

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

NEW ACCESS ENTRANCE ON VA 234 Prince William Forest Park Triangle, Virginia

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide a new public access entrance into Prince William Forest Park from Virginia Route 234 (VA 234) with the fewest natural and cultural resource impacts. This project is needed because the only public access entrance is currently provided from Virginia Route 619 (VA 619), which is a two-lane road with steep hills and sharp curves. This entrance is less convenient for Park visitors arriving from points north and west of the Park, including the new communities along the VA 234 corridor, and the heavily populated Manassas area. An entrance from VA 234 provides access for the visitors from these communities. Just over half of the visitors recently surveyed (52.2 percent) are either moderately or very interested in access to the Park from VA 234.

Prince William Forest Park is one of the few locations in the Washington, D.C. area that provides campgrounds for overnight visitors to the capital region. The Travel Trailer Village, a concessionaire-operated campground in the Park, is located along VA 234. Although this campground is very popular and can accommodate full-size recreational vehicles (RVs), there is no public vehicular access from the Travel Trailer Village (TTV) to the rest of the Park. Therefore, visitors staying at the TTV campground must drive their vehicles around to the public entrance on VA 619 in order to visit and enjoy the other Park facilities. Providing a public access entrance on VA 234 will alleviate these conditions and potentially increase visitation from visitors to the Travel Trailer Village to Prince William Forest Park by providing an additional access point.

ALTERNATIVES

Selected Action

The selected action is the preferred alternative (Alternative C), as described in the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect. The selected action presents the National Park Service (NPS) proposed action and defines the rationale for the action in terms of natural and cultural resource protection and management, visitor use, health and safety, and costs. The selected action best meets the Prince William Forest Park planning objective of providing long-term preservation of the park's resources and provides for public use and park enjoyment. Under the selected action, the NPS will construct a new bike/pedestrian access entrance into the Park from VA 234 across from Waterway Drive. A full movement signalized intersection will be installed. The new 10-foot wide, pervious surface bike/pedestrian trail will begin at VA 234 and will then merge onto the existing Burma Road, where it will occupy the footprint of the road until it terminates at Scenic Drive. The trail will cross Quantico Creek on a slightly modified multi-use bridge that will be designed to handle increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The trail will then connect to the existing designated multi-use lane on Scenic Drive. A 50- to 100-space parking lot will be constructed near Waterway Drive and VA 234 on NPS managed land. The new bike/pedestrian trail will connect to the parking lot.

Other Alternatives Considered

The Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect for a New Access Entrance on VA 234 analyzed the Preferred Alternative (now selected and described above), the No-Action Alternative, and three other action alternatives (Alternative B, Alternative D, and Alternative E). Under the No-Action Alternative, the NPS would continue to operate and manage Prince William Forest Park under the current conditions. Impacts to visitor use and experience would continue because access to the Park is restricted to one location along VA 619. This alternative was not selected because it does not meet the purpose and need for the project of providing an additional access entrance into the park along VA 234 as called for in the park General Management Plan.

Like the Preferred Alternative, Alternative B would construct a new entrance at Waterway Drive; however, this entrance would provide for full two-way vehicular access from Waterway Drive to Scenic Drive and no parking lot would be provided. The existing signalized intersection at Waterway Drive would be modified to a full movement signalized intersection. Burma Road would be paved and widened and a previous 11-foot wide bike/pedestrian trail would be constructed. The new bike/pedestrian trail would connect the trail along VA 234 to the trail following Scenic Drive. The bridge over Quantico Creek would have to be removed and replaced with a new structure to handle the additional vehicular and bike/pedestrian traffic. A new entrance station would be constructed near VA 234 to collect entrance fees and provide public contact. This alternative was not selected due to the extensive cut and fill that would be required that would affect natural and cultural resources. Additional impacts would occur to the visitor experience, and to park operations.

