National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wupatki National Monument
Arizona

General Management Plan

Record of Decision

Approved:

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Intermountain Regional Director
National Park Service

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

RECORD OF DECISION

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Wupatki National Monument

Arizona

[Instructions/suggestions are highlighted and in brackets, delete from final product. *The average ROD should be 10 pages. If the preferred alternative proposes actions that would be located in or have adverse effects on floodplains/wetlands, a wetland/floodplain statement of findings (SOF) must be combined with draft/final EIS. When signed by the regional director, the SOF is attached to the ROD as a separately identifiable document. If the preferred alternative affects a historic property eligible for listing on or listed on the National Register of Historic Places, then the information gathered as a part of the section 106 review must be included in the draft/final EIS and the section 106 process must be completed before the ROD can be signed. The ROD must include a statement on consultation under section 106. All consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act must be completed before the ROD can be signed.]*

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service, has prepared this Record of Decision on the *General Management Plan/Final Environmental Statement* for Wupatki National Monument. This Record of Decision includes a description of the background of the project, a statement of the decision made, synopses of other alternatives considered, the basis for the decision, findings on impairment of park resources and values, a description of the environmentally preferable alternative, a listing of measures to minimize environmental harm, and an overview of public and agency involvement in the decision-making process.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of the general management plan is to provide a comprehensive direction for resource preservation and visitor use and a basic foundation for decision making for the monument for the next 15 to 20 years. The plan prescribes the resource conditions and visitor experiences that are to be achieved and maintained in the park over time. The clarification of what must be achieved according to law and policy is based on review of the park's purpose, significance, and special mandates.

DECISION (SELECTED ACTION)

Description of the Selected Action

[Describe the Preferred Alternative]

Key Actions

[If you need to, show bullet list of key provisions of the Preferred Alternative.]

Boundary Expansion

[For some GMPs, this is an important step, so it can be broken out, if you'd like.]

Mitigating Measures/Monitoring

[Make a clear statement of which mitigation measures will be implemented if they are not obviously integral to the alternative selected and summarize any monitoring or other enforcement programs or plans. The description of mitigation and monitoring should be specific enough to enable the public to determine whether measures have been effectively implemented, but not be so specific as to duplicate the EIS (DO-12, 6.2A4).]

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

[Describe the other alternatives that were considered in the final EIS.]

BASIS FOR DECISION

[Describe the decision rationale—what were the criteria (e.g. cost, degree of environmental impact, technical considerations, degree to which objectives were met, logistics) used in selecting an alternative, how did each alternative measure up against these criteria, how were the criteria weighted, and so forth (DO-12, 6.2A3).]

FINDINGS ON IMPAIRMENT OF PARK RESOURCES AND VALUES

[ROD must indicate that, after a review of the impacts, the alternative selected for implementation will not impair park resources or values and will not violate the NPS Organic Act.]

[Summarize the impact analysis, paying particular attention to any major adverse effects, because impairment is a subset of those effects.]

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

[Using the six criteria spelled out in NEPA section 101, describe the environmentally preferred alternative. You may wish to use something like the following:]

The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying the criteria suggested in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), which is guided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ provides direction that "the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA §101: (1) fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; (2) assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings; (3) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradations, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; (4) preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety, of individual choice; (5) achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and (6) enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources."

The No-Action Alternative represents the current management direction for Wupatki National Monument. The existing use and development of the park is based on planning initiated and implemented during the Mission 66 program. Personal services interpretation and resource protection patrols are sporadic at each of the four archeological interpretive areas, and the majority of visitors interact with these sites on their own with no on-site NPS presence. For resource protection purposes, areas of the park other than the developed sites and administrative areas are closed to unguided entry. Because the No-Action Alternative maintains the Mission 66 designed visitor experience, the diversity for educational opportunities and the protection of cultural resources is limited. Protection of cultural resources and visitor opportunities would not be as enhanced as under Alternatives 1, 2, 3, or 4. The No-Action Alternative does not impact access to neighboring lands, unlike Alternatives 2 and 4. The No-Action Alternative does not fully realize provisions 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the goals.

Alternative 1 strives to limit motorized sightseeing in the park and focus on longer and more intensive educational programs to enhance the protection of cultural and natural resources, thus meeting national environmental policy goal 6. This alternative restricts the visitor experience by eliminating the drive-through experience in favor of a longer intensive stay. This alternative also limits access by park neighbors to the Navajo Reservation, ranch land, and USFS lands surrounding the monument. National environmental policy goals 3, 4, and 5 are not fully realized under this alternative to the same extent as in Alternative 4. In addition, it does not fully realize provisions 3 and 5 of the goals when compared with Alternatives 2 and 3.

