

GMP Dynamic Sourcebook - Appendix D: Public Involvement

D.7 Examples of Public Involvement Strategies

Blue Ridge: Example of Scoping Methods to Overcome Distance Barriers

The linear nature of the Blue Ridge Parkway—469 miles through 29 counties and two states—is a considerable challenge when trying to accomplish meaningful scoping within a limited budget. Some of the best ways of getting GMP scoping input from the general public was through newsletters with mailback comment forms. To help improve the breadth of public participation, we made the newsletter available at the park's many visitor contact stations. Also, the park offers a brochure at the contact stations that invite people interested in the GMP to be added to the mailing list (mailback postcard). For internal field staff scoping meetings as well as public scoping meetings, a way to stay efficient and meet our goals was to split the team up, each half facilitating meetings in or near either the Virginia or North Carolina half of the park, and then meeting back at headquarters to debrief. For meetings with the planners from the 44 municipal, state, and county jurisdictions, we kept the demands on their limited time and travel budgets to a minimum by piggybacking on the agenda of previously scheduled regional meetings. For scoping meetings with regional natural, cultural and transportation experts, we identified a hotel at a driving "mid-point" along an interstate that was approximately equidistant and no more than a 2 -3 hours drive for the majority of the participants. This allowed them to arrive mid-morning and depart mid-afternoon. The park arranged for a local caterer to prepare box lunches. As a result we were able to obtain a high turnout of participants and about 4 hours of scoping input for each group over a 3 day period.