With Alternative D, a new two-way vehicular access entrance would be provided into the Park from VA 234 at Pleasant Road. Two-way, full vehicular access would be provided from Pleasant Road to Scenic Drive via Burma Road. No parking lot would be provided. Pleasant and Burma Roads would be paved and widened and an 11-foot wide previous bike/pedestrian trail would be constructed. The new bike/pedestrian trail would connect the trail along VA 234 with the trail following Scenic Drive. As with Alternative B, the bridge over Quantico Creek would have to be removed and replaced with a new structure to handle the additional vehicular and bike/pedestrian traffic. A new entrance station would be constructed near VA 234 to collect entrance fees and provide public contact. This alternative was not selected due to the extensive cut and fill that would be required that would affect natural and cultural resources and due to the number of tributaries to Quantico Creek that would be impacted. Additional impacts would occur to the visitor experience, and to park operations.

Like the Preferred Alternative, Alternative E would provide for a new bike/pedestrian access entrance into the Park from VA 234. However, this entrance would be located along VA 234 at Pleasant Road. The trail would follow the footprint of Pleasant and Burma Roads until Burma Road terminates with Scenic Drive. The trail will cross Quantico Creek on a slightly modified multi-use bridge that will be designed to handle increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic. A 50- to 100-space paved parking lot would be constructed near Pleasant Road and VA 234 on NPS managed land. This alternative was not selected due the number of tributaries to Quantico Creek that would be impacted and the cultural resources impacts. Additional impacts would occur to the visitor experience, and to park operations.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In accordance with Director's Order #12 (NPS, 2001a), the NPS is required to identify the "environmentally preferred alternative" in all environmental documents, including Environmental Assessments. As described in the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, the environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which considers the following:

1. Fulfilling the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
2. Assuring for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
3. Attaining the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;
4. Preserving important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintaining, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
5. Achieving a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
6. Enhancing the quality of renewable resources and approaching the maximum attainable recycling of non-renewable resources (National Environmental Policy Act, Section 101).

The selected action will create a bike/pedestrian trail across from Waterway Drive, which will enhance visitor use and experience and provide an aesthetically and culturally pleasing environment for visitors as they enter and exit the Park. The selected action will utilize the existing footprint of Burma Road for the creation of a bike/pedestrian trail, thus creating less adverse natural and cultural resource impacts.

After reviewing the potential resources and other impact topics, and developing appropriate mitigation measures, the selected action best ensures and addresses the provision of the national environmental policy goals stated in NEPA Section 101. The selected action satisfies these environmental criteria to a greater degree than the No-Action Alternative and Alternatives B, D, and E for the following reasons:

- It offers a long-term sustainable solution for the preservation of the Park's resources and provides continued public use and park enjoyment for succeeding generations (Criteria 1 and 6).
- It assures a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment for future generations to enjoy, provides a variety of choices in which to utilize the Park and enjoy its resources (walk/ hike/bike/drive), enhances understanding of the Prince William Forest Park as a unit of the NPS, and provides increased awareness of the Park (Criteria 2 and 5) without risk of imperiling resources; hence, ensuring the Park's preservation for future generations.
- It attains the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment and protection of key natural and cultural resources (Criterion 3).
- While some vegetation will be lost with the construction of a bike/pedestrian trail, the selected action prevents a substantial loss of cultural and natural resources (Criterion

4) by utilizing the existing footprint of Burma Road. A smaller amount of cut and fill will be needed for construction of the bike/pedestrian trail, than for the construction of a full vehicular access point.

The selected action provides the greatest range of beneficial impacts to natural and cultural resources. Therefore, the selected action is the environmentally preferred alternative.

MITIGATION

Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the selected action to reduce impacts. Mitigation measures include clearly defining construction zones; minimizing introduction of nonnative species; best management practices to minimize erosion, sedimentation, noise, and dust emissions, and minimizing new disturbance.

Mitigation measures for the New Access Entrance from VA 234 are listed below:

General Mitigation Measures:

- The NPS project manager will ensure that the project remains confined within the parameters established in the compliance documents and that mitigation measures are properly implemented.
- Construction will occur during non-peak traffic hours.
- Road closures will not be implemented during periods of higher use (i.e., weekends).
- Appropriate signage and interpretive wayside exhibits will occur to direct visitors into the Park.
- Construction zones outside of the existing disturbed area will be physically identified by a fence, with construction tape, or some similar material prior to any construction activity. The fencing will define the construction zone and confine activity to the minimum area required for construction.
- Staging areas will be fenced and secured. Staging areas shall be screened from public view. Any temporary fencing established around staging areas will be inspected at least once a week and corrective action taken, if needed. Appropriate rubbish and recycling containers shall be placed in the staging area; the staging area will be kept clean at all times to prevent trash and/or rubbish from escaping, or causing safety hazards.
- All protection measures will be clearly stated in the construction specifications and workers will be instructed to avoid conducting activities beyond the construction zone, as defined by the construction zone fencing. This does exclude necessary temporary structures such as erosion control fencing.
- All tools, equipment, barricades, signs, surplus materials, and rubbish will be removed from the project work limits upon project completion. Any asphalt surfaces damaged as a result of the project will be repaired to original condition. All demolition debris will be removed from the project site, including all visible concrete and metal pieces.
- Contractors will be required to properly maintain construction equipment (i.e., mufflers) to minimize noise from use of the equipment.
- A hazardous spill plan will be implemented, stating what actions will be taken in the case of a spill and the preventive measures to be instated, such as placement of refueling facilities, storage, and handling of hazardous materials, etc.
- Equipment used on the project will be maintained free of external petroleum-based products while working at the project locations.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

- Where appropriate, vegetable or mineral oil based grease, hydraulic oil, and bar and chain oil will be used. These lubricants are less toxic than typical lubricants and are biodegradable.
- All equipment on the project will be maintained in a clean and well-functioning state to avoid or minimize contamination from automotive fluids.
- All equipment will be inspected prior to entry into the park to ensure they are in proper operating condition, including no fluid leaks and properly functioning muffler and exhaust systems
- All truck beds and stockpiles will be covered to minimize blowing dust or loss of debris.
- Recycling of acceptable materials will be encouraged and/or written into contracts.
- The design shall include the use of sustainable materials and best management practices.

Cultural Resource Mitigation Measures:

- A Phase I archeological survey will be completed to determine whether archeological resources are present within the project area. In the event that archeological resources are found, their significance will be assessed, and the results shared with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). If appropriate, a Memorandum of Agreement will be developed between VDHR/VA SHPO and the NPS.
- In the unlikely event that human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered during the survey or during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 USC 3002) of 1990 will be followed. All human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony will be left in place until the culturally affiliated tribe(s) is consulted and an appropriate mitigation or recovery strategy developed between the affiliated tribes, the VDHR/VA SHPO, and the NPS.
- A new gate may need to be installed on Burma Road and appropriate signage/interpretive wayside exhibits will be erected to direct visitors entering and exiting the Park.

Soil Mitigation Measures:

- To the extent possible, construction in areas with steep slopes will be avoided.
- Soils removed from areas of construction will be stored for later use. The topsoil will be redistributed as near to the original location as possible and supplemented with scarification, mulching, seeding, and/or planting with species native to the immediate area. Only clean fill will be used if and when needed; and park staff will inspect the location/origin of the fill.
- An appropriate Sediment and Erosion Control Plan will be implemented.
- Sustainable best management practices will be utilized to control stormwater runoff.
- A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be implemented.

Sediment Control Mitigation Measures:

- Any disturbance in the Resource Protection Area (RPA) or Resource Management Area (RMA) will be conducted in accordance with the *Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook*. Disturbance in the RPA and/or RMA will be minimized as much as possible through appropriate best management practices. These practices will include all or some of the following, depending on site-specific requirements:
 - Keep disturbed areas as small as practical to minimize exposed soils and the potential for erosion;

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

- Locate waste and excess excavated materials outside of drainages to avoid sedimentation;
- Install silt fences, temporary earthen berms, temporary water bars, sediment traps, stone check dams, or other equivalent measures including installing erosion-control measures around the perimeter of the stockpiled fill material prior to construction;
- Conduct regular site inspections during the construction period to ensure that erosion-control measures were properly installed and are functioning effectively;
- Store, use, and dispose of chemicals, fuels, and other toxic materials in a proper manner; and
- Revegetate disturbed areas as soon as environmentally feasible after construction is completed.
- Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) General Permit for construction activity stormwater discharges will be obtained from the Virginia Department of Conservation (DCR), if necessary.

