett Place now serves as a Wilderness Interpretive Center operated in partnership with the Chatham Trails Association and AMC Cold River Camp.

Over time, the Brickett Place had developed structural needs. The roof was replaced in 2006, but other critical items still remain to be addressed including wall movement, mortar deterioration, and internal water damage.

### **Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the Brickett Place Rehabilitation Project is to stabilize and rehabilitate the National Register structure. The need for this project includes several factors:

- Addressing health and safety concerns associated with structural condition of the Brickett Place.
- Determining, designing, and implementing solutions to address foundation movement and other structural stresses.
- Addressing other conditions causing and accelerating decay of this historic structure.
- Maintaining integrity of historical construction techniques and design of this building.

The project area is entirely within Management Area 2.1 (MA 2.1; General Forest Area). The proposed project is compatible with the Forest-wide and MA 2.1 goals, standards and objectives identified in the 2005 Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA- 3 Forest Service, 2005) for both recreation and heritage resources including:

- The Forest Plan directs that the White Mountain National Forest should manage high use areas and facilities to meet visitor needs, while providing for long-term sustainability.
- The White Mountain National Forest will identify, evaluate, preserve, protect, stabilize, interpret, and when necessary, mitigate for loss of heritage resources at a Forest-wide and project level.

### **Proposed Action**

The proposed action includes 3 phases:

1. Completion of a structural analysis to recommend a solution to address foundation movement, other evident structural stresses, and risk analysis in coordination with the Maine Historic Preservation Office.
2. Implement the recommendations of the structural analysis including improved drainage around the Brickett Place. This phase would also include installing footings for basement posts, providing basement ventilation, repointing brick work, repairing windows and other structural and exterior repairs.
3. Phase 3 incorporates the majority of interior repairs including removing water damaged drop ceilings, patching plaster walls, and possibly improving accessibility to the house.

This phase also incorporate improvement of the driveway drainage and repairs to the Civilian Conservation Corps era garage adjacent to the Brickett Place. The project is expected to be implemented between the Fall of 2008 and the Fall of 2010.

### **Description and Reasons for Decision**

After careful consideration of public input, the recommendations of an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists, and the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, I have decided to proceed with the proposed action activities to stabilize and rehabilitate the Brickett Place.

This decision is based on my review of the project file and past experience with similar activities on the White Mountain National Forest. These activities will reduce deferred maintenance, improve the condition and long-term stability of this historic structure, and provide for its existing use as an interpretive center.

### **Alternatives Considered**

Not addressing the ongoing structural issues at the Brickett Place would allow the deterioration of this National Register structure to continue. The accumulation of further deferred maintenance needs would increase the cost of repairing the structure in the future. Additionally, without repairing critical structural components, the possibility of having to close the structure to public use would continue. The no action alternative would ignore the public safety concerns associated with the current condition of this historic structure.

### **Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision**

Decisions may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment when they are within one of the categories identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 7 CFR 1b or one of the categories identified in 36 CFR 220.6(d) and (e), and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may be substantially affected by the project.

### **Category of the Exclusion**

The project is within Category 5 of 36 CFR 220.6(d). This category of exclusion includes “Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities.” This category does not require a project file and decision memo.

### **Relationship to Extraordinary Circumstances**

#### **Threatened and Endangered Species or Their Critical Habitat**

To date, no federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species have been observed or are known to be present. A Biological Evaluation (BE) was completed in 1999 and updated in 2008. The BE and updated review indicate the project’s effect on any endangered, threatened, proposed, or sensitive species to be non-existent.

### **Floodplains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds**

This project is not within a close proximity to floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds. Therefore, the project effects to floodplains, wetlands, or any municipal water supply are expected to be non-existent.

### **Congressionally Designated Areas**

The project area is not located with a Congressionally designated area, but is within .3 miles of the Caribou Speckled Mountain Wilderness. This project's effects on this Wilderness because of the small scale of the project and distance from Wilderness are expected to be minor or non-existent.

### **Inventoried Roadless Areas**

The project area is not within any inventoried roadless areas. The closest inventoried roadless area is the Caribou 1 inventoried roadless area, which is located approximately .2 miles from the project area. Given the small scale of the project and distance from the nearest IRA, the effects are expected to be minor or non-existent.

### **Research Natural Areas**

The proposed project area is not located within or adjacent to a Research Natural Area (RNA) or a candidate RNA (CRNA). Therefore, the effects on any RNA or CRNA are expected to be non-existent.

### **American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites & Archaeological Sites, or Historic Properties or Areas.**

The Brickett Place is an historic property. This project is expected to have positive effects on the historic resource by providing needed maintenance and stabilization that will protect this National Register site. During ground disturbing activities, an archaeologist will be present and all activities will be approved by the Maine Historic Preservation Office prior to their commencement.

### **Public Involvement**

Public involvement for the project included a scoping notice issued on July 28, 2008. Direct mailings were sent on July 28, 2008 to approximately 10 interested parties and posted on the White Mountain National Forest website. Consultation included the Town of Chatham Selectmen. No comment letters were received for this project, however verbal comments received were all supportive of the project as proposed.

### **Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations**

My decision will comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

### **Forest Plan Consistency**

This decision is consistent with all applicable management direction contained in the Forest Plan (USDA-Forest Service, 2005). The Forest Plan has been reviewed in consideration of this project. This decision is responsive to guiding direction contained in the Plan, as summarized in purpose and need section of this document.

## Appeals

This decision is not subject to administrative appeal under Forest Service Appeal Regulations found in 36 CFR 215.

## Implementation Date

The structural stabilization and rehabilitation of the Brickett Place may be implemented immediately.

## Contact Person

Further information about this decision can be obtained from Holly Jewkes, Assistant Ranger, Saco Ranger District, (33 Kancamagus Hwy, White Mountain National Forest, Conway, NH 03818) Phone: 603 447-5448 X127, Fax: 603 447-8405 or [hjewkes@fs.fed.us](mailto:hjewkes@fs.fed.us).

## Signature and Date

I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment as it is within one of the categories identified in 36 CFR 220.6 (d) and (e), and the effects to extraordinary circumstance resources related to the decision are expected to be minor or non-existent. My conclusion is based on information presented in this document and the entirety of the Planning Record.

/s/ Terry Miller  
TERRY MILLER  
District Ranger

08/26/2008  
DATE

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