Alternative 2 promotes improved vehicle access to more of the park for diverse motorized sightseeing experiences and ensures presence of park personnel at popular use areas for visitor contact and site protection purposes. Motorized access to existing popular features would be maintained, and sightseeing would be expanded to new areas. The road to Black Falls Crossing would be opened to park visitors, and existing primitive roads in the north boundary expansion would be used for guided tours along a scenic backcountry loop. Opening the Black Falls Crossing Road to motorized sightseeing could cause congestion for Navajo residents that use the road to commute to Flagstaff and could cause congestion for other American Indians seeking traditional cultural uses in that area.

Alternative 2 meets national environmental policy goals 3 and 5 by providing access to more of the park's resources. It does not meet the national environmental policy goal 4 for those groups traditionally associated with the park.

The Preferred Alternative provides for the greatest range of diverse visitor experiences and access to Wupatki National Monument. This alternative would improve upon existing visitor educational opportunities at popular use areas and provide guided access into undeveloped areas of the park. The traffic circulation pattern would remain the same and access to neighboring lands would remain unchanged. Areas of the park not zoned for administrative or visitor use would remain closed to protect resources. The four archeological areas of the park would be gated at night for protection. There may be some increased congestion for American Indians seeking traditional cultural uses from expanded visitor opportunities. The Preferred Alternative would realize each of the applicable provisions of the national environmental policy goals.

Alternative 4 restructures the way visitors gain access to and experience both Wupatki and Sunset Crater Volcano National Monuments to provide a more unified interpretive story and greater protection for natural and cultural resources. FR545 would be modified to a one-way exit road from the existing Wupatki visitor center to the north entrance of the Wupatki. The road would be gated at the beginning of the one-way and closed at night, impacting ranch and Navajo residents who use the road to commute to Flagstaff. Visitor opportunities would decrease with the removal of the visitor center/museum; however, extended learning would still be provided at each of the day use sites. Most of the existing housing, maintenance, and administrative facilities would be removed and the area would be rehabilitated to more closely resemble its historical appearance. Although Alternative 4 would realize most of the applicable provisions of the national environmental policy goals, it would fall short of satisfying criterion 5 by precluding access through the park by park neighbors to the Navajo Reservation, ranch land, and USFS lands surrounding the monument.

The Preferred Alternative is also the environmentally preferred alternative. The Preferred Alternative surpasses the other alternatives in best realizing the full range of national environmental policy goals as stated in §101 of the National Environmental Policy Act. Although other alternatives may achieve greater levels of individual protection for cultural resources or natural resources, or better enhance visitor experience, Alternative 3 overall does (1) provide a high level of protection of natural and cultural resources while concurrently attaining the widest range of neutral and beneficial uses of the environment without degradation; (2) maintain an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice; (3) integrate resource protection with an appropriate range of visitor uses; and (4) accommodate the access needs of park neighbors and affiliated American Indian Tribes.

PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

[You may wish to break your responses down with the following subheadings, but it is not required. We've provided an example below.]

Scoping

The notice of intent (NOI) to prepare this EIS was published in the *Federal Register* May 19, 1997. The NOI indicated availability of newsletter #1, from which comments were accepted until June 30, 1997. The first newsletter described purpose and significance statements for the park, as well as identifying preliminary issues. A second newsletter, released February 1998, detailed public response to the first newsletter, described final purpose and significance statements, and explained the preliminary range of management zones. A third newsletter, issued November 1998, described the range of preliminary alternatives. The fourth newsletter in May 1999 described the decision to prepare a plan concurrently with the Forest Service Flagstaff Lake Mary Ecosystem Area planning process. All comments received through June 1999 were considered in the EIS. The *Purpose of and Need for the Plan, Need for the GMP*, and *Description of Scoping Process* sections of the FEIS describe the issues and concerns raised and sort the responses into several categories.

Public Meetings and Outreach

In addition to the newsletters, an open house was held August 20, 1997 to gain information from the public on the park's purpose and significance, issues, and alternatives. To determine if existing park visitors' needs were being met, trip fact sheets were set out at the visitor center. Visitors filled out the sheets voluntarily. The trip fact sheets were a one-page check-off that asked visitors where they were from, why they came to the park, how they

preferred to learn about the park, and what they would take advantage of, if it were available. A total of 4,091 trip sheets, spanning a 15-month time frame, were collected and collated.

