

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Cades Cove Opportunities Plan

Appendix I **Environmental Screening Form**

Initial Draft September 2002
October 2004

United States Department
Of the Interior
National Park Service

Environmental Screening Form

Project Description/Location: Cades Cove Development Concept and Transportation Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the National Park Service is preparing an environmental impact statement for the Cades Cove development concept and transportation management plan for Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This effort will result in a comprehensive long-term management plan that considers various means to get people to Cades Cove and to manage and distribute visitor use within the Cove in order to enhance visitor experience, protect resources and carry out the mission of the park. Alternatives to be considered include no action, as well as management options such as improving roadway, parking, trail facilities, transit service, applying various visitor management strategies, and other alternatives that may come out of the public process. The environmentally-preferred alternative and the agency-preferred alternative will be identified for the NEPA document.

Located in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Blount County, TN

Mandatory Criteria (A-M)	Yes	No	Data Needed to Determine
Would the proposal, if implemented:			
A. Have material adverse effects on public health or safety? <i>Current regional air and water quality data are needed to determine potential impacts. Nearby, Knox County, TN is designated a maintenance area for ozone. Blount and Sevier counties have been identified for non-attainment designation under EPA's eight-hour standard. According to the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) Area Classifications, national parks should be in the Class 1 air quality group, but due to the proximity of Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Knox, Blount and Sevier counties, that classification could be marginal and needs to be determined. Any alternative's impacts to air and water quality will need to be assessed.</i>			X
B. Have adverse effects on such unique characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; or ecologically significant or critical areas, including those listed on the National Register of Natural Landmarks? <i>The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is designated as an International</i>			X

<i>Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site. The bulk of the park's land is zoned in the natural environment category, with important emphasis placed on its historical/cultural heritage, particularly at Cades Cove. In the 1981 General Management Plan, the Management Zones section describes the Natural Zones and Historic Zones. These should be reviewed. Supporting data to further preserve and protect the Park's worldwide recognition could be provided in the form of cultural landscape studies, biological resources studies, and new geographical/geological surveys of the park.</i>			
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects? <i>The potential for highly controversial effects is related to the social impacts or concerns of Cades Cove descendants and the gateway communities, specifically their use and access to the Cove. An analysis of these impacts is needed to address community concerns.</i>			X
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks? <i>No potential effects or risks that meet these criteria are likely to occur from alternatives.</i>		X	
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects? <i>The impacts are undetermined at this time. Each action for construction, demolition, renovation or development would be reviewed under its own merits and would be subject to the appropriate environmental documents under NEPA.</i>			X
F. Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects? <i>Development within the site could contribute in individually insignificant ways to cumulative impacts. Analysis would need to be made of the cumulative impacts of any alternative. Supporting data could be acquired from traffic studies, preliminary roadway design concepts, biological resources and cultural landscape studies, and other studies needed for the environmental analysis and documentation.</i>			X
G. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? <i>Alternatives within the site could have the potential for adverse effects on historic properties. Cades Cove has been nominated to the National Register as a district. Known historic resources include approximately 30 buildings and the Cades Cove Loop Road. Management of visitors today and in the future could require additional protection and preservation of cultural and historic resources. A cultural landscape inventory and report is</i>			X

<i>needed to analyze and mitigate impacts. The Historic Management Zone described in the 1982 Great Smoky Mountains General Management Plan should be reviewed.</i>			
H. Have adverse effects on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species? <i>There are listed species in Cades Cove. The impacts of the alternatives within the site are unknown. Review of biological resources information is needed to determine the potential for adverse effects.</i>			X
I. Require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act? <i>There are wetlands in the study area. Investigation and review of current floodplain and wetland protection measures are required. Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 direct federal agencies to enhance floodplain and wetland values, to avoid development in floodplains and wetlands whenever there is a practical alternative, and to avoid to the extent possible adverse impacts associated with the occupancy or modification of floodplains and wetlands. If any waters or channels of a body of water would be modified, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must review the water resource development to determine compliance.</i>			X
J. Threaten to violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment? <i>Potential construction would comply with major federal laws, executive orders and regulations and associated state regulations.</i>		X	
K. Involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA sec, 102(2)(E)? <i>Conflicts would be resolved in the selection of a preferred alternative that would comply with major federal laws, executive orders and regulations and associated state regulations.</i>		X	
L. Have a disproportionate, significant adverse effect on low-income or minority populations (EO 12898)? <i>A socioeconomic analysis will be needed to determine plan impacts.</i>			X
M. Restrict access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 130007)? <i>The presence or absence of Indian sacred sites is unknown and the plan has the potential to affect these resource types. Tribal</i>			X

consultation and NEPA analysis/documentation is needed to resolve this question.			
N. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of federally listed noxious weeds (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act)? <i>Potential construction would comply with the Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and NPS policies regarding invasive plants and noxious weeds..</i>		X	
O. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of nonnative invasive species or actions that may promote the introduction, growth or expansion of the range of non-native invasive species (EO 13112)? <i>Potential construction would comply with EO 13112 and NPS policies regarding invasive plants and noxious weeds.</i>		X	
P. Require a permit from a federal, state, or local agency to proceed, unless the agency from which the permit is required agrees that a CE is appropriate? <i>A determination of changes to air, water, wetlands, solid waste disposal, etc., would need to be conducted to identify permit requirements.</i>			X
Q. Have the potential for significant impact as indicated by a federal, state, or local agency or Indian tribe? <i>The specific impacts and the severity of the impacts are not known. The NEPA analysis and documentation will be used to identify any potential for significant impacts.</i>			X
R. Have the potential to be controversial because of disagreement over possible environmental effects? <i>The plan has the potential to be controversial because of the concerns of the gateway communities and public.</i>			X
S. Have the potential to violate the NPS Organic Act by impairing park resources or values? <i>The potential for impairment will be assessed in the environmental document.</i>			X

Tailor the following to meet individual park unit/project needs. Are any measurable impacts possible in the following categories relating to physical, natural, or cultural resources?

