



Jackson Lake Lodge

RESOURCE BRIEF

**Importance**

In 2003, before it was 50 years old, Jackson Lake Lodge was designated a National Historic Landmark for its architecture and its association with historic events. Yellowstone Superintendent Horace Albright escorted John D. Rockefeller, Jr. up what is now “Lunch Tree Hill” in 1926. Inspired by the view, Rockefeller purchased land he later donated to expand Grand Teton National Park. Rockefeller funded construction of Jackson Lake Lodge on land that included Lunch Tree Hill to serve the explosion of middle class park vacationers. Gilbert Stanley Underwood, noted for his log buildings in other parks, designed the lodge in the modern International Style, making a clear break with traditional rustic park architecture. Completed in 1955, thousands of tourists and four presidents (Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Clinton) have visited in the ensuing decades. In 1989, on the terrace in front of the lodge, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker concluded U.S.-Soviet talks by signing a statement of peace and friendship at a lodgepole pine table made in the lodge carpenter shop. The “Peace Table” now sits on the second floor landing.

**Status and Trend**

As indicated by inspections and visitor surveys, the décor is dated and shows significant wear, especially lights, beds and bathrooms. Refurbishment of the furnishings

and fixtures began in late 2008, using franchise fees paid by the Grand Teton Lodge Company, the concessioner operating the facility. The design crew will replace non-historic furnishings with fixtures replicating the original ones while improving efficiency and comfort in a subdued western style. Workers will also refurbish historic furniture by reupholstering chairs, refinishing dressers and tables, and adding rustic hardware. Other renovations include carpeting made of recycled materials, eco-friendly paint, lamps with compact fluorescent bulbs, and water-efficient bathroom fixtures.

A 2007 cultural landscape inventory documented important features such as fences, benches, trails and views. To eliminate wildlife barriers and enhance views from area trails, company volunteers and staff began removing unneeded, non-historic fences in 2009. In 2010, the park will install new interpretive wayside exhibits at this and other historic sites.

**Discussion**

The complex’s three-story buildings hug the edge of the bluff above Willow Flats, appearing to crouch low and blend with the surroundings, unlike rustic designs that often loomed large on the landscape. The two-story glass window facing west from the upper lobby overlooks Jackson Lake and the Teton Range, focusing the building’s interior on park resources rather than the building itself, an evolution in architectural intent in keeping with the conservation awareness espoused by Rockefeller and Albright.



Jackson Lake Lodge room, 1955.



Jackson Lake Lodge Today.