Water Quality and Wetland Mitigation Measures:

- Wetlands and streams within or directly adjacent to the project area will be formally delineated in accordance with the 1987 Army Corps of Engineer's *Wetland Delineation Manual* and will be classified according to the Cowardin System as described in *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States* (1979). After a Jurisdictional Determination is obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, impact avoidance and minimization to wetlands and streams will be analyzed. Efforts to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and streams will be taken where practical. Should impacts be unavoidable, the appropriate permits will be obtained. If required, wetland and/or stream mitigation will offset unavoidable impacts.
- NPS will obtain a Virginia Water Protection Permit from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).
- Wetlands and streams adjacent to the project area will be protected during construction using appropriate sediment and erosion control measures.

Vegetation Mitigation Measures:

- Construction areas will be restored and revegetated using NPS approved plant species.
- All equipment will require an inspection by approved NPS staff prior to being off-loaded in the Park to inspect for possible non-native plant/plant seed introduction
- Non-native vegetation will not be introduced. Disturbed areas will be monitored for up to three years following construction to identify growth of noxious weeds or non-native vegetation. Treatment of non-native vegetation will be completed in accordance with NPS-13, *Integrated Pest Management Guidelines*.
- Vegetation impacts and potential compaction and erosion of bare soils will be minimized by replacement of topsoil as near to the original location as possible, scarification, mulching, and seeding/planting with species native to the immediate area.
- Remedial actions could include installation of erosion-control structures, reseeding and/or replanting the area, and controlling non-native plant species.
- All topsoil, hay, etc. will be certified weed/seed free and/or from an approved NPS source.
- To maximize vegetation restoration efforts after completion of construction activities, the following measures will be implemented:
 - Salvage topsoil from construction areas for reuse during restoration on disturbed areas.

- Salvage native vegetation for subsequent replanting in disturbed areas.
- Monitor revegetation success for up to three years following construction, implementing remedial and control measures as needed.
- An official survey of the small whorled pogonia will be conducted within the area of potential effect in Spring 2007 and again in the spring immediately before construction if later than 2007, for the selected action by the Virginia DCR. If species are present within the project area NPS will coordinate and consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S. FWS) and the Virginia DCR and mitigation will be implemented based upon the coordination and consultation.

Air Quality Mitigation Measures:

- To control fugitive dust, water sprinkling will be implemented, as needed, in active work areas where dirt or fine particles are exposed.
- The design of the new access entrance will provide sufficient queue space for vehicles to prevent back-ups onto Route. 234.
- Construction debris will be immediately hauled from the Park to an appropriate disposal location.
- Construction will occur during non-peak traffic.

WHY THE SELECTED ACTION (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE) WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

As defined by 40 CFR 1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse: These impacts are impacts that may have both beneficial and adverse aspects. No major adverse or beneficial impacts were identified that will require analysis in an environmental impact statement.

The selected action will have no or negligible long term beneficial or adverse impacts to vegetation, geology and topography, wildlife, floodplains, wetlands, water resources, soundscape management, lightscape management, ethnographic resources, museum collections, Indian trust resources, cultural landscapes, historic structures, socioeconomics, transportation/traffic, environmental justice, land use, parks and recreation, emergency services, concession operations, and infrastructure. For the short-term, negligible adverse impacts to air quality and aquatic wildlife will occur.

The selected action will contribute minor long-term adverse impacts to air quality, park operations, and visual and aesthetic resources; and beneficial long-term impacts to soils; aquatic wildlife; air quality, and visual and aesthetic resources. For the short-term, minor adverse impacts to water resources, wetlands, and soils will occur.

For threatened and endangered species, both federally listed and state or other agency listed, preliminary surveys conducted by the NPS identified the selected action as having potential habitat for the small whorled pogonia. An official survey of the small whorled pogonia will be conducted in Spring 2007 within the project area for the selected action by the Virginia DCR and again in the spring immediately before construction if later than 2007. If species are present within the project area, NPS will coordinate and consult with the U.S. FWS and the Virginia DCR and mitigation will be implemented based upon coordination and consultation.

Degree of effect on public health or safety: During construction, temporary and short-term impacts to noise and air quality will be reduced by restricting the hours of construction.