As a complement to the public meeting, newsletters, and trip fact sheets, a visitor use study was conducted to gather more in-depth information on visitors, their experience, behavior, and how behavior affects resources. Approximately 1,200 mail-back questionnaires were distributed in conjunction with an on-site interview. A total of 295 questionnaires were returned for Wupatki. The on-site survey repeated the questions asked in the trip fact sheets, whereas the mail-back questionnaire provided more detailed information.

Visitors to Wupatki reported that they came to the monument to see archeological ruins and to look at the scenery. Things that most bothered visitors include the heat, smelly rest rooms, disturbance of the sites, people disobeying rules, and the fact that visitor center displays need modification. A few visitors commented on a lack of signs near the pueblos, unsupervised children, and an overall lack of ranger presence. When asked about what they would like to see changed, most visitors responded, "nothing." Among the changes that some visitors did want were more ranger talks and guided walks and better and more information, including updated exhibits, a video or movie on how the early native people lived, a reconstructed dwelling, more detailed maps, living history, and self-guided tours to the backcountry.

Public Comment

[Briefly characterize the public response to the DEIS.]

The National Park Service received 16 comments on the Wupatki National Monument Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Draft General Management Plan. One was from the Hopi Tribe, five were from federal and state agencies, three were from non-governmental organizations, and seven comments were received from individuals.

Most comments from individual expressed opinions about the preferred alternative. Some individuals agreed with the preferred. Other commenters agreed generally with the preferred but disliked either the construction of a new visitor contact station near Highway 89, the realignment of the road to Wukoki ruin or both. One individual requested clarification on uses with in the monument. Comments from the Hopi Tribe expressed support for Alternative #4, Emphasis the Integrated Story Between the Parks and Minimize Development.

Some of the letters received have ideas that were outside the scope of the general management plan/environmental impact statement. The National Park Service values this input and where applicable it will be taken into account in future plans. Substantive comments were addressed in the final EIS on pages 247-288.

Agency and American Indian Consultation and Coordination

A number of meetings were held with staff from the U.S. Forest Service and Arizona Game and Fish Department. These meetings were held to discuss impacts that the alternatives might have on adjacent recreational activities and impacts to wildlife and their movement corridors and to try to ensure that NPS planning would be in support/harmony with their agency planning efforts. Several of these conversations explored the possibility of joint or co-management of resources and visitor uses.

Add information about section 106 and section 7 consultation

In keeping with its mandates for tribal consultation, NPS consulted with many American Indian tribes throughout the planning process. Based on ethnographic research efforts and previous consultations conducted for the Flagstaff Area national monuments during the last several years, ten tribes were identified as having potential traditional associations with park lands and resources. They are the Havasupai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Hualupai Tribe, Navajo Nation, San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, Tonto Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Yavapai Apache Nation, Yavapai-Prescott Tribe, and Zuni Tribe. All ten tribes were contacted by letter and telephone, inviting them to attend an introductory meeting in October 1997. Six of the ten tribes participated in the October meeting, and four participated in a December 1997 consultation meeting. As of February 1998 participating tribes included Hopi, Hualupai, Navajo, White Mountain Apache, Yavapai Apache, Yavapai-Prescott, and Zuni.

At the first two consultation meetings the tribes discussed the purpose and significance statements and agreed on language for the final statements. They also discussed tribal involvement in identifying culturally significant and sensitive resources as well as plans for participation throughout the planning process. Early in 1998 the Hopi, Navajo, and Zuni Tribes agreed to conduct further NPS-sponsored research into tribal associations with park lands and identify particular sensitive resources and management concerns for the EIS. Representatives from three tribes

attended the final tribal consultation meeting in August 1998 and assisted with the development of alternatives. Early in 1999 the Hopi Tribe and Navajo Nation submitted to NPS reports identifying culturally sensitive resources and specific recommendations for the GMP.

All ten tribes originally identified continued to receive newsletters and invitations to consultation meetings throughout the planning process. Tribal interests and concerns were fully considered in the planning process and in the development of alternatives in the GMP.

CONCLUSION

[Make a statement of whether all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative have been adopted, and if not, why not (DO-12, 6.2A5). Repeat the impairment determination. Consider using language like the following:]

As described in the *Mitigation* section, all practical means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative have been adopted. Because there would be no major adverse impacts to resources whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes in the establishing legislation or proclamation for Wupatki National Monument; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in relevant National Park Service planning documents, there would be no impairment of the park's resources or values. After a review of these effects, the alternative selected for implementation will not impair park resources or values and will not violate the NPS Organic Act.