

Shenandoah National Park Madison County, Virginia

**A Promise Made
A Promise to Keep**



Shenandoah National Park, Virginia



Why Now

- A Promise made by The President of the United States 84 years ago
- Madison: 33,000 acres in the Park without an entrance
 - The only county without an entrance
- Historical eminent domain issues
- The personal and collective sacrifice of Madison County citizens

Why Now

- To honor the mountain people of Madison, their lost way of life
- The first presidential retreat. A national historic landmark
- A unique opportunity to experience the Park as it was when it all began
- A road traveled during the Civil War
- A road traveled when Virginia was just a colony



Old Rag Mountain Peak

How it Began

In 1925, the Shenandoah National Park Association (SNPA) was established to lobby for park legislation and raise money to purchase the land through the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Authorizing legislation was passed in the spring of 1926. Virginia then engaged in the long legal process to condemn and purchase the land, concluding with the establishment of Shenandoah National Park on December 26, 1935.

Governor Harry F. Byrd

- ◉ His Vision:
 - A state road system- “The Byrd Act”
 - A national park for Virginia -“Shenandoah National Park”
- ◉ In 1915, while still heading the Valley Turnpike Company, at the age of 28, Byrd was elected to the Virginia Senate. That election was to begin his 50 years of service in various roles in the state and federal government
- ◉ At the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond, as a new state senator, Byrd was initially a progressive with an early interest in road improvements. He advocated a tax on gasoline as a fair method of raising revenue for road construction
- ◉ 50th Governor of Virginia, Democrat
 - February 1, 1926 – January 15, 1930
- ◉ United States Senator of Virginia
 - March 4, 1933 – November 10, 1965

President Herbert Hoover

- Elected president in 1928, being far from his home in Iowa, he wanted a retreat within 100 miles of the Capitol
- President Hoover, the 31st President of the United States, an engineer, naturalist, fisherman and philanthropist
- Mrs. Hoover, a geologist, naturalist and philanthropist



Deer Grazing in Big Meadows

The Plan

- Governor Byrd reached out to the Secretary of Interior Dr. Ray Wilbur and offered the perfect retreat for the new president.
 - Less than 100 miles from the Capitol
 - Greater than 2,500 feet elevation
 - On the Eastern slope of a mountain
 - On a trout stream, on the Rapidan River
 - On land he hoped would be the first National Park of the East Coast

President Hoover's Trip to Madison

- Hoover considers several sites but chooses Madison County, nine miles past the small town of Criglersville and up Rapidan Road
- May 1929, President Hoover began utilizing the temporary camp
- The building of President Hoover's camp focused worldwide attention on the future Park and greatly influenced its development

The Summer White House

- Virginia offers to supply land and build the camp at no cost to the President
- The President declines the offer and purchases 164 acres with his own money and begins planning for his retreat
- Hoover pays for the building material
- The Marine Corps volunteer their labor to construct camp

Madison County Board of Supervisors

- At the Board of Supervisors meeting on February 23, 1929 the Supervisors approve to spend \$7,000.00 to improve the road to Hoover's Camp
- President Hoover sends a letter to Carson thanking the Board of Supervisors and the people of Madison County for their contribution to improve the road that would one day be one of the main entrances to the future Shenandoah National Park
- Mr. Carson replies reaffirming this commitment

Rapidan Road 1929



Rapidan Road 1929



Madison Day August 17, 1929

President Hoover thanks the Citizens of Madison

- *The President spoke at noon at the Madison County fairgrounds, during a day-long celebration held by Madison County residents to welcome the President and Mrs. Hoover as neighbors.*
- *The secretary of the local Chamber of Commerce estimated that some 10,000 people were there.*
- *The ceremony was attended by Members of Congress, Government officials, and Virginia Governor Harry F. Byrd, who arrived in an Army blimp. The program was broadcasted by radio and filmed by a newsreel crew*