Although the selected action will require use of heavy equipment during construction for certain actions, the adverse impacts of emissions and dust associated with these activities will be short-term and negligible in a local context. Construction activities will not be expected to appreciably contribute to air quality impacts already occurring in the area. Furthermore, construction vehicles will be inspected prior to entry into the park to ensure they are in proper operating condition, including no fluid leaks and properly functioning muffler and exhaust systems. The truck beds and stockpiles will be covered to minimize blowing dust or loss of debris and construction equipment will be required to strictly adhere to park regulations and posted speed limits while inside park boundaries. New traffic volumes will potentially change air quality from an increase in visitors entering and using the parking lot. The entrance will be designed such that sufficient queue space for vehicles will be obtained reducing potential for idling vehicles to adversely contribute to air quality.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas: As described in the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect, the project area is not considered agricultural land. There are some prime farmland soils in the project area; however, the Census Bureau Map identifies these areas as urbanized. Prime farmlands designated as an urbanized area on the Census Bureau Map are not subject to the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

There is one major stream, Quantico Creek, and six unnamed tributaries in the project area. There are also several ephemeral streams, and several dry channels. The selected action will cross over Quantico Creek and two unnamed tributaries where an existing bridge and under-road culverts are located. These water resources will be temporarily impacted during construction, but in the long-term, the impacts will not be detectable and will be well within water quality standards. Vegetation removed during construction will be replaced after construction is complete to help control erosion and protect water quality. For these reasons, long-term impacts to surface water resources will be negligible and adverse. The bridge over Quantico Creek will require minor modifications to handle increased trail traffic. The specific modifications will be determined during the design phase of this project.

There are two wetlands found within or adjacent to the project area. Minor, short-term, adverse and negligible long-term adverse impacts to Wetland A will occur. Wetland A is approximately 20 to 30 feet east of Burma Road at the bridge over Quantico Creek. Because the limits of disturbance for the selected action will be the existing roadway, Wetland A will not be filled. Once the bike/pedestrian trail is constructed, the trail will have the potential to cause runoff, which may affect Wetland A. The selected action will potentially have negligible long-term adverse and minor short-term adverse impacts to Wetland B due to its location adjacent to the limits of disturbance. Construction equipment could potentially be placed near Wetland B. Once the bike/pedestrian trail is constructed, the trail will have the potential to cause runoff. A wetland jurisdictional determination and consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be needed to ascertain the wetland boundaries as they relate to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1987 *Wetland Delineation Manual* and applicable Section 404 regulations of the Clean Water Act. As this project is at the planning level stage, a Statement of Findings has not been completed. A Statement of Findings will be completed prior to implementation of the selected action during the design phase of this project.

Prince William Forest Park is located within Virginia's coastal zone. The selected action will have a minor long-term adverse impact to the coastal zone. The selected action is consistent with the Virginia Coastal Program.

There are no ecologically critical areas within the project area. The project area is located in Flood Zone X, which is outside the 500-year floodplain. No Indian trust resources, or ethnographic resources identified in the project area that could be affected by the project actions.

A cultural landscape study has not been completed for the Prince William Forest Park; however the NPS is planning to conduct one in the near future. It is likely the greater part of the park will be determined a cultural landscape when the study is complete. In addition, there are five individual historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) within the Park. Four of these are Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) constructed cabin camps and the fifth is the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine. All five historic districts note that building and structures within each district were designed in harmony with the natural and manmade landscape, and the landscape is an integral part of the nominations. A cultural landscape is also represented by the abandoned farms and fields within the Park and the surrounding forest. The impacts on any potential cultural landscape from the selected action will not be greater than minor because the Park is heavily wooded, which will help shield the new access and disperse any additional noise create by the increase in visitors.

Prince William Forest Park contains 158 CCC structures. As previously mentioned, there are five individual National Register-listed historic districts within the Park. Four of these are CCC constructed cabin camps and the fifth is the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine. The area of potential effects for the selected action is roughly defined as an area extending 500 feet in all directions from the project area. Two of the CCC camps are within the area of potential effects for cultural resources. Camp (1) Goodwill Historic District lies about 150 feet south of the intersection of Burma Road and Pleasant Road, and Camp (4) Pleasant Historic District lies about 450 feet south of the same intersection. A new access entrance near the camps may affect these cultural resources through the potential increase of stray visitors and vandalism. A new gate may be installed on Burma Road to prevent/deter visitors from continuing southeast along Burma Road and accessing the camps and appropriate signage and interpretive wayside exhibits will be implemented to direct visitors entering and exiting the park. The impact to historic structures will be negligible long-term and adverse. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, implementation of the selected action will have *no adverse effect* on historic structures. According to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's criteria of adverse effect (36 CFR 800.5), the selected action will not alter those characteristics that make the historic districts eligible for the National Register.