	Yes	No	Data Needed to Determine
A. Geological resources – soils, bedrock, streambeds, etc.	X		
B. From geohazards?			X
C. Air quality, traffic, or from noise	X		
D. Water quality or quantity			X
E. Streamflow characteristics			X
F. Marine or estuarine resources		X	
G. Floodplains or wetlands			X
H. Land use, including occupancy, income, values, ownership, type of use			X
I. Rare or unusual vegetation – old growth timber, riparian, alpine, etc.	X		
J. Species of special concern (plant or animal; state or federal listed or proposed for listing) or their habitat	X		
K. Unique ecosystems, biosphere reserves, World Heritage sites	X		
L. Unique or important wildlife or wildlife habitat			X
M. Unique or important fish or fish habitat			X
N. Introduce or promote non-native species (plant or animal)		X	
O. Recreation resources, including supply, demand, visitation, activities, etc.	X		
P. Visitor experience, aesthetic resources	X		
Q. Cultural resources, cultural landscape, sacred sites, etc.	X		
R. Socioeconomics, including employment, occupation, income changes, tax base, infrastructure, etc.			X
S. Minority and low-income populations, ethnography, size, migration patterns, etc.			X
T. Energy resources			X
U. Other agency or tribal land use plans or policies		X	
V. Resource, including energy, conservation potential			X
W. Urban quality, gateway communities, etc.	X		
X. Long-term management of resources or land/resource productivity	X		
Y. Other important environmental resources?	X		

Please answer the following questions:

1. Are the personnel preparing this form familiar with the site, and/or has a site visit been conducted? (Attach additional pages noting when site visit took place, staff attending, etc.)

Sandra Dowling, a planner with David Evans and Associates, Inc., visited Cades Cove September 18 and 19, 2002 with staff from HNTB, the prime consultant on this project. This form was completed in consultation with consultant team members John Boyle, Project Manager, HNTB; Debra Perkins-Smith, Environmental Task Manager; Great Smoky Mountains National Park staff, Dianne Flaugh and Teresa Cantrell; and Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) staff, Kelley Segars.

2. Has consultation with all affected agencies or tribes been completed? (Attach additional pages detailing the consultation, including the name, date, and summary of comments from other agency or tribal contacts.)

This plan is being undertaken in coordination with the Knoxville Regional TPO. Consultation is ongoing. Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Knoxville Regional TPO have consulted the public and local gateway communities in a series of public meetings as follows:

Public Meeting	Date	Location	Purpose
No. 1	05/23/02	Townsend	Scoping – Identify issues
No. 2	07/22/02	Knoxville	Scoping – Review issues and project goals
No. 3	07/23/02	Townsend	Scoping – Identify alternatives
	09/17/02	Maryville	
	09/19/02	Knoxville	

Consultation letters were sent to the following agencies as noted below:

US Fish and Wildlife	May 02, Sept. 02, March 03
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	May 02, Sept. 02, March 03
US Army Corps of Engineers	May 02, Sept. 02, March 03
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)	May 02, Sept. 02, March 03
Federal Highway Administration	Sept. 02, March 03
Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division	Sept. 02, March 03
Federal Transit Administration	Sept. 02, March 03
National Center for Environmental Health	Sept. 02, March 03
Tennessee Department of Transportation	Sept. 02, March 03

Tennessee Environmental Policy Office	May 02, Sept. 02, March 03
Tennessee Division of Natural Heritage	May 02, Sept. 02, March 03
Tennessee Division of Water Pollution Control	May 02, Sept. 02, March 03
Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency	May 02, Sept. 02, March 03
Tennessee Historical Commission	May 02, Sept. 02, March 03

In addition, it is anticipated that the following agencies and/or Tribes will be consulted:

State Historic Preservation Organization (SHPO)

Tribal consultation for the Cades Cove region of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park has been ongoing with other agency consultation and coordination. Tribes that may be impacted by decisions for the park include the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, and the United Chickasaw Nation. David Chapman, the historic preservation coordinator for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, has sent cooperating agency letters to the Tribes. In addition, he and Dianne Flaugh have copied all other agency correspondence to the SHPO and Tribes.

Instructions

When you have completed a site visit (or if staff are familiar with the specifics of the site) and consultation with affected agencies and/or tribes, and if the answers in the checklist above are all "no," you may proceed to the categorical exclusion form (appendix 2) if the action is described in section 3-4 of DO-12. If any answers in the checklist are "yes" or "data needed to determine," or if the action is not described in section 3-4, prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. Attach maps, notes of site visits, agency consultation, relevant data or reports, the categorical exclusion form or other relevant information to this form to begin the statutory/administrative record file.

1. Site Base Map

2. Resource Reports

- 1982 Great Smoky Mountains General Management Plan, National Park Service
- 1998 Access Issues at Cades Cove Report
- 1999 Cades Cove Visitor Use Study
- National Register Nomination Form

Signatory

In signing this form, you are saying you have completed a site visit or are familiar with the specifics of the site, that you have consulted with affected agencies and tribes, and that the answers to the questions posed in the checklist are, to the best of your knowledge, correct.

Interdisciplinary Team Leader

Date

Technical specialist/field of expertise

Technical specialist/field of expertise