Madison Day

**Governor
Byrd**



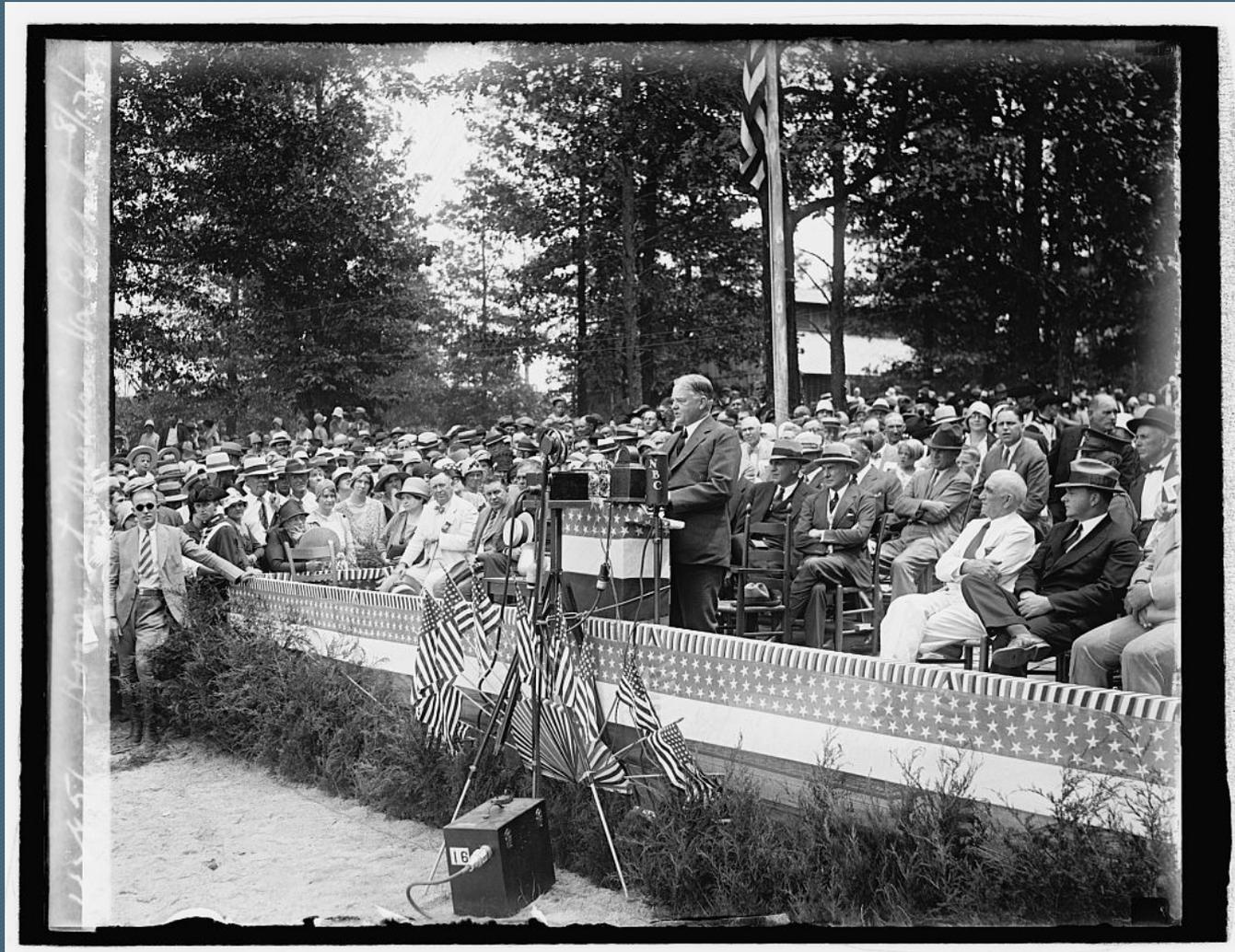
Madison Day

President Hoover



Madison Day

**President
Hoover**



Madison Day

**The
attending
spectators**



Madison Day

**President
Hoover**



Camp Hoover August 17, 1929



Camp Hoover August 17, 1929



Camp Hoover August 17, 1929



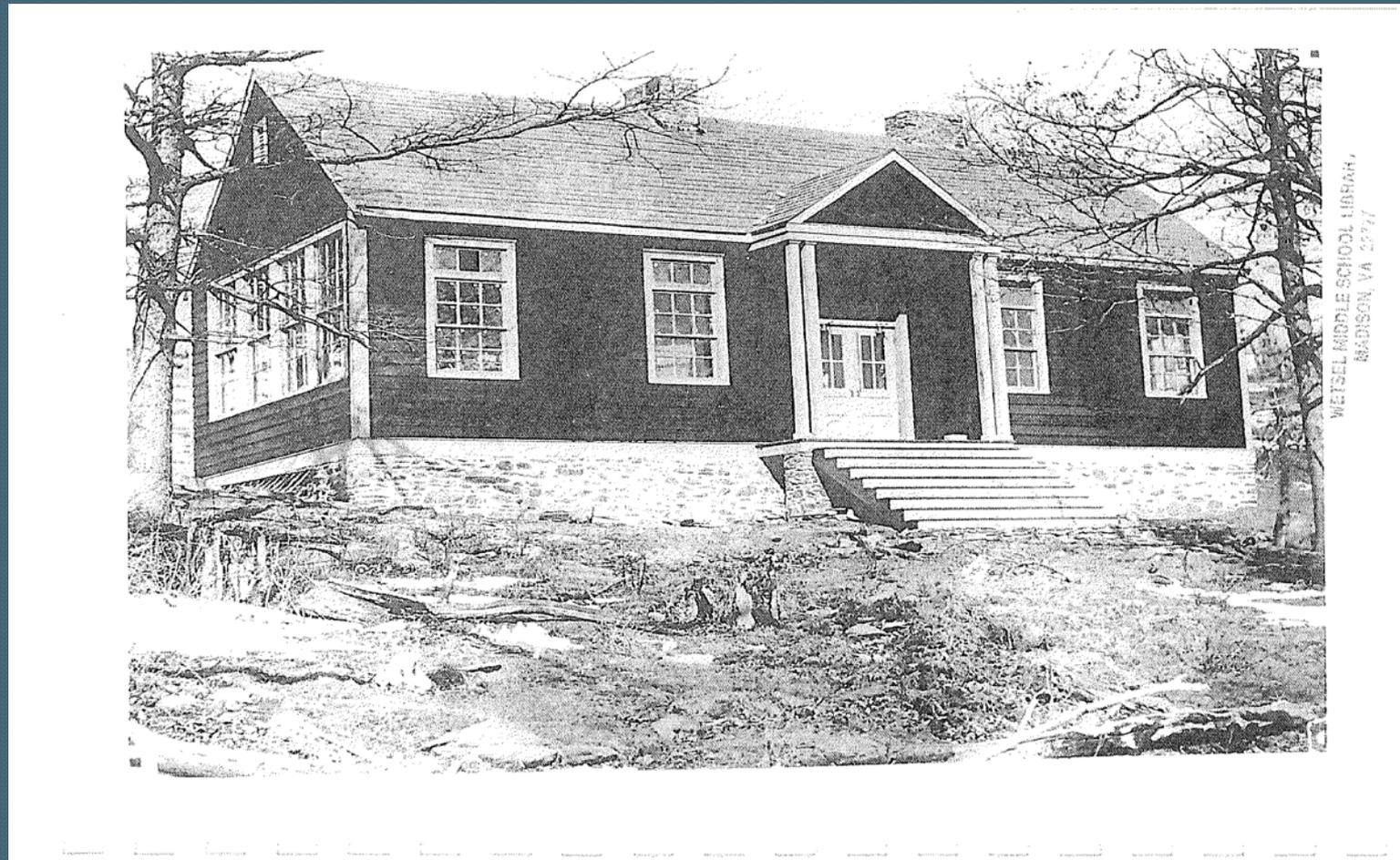
Herbert Hoover's
Rapidan Community School- March 3, 1930

The President's Community School opens for the children of Madison County

“A state highway, which is to become a main entrance to the proposed Shenandoah National Park and which winds past the President's summer lodge and camp, leads to the school building from Criglersville”

[Complete Letter](#)

Hoover's Rapidan School 1930



Herbert Hoover's Community School on Rapidan Road- March 3, 1930

Hoover's Rapidan School 1930



At the Madison County Fair in front of the flower barn (1931).

Front Row:

Irwin Hurt, Myrtle Weakley, Myrtle Cave, Harold Buraker, Eva Mae Buraker, Gratton Buraker, Alvin Meadows (holding hat), Lloyd Hurt (holding hat)

Middle Row:

Burley Weakley (boy in tie), Bess Cave (in flowered dress), Celia Buraker, Nathan Weakley (in V-neck sweater), James Weakley (in V-neck sweater)

Back Row:

Mr. Yowell (superintendent of Madison County Schools), Christine Vest (teacher), Della Meadows, Pauline Buraker, Bealey Hurt, Rosa Hurt, Reda Buraker, Ray Buraker (in suit coat and tie), Mr. George Buraker, Rueben Cave

Hoover's Rapidan School Today



It was relocated to Big Meadows and is currently a ranger station

Land

- President Hoover presented a bill that would permit all landowners to stay in their homes. It was passed by the House and Senate, and signed by Hoover on February 4, 1932

This promise was not kept!



The Road to Camp Rapidan

- Route 649 was added to the secondary road system as part of The Byrd Act
- Originally 9.70 miles from Criglersville to the Community School
- 5/1/1936- 2.05 miles of road was abandoned, east to the first Park boundary
- 7/14/1941- The county was told to abandon another 4.6 miles of road, east from the old Park boundary to the new Park boundary
- Today the State shows 3.1 miles of remaining road which was to line up with the east Park Boundary

Virginia Tourism 1930

Both
"THE FIRST CITIZEN"
 and YOU « « «
 will find the vacation
 you want in Virginia!



The Rapidan River, on which the Hoover Camp is located.



Virginia Beach, one of the most popular of Virginia seaside resorts.



The Caverns of the beautiful Shenandoah Valley.



Mt. Vernon. No less famous are Monticello, home of Jefferson; Arlington, home of Lee.



Over 900 Highway Markers locate places of interest to the motorist.

AMONG the misty-blue Virginia hills, fishing streams like the Rapidan go chuckling over the stones. Westward, white roads swing up the tall mountains that hold some of the loveliest scenery in eastern America. A few hours southward, blue seas are lapping on the clean, white sands.

In the country between lie Natural Wonders such as the weirdly beautiful Caverns of the Shenandoah Valley; Natural Bridge that leaps a stream 200 feet below; mineral and hot springs around which famous resorts are located. Almost everywhere you will find ground hallowed by history, scenes stirring with memories of great men and great deeds. The spot where John Smith landed in 1607 . . . the birthplace of Washington, of Lee . . . the church where Henry spoke of Liberty . . . the field where Cornwallis surrendered . . . dramatic chapters of two great wars.

More than 900 markers have been placed on Virginia highways to locate for you points of greatest interest. No single advertisement could list them, no matter how briefly.

You are asked to write for the profusely illustrated booklet, "Virginia, The Beckoning Land." This official state publication of 40 pages contains maps locating all places of interest and outlining trips of from one day to two weeks. Also ask for the booklet giving inscriptions on all Highway Historic Markers. Another publication that will interest you is "The President's Camp on the Rapidan." A copy of this beautifully illustrated booklet will be sent without charge to all who request it.

Plan your trip for late summer or early fall, when Virginia is at its loveliest. 4,500 miles of perfect roads await you.

STATE COMMISSION ON CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Room 105, State Office Building, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA



The Government Monument at Yorktown, Virginia, where the 150th Anniversary of Cornwallis' Surrender will be commemorated October 16-19, 1931.

Write for your copy of the booklet "Virginia, The Beckoning Land." 40 pages profusely illustrated. Maps to help you plan your trip. A copy of the booklet giving inscriptions on Highway Historic Markers will also be sent to all planning to visit Virginia.

Ask for a copy of the interesting historical story and illustrated booklet, "The President's Camp on the Rapidan."



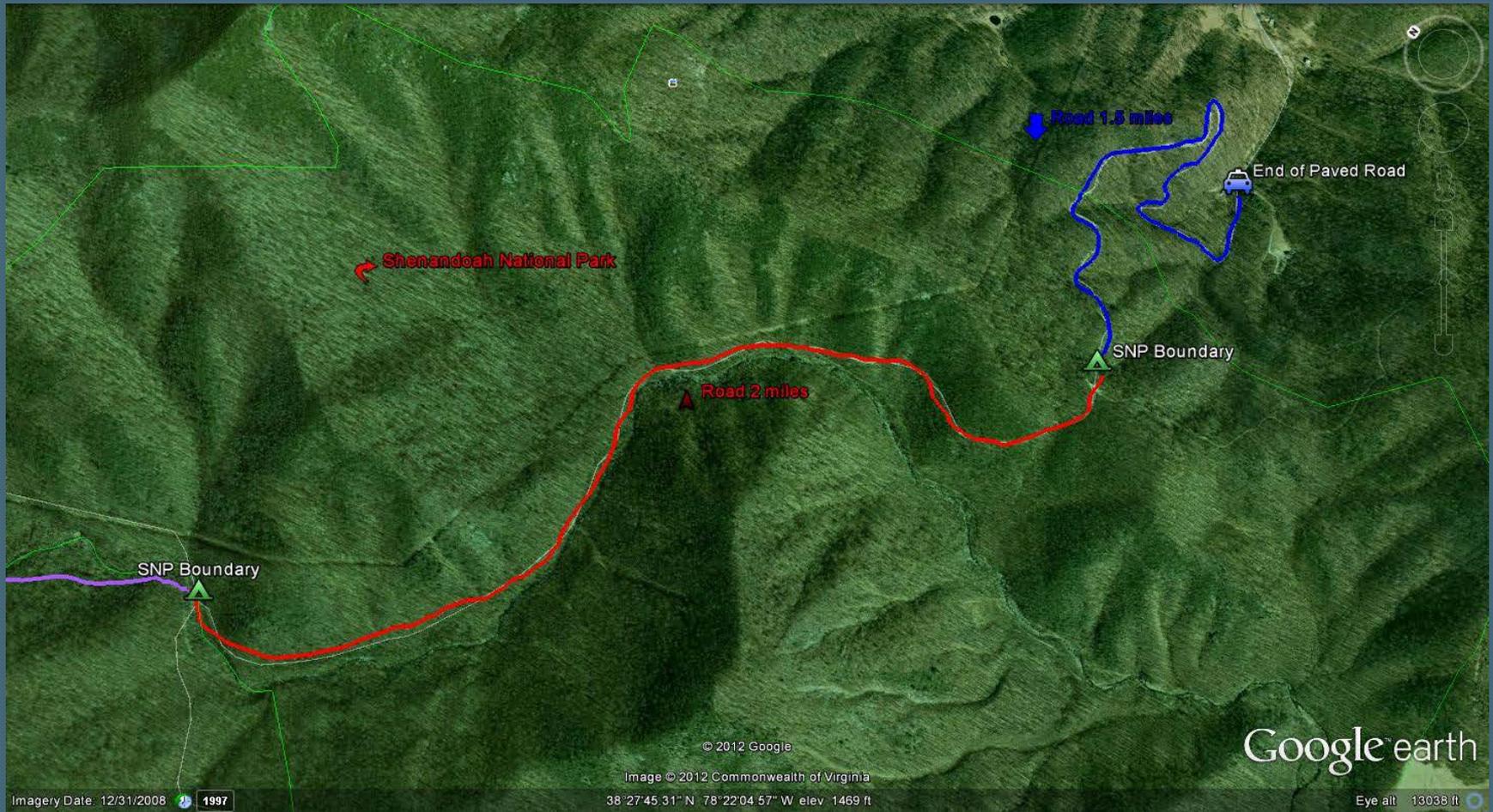
President Roosevelt

- First visited Hoover's Camp and the Park on April 9, 1933 with President Hoover
 - He went to the Brown house but due to the difficult terrain he required help to reach the house
 - He never returned
- The Park became fully established December 26, 1935
- The Eagle reported that on June 26, 1936 Rapidan Road was in excellent condition and many people were visiting Hoover's camp.
- Gated and closed May 1939
- August 1939 Senators Byrd and Glass presented SJR 160, a bill to appropriate funds to improve the road. The bill passed unanimously only to have Roosevelt veto the bill.

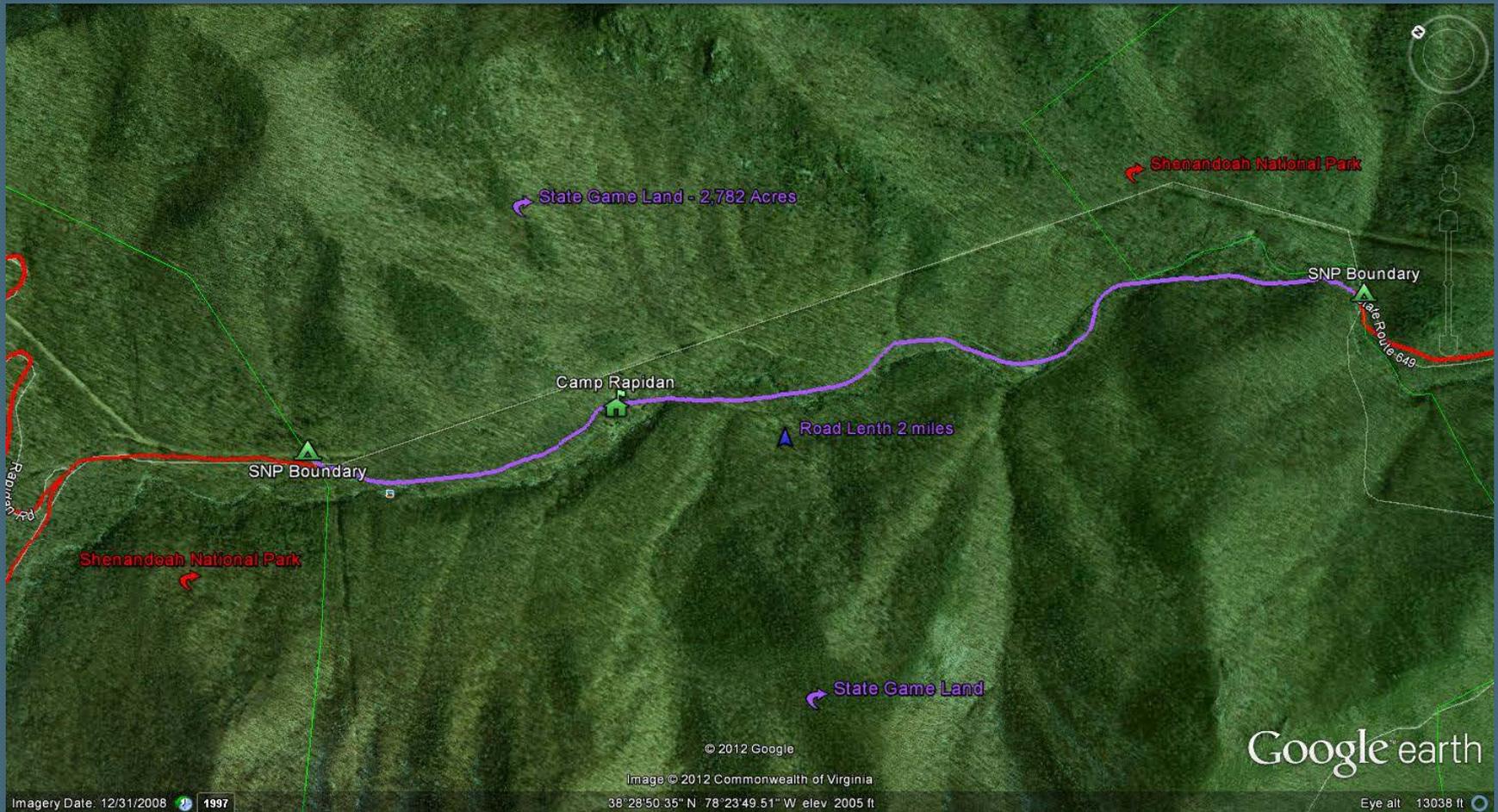
The gate to the Park today



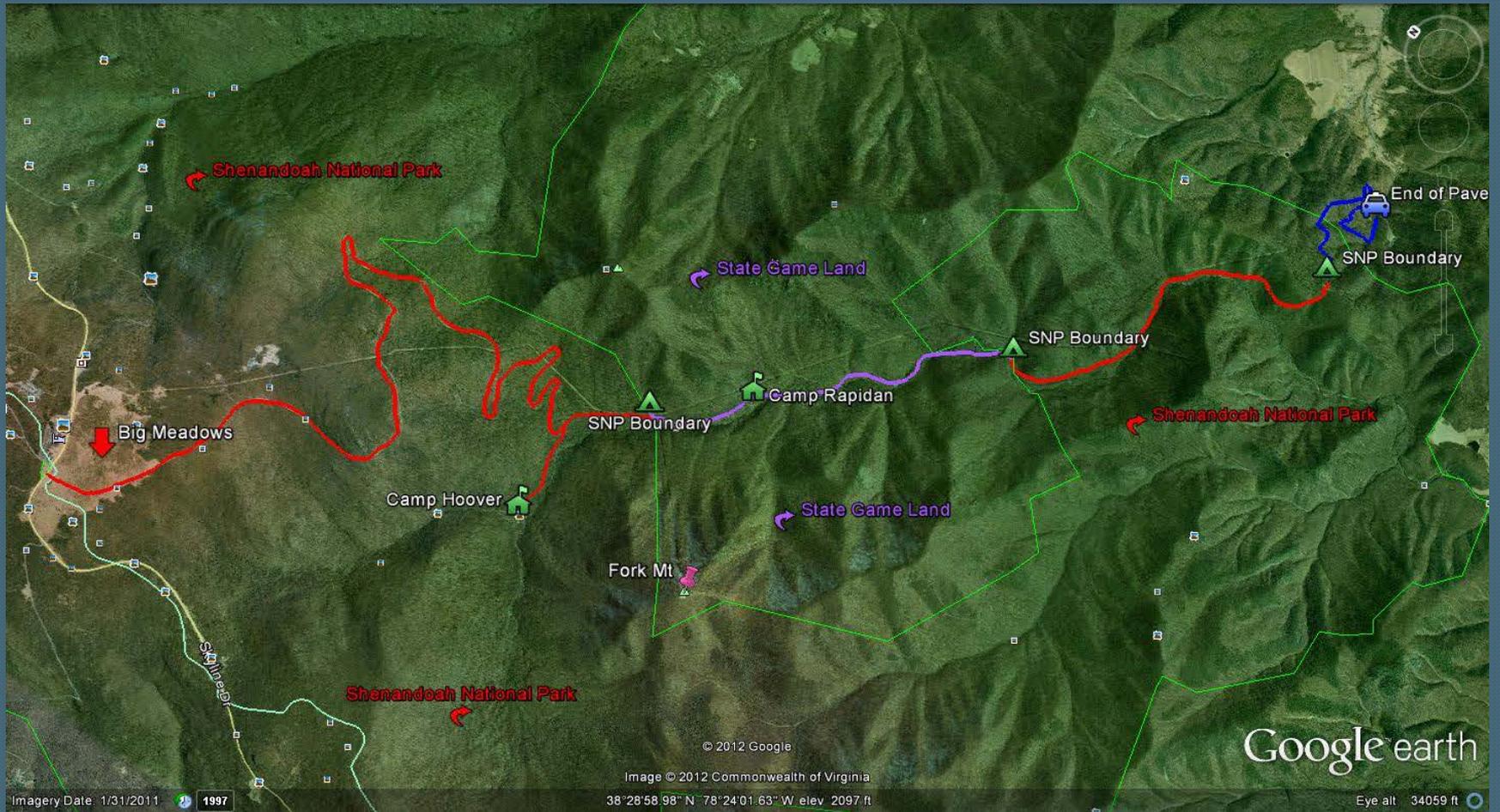
First Section State Road through the Park



Second Section State Game Land, Camp Rapidan



Rapidan Road to Big Meadows



Rapidan Road inside the Park



Rapidan Road inside the Park



The Brown House



The Brown House



How do we begin

- Permit the gate to be opened!
- Public access is already provided from a State maintained road
 - Through 2 miles of the Park
 - Through 2 miles of State Game Land
 - To the park gate, 1 mile from Hoover's Camp
 - The road is already established, maintained, and passable
- The Park road to Big Meadows is already in excellent shape and currently in use by Park tour buses

How do we begin

- Our 2012 Comprehensive plan includes this initiative, "To establish an entrance into the park"
- The benefits to Madison County, to Virginia, and to the Park are enormous
- **The first step:** The Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution that will work to fulfill the promise that was made by President Hoover to the people of Madison County

How do we begin

- We have Resolutions of support from
 - The Madison County Board of Supervisors
 - The Madison County Constitutional Officers
 - The Madison County School Board
 - The Town of Madison
 - The Madison County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
 - The Madison County Historical Society
 - Madison County Parks and Recreation
 - The Madison County Lions
 - Greene County
 - Orange County
 - Culpeper County
 - Thomas Jefferson Partnership for Economic Development
 - Representing 8 Counties and the City of Charlottesville in Central Virginia
 - Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
 - Representing 5 Counties and 8 towns in Planning District 9

How do we begin

- Steps include discussions with
 - The citizens and businesses of Madison
 - Shenandoah National Park
 - Environmental Groups
 - All Park partners
 - The Governor's office
 - The National Park Service
 - Virginia State Legislators
 - U.S. Senators
 - U.S. Congressmen