A portion of the project area was surveyed and no archeological sites detected. A new Phase I archeological survey will be conducted to determine whether archeological resources are present outside the previously surveyed areas, but within the project area. In the event that archeological resources are identified, their significance will be assessed and the results shared with the VDHR/VA SHPO. The NPS will mitigate any adverse effects to archeological resources.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the NPS sought concurrence from VDHR on impacts to cultural resources in a letter dated April 27, 2006. No response was received from VDHR. The Park contacted VDHR again on August 23, 2006. To date, no response has been received.

Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial: There were no highly controversial effects identified during either preparation

of the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect or the public review period. Nine comments in favor of the selected action were received from the public during the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect review period.

Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks: There were no highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks identified during either preparation of the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect or the public comment period.

Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration: The selected action neither establishes a NPS precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant impacts: Impacts to geology and topography, soils, air quality, vegetation, aquatic wildlife, wetlands, water resources, coastal zone management, visitor use and experience, park operations, transportation/traffic, historic structures, archeological resources, and visual and aesthetic resources were analyzed in the selected action of the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect. As described in the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect, cumulative impacts were determined by combining the impacts of the preferred alternative with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Projects that make up the cumulative effects scenario include:

- The VA 234 Expansion which consists of transforming 11 miles of VA 234 in Prince William County from two lanes to a four-lane highway;
- A new water line installed through 12 miles of the Park that replaces the existing 1930s era wells and pipeline;
- A new National Museum of the Marine Corps that is scheduled for completion for November 2006 near U.S. Route 1, south of the Park;
- On-going residential development occurring along VA 234;
- A new 105-foot water tower for the Prince William County Service Authority being constructed near visual distance of the selected action;
- Land acquisition across from Waterway Drive adjacent to the Prince William Forest Park boundary; and
- A long-term Interpretive Plan that will emphasize the Park's major themes and its natural environmental and human interaction with the landscape.

The negligible long-term adverse impact of the selected action on geology and topography will add a contribution to the overall negligible adverse cumulative effects.

The minor short-term adverse and the beneficial impacts of the selected action on soils will add a beneficial and a perceptible adverse contribution to the overall minor to moderate adverse and beneficial cumulative impact.

Negligible short-term and minor long-term adverse impacts to air quality will add a perceptible adverse and perceptible beneficial contribution to the overall minor adverse and beneficial cumulative effects.

The negligible short-term and long-term adverse impacts of the selected action on vegetation, the negligible short-term adverse impact on aquatic wildlife, and the minor short-term and

negligible long-term adverse impacts on wetlands will add a perceptible adverse contribution to the overall minor adverse cumulative effects.

Minor short-term and negligible long-term adverse impacts to water resources will add a perceptible adverse and beneficial component to the overall minor adverse cumulative effects.

The selected action will have minor long-term adverse impacts to Virginia's coastal zone and will add a perceptible adverse contribution to the overall adverse cumulative effects.

With the selected action, visitors will experience long-term beneficial impacts. These beneficial impacts will have a perceptible contribution to the overall beneficial cumulative effects. Park operations will experience minor long-term adverse impacts. However, the selected action will not contribute to cumulative effects.

The selected action will create negligible short- and long-term adverse impacts on transportation/traffic. These adverse impacts will add a perceptible contribution to the overall beneficial and minor to moderate adverse cumulative effects.

A negligible long-term adverse impact to historic structures will occur from the selected action, which will add a perceptible adverse component to the overall beneficial cumulative effect. Even though there is the potential for adverse impacts to archeological resources, the selected action will not contribute to cumulative effects.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structure, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources: As described in the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect, the selected action will not adversely affect any properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

Prince William Forest Park includes 158 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) structures. There are five individual National Register-listed historic districts within the Park. Four of these are CCC constructed cabin camps and the fifth is the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine. The area of potential effects for the selected action may be roughly defined as an area extending 500 feet in all directions. Two of the CCC camps are within the area of potential effects for cultural resources. Camp (1) Goodwill Historic District lies about 150 feet south of the intersection of Burma Road and Pleasant Road, and Camp (4) Pleasant Historic District lies about 450 feet south of the same intersection. A new access entrance near the camps may affect these cultural resources through the potential increase of stray visitors and vandalism. A new gate may be installed on Burma Road to prevent/deter visitors from continuing southeast along Burma Road and accessing the camps. Appropriate signage and interpretive wayside exhibits will be implemented to direct visitors entering and exiting the park. The impact will be negligible long-term, and adverse. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, implementation of the selected action will have *no adverse effect* on historic structures. According to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's criteria of adverse effect (36 CFR 800.5); the selected action will not alter those characteristics that make the historic districts eligible for the National Register.

A portion of the project area was surveyed and no archeological sites detected. A Phase I archeological survey will be conducted to determine whether archeological resources are present outside the previously surveyed areas, but within the project area. In the event that

archeological resources are identified, their significance will be assessed and the results shared with the VDHR/VA SHPO. The NPS will mitigate any adverse effects to archeological resources.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the NPS sought concurrence from VDHR on impacts to cultural resources in a letter dated April 27, 2006. No response was received from VDHR and the Park contacted the SHPO again on August 23, 2006 and has not received any response to date.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat: The project area of the selected action may support habitat for threatened, endangered, or candidate species of special concern.

In response to a request for information regarding potential impacts on threatened, endangered, or candidate species of special concern and/or their habitat, the U.S. FWS and the Virginia DCR both recognized that the project area of the selected action may support habitat appropriate for the small whorled pogonia. The U.S. FWS classifies this species as threatened and the Virginia DCR classifies it as endangered.

Preliminary surveys conducted by the NPS identified the project area of the selected action as having potential habitat for the small whorled pogonia. An official survey for the small whorled pogonia and its habitat will be conducted in Spring 2007 within the project area for the selected action by the Virginia DCR and again in the spring immediately before construction if later than 2007. If species are present within the project area, NPS will coordinate and consult with the U.S. FWS and the Virginia DCR and mitigation will be implemented based upon coordination and consultation.

Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law: The selected action violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

IMPAIRMENT OF PARK RESOURCES OR VALUES

I, as Superintendent of Prince William Forest Park, have determined that the implementation of the selected action will not constitute an impairment of park resources or values. Impacts documented in the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect and summarized above will not have a major affect on resources or values that are key to the natural and cultural integrity of the park or alter opportunities for the enjoyment of the park. The selected action will not impair park resources and will not violate the National Park Service Organic Act. This conclusion is based on a thorough analysis of the impacts described in the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect, the agency and public comments received, and the professional judgment of the decision maker, in accordance with NPS *Management Policies 2001*. As described in the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect, implementation of the selected action (preferred alternative) will not result in major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of Prince William Forest Park; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the Park; or (3) identified as a goal in the Park's *General Management Plan* or other relevant National Park Service planning documents.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY CONSULTATION

Scoping is an effort to involve agencies and the general public in determining issues to be addressed in the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect. Scoping is used to determine important issues to be given detailed analysis in the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect and eliminate issues not requiring detailed analysis; allocates assignments among the interdisciplinary team members and/or other participating agencies; identifies related projects and associated documents; identifies permits, surveys, consultations, etc. required by other agencies; and creates a schedule that allows adequate time to prepare and distribute the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect for public review and comment before a final decision is made. Scoping includes any interested agency, or any agency with jurisdiction by law or expertise (including the SHPO and Indian tribes) to obtain early input.

Park staff and resource professionals of the National Park Service – Denver Service Center conducted internal scoping. This interdisciplinary process defined the purpose and need, identified potential actions to address the need, determined the likely issues and impact topics, and identified the relationship of the proposed action to other planning efforts at the park.

A public scoping meeting was held on June 9, 2005 to obtain feedback on the project from the public and from local agencies. A public notice announcing the project was listed in local newspapers and homeowner's association mailings. Additionally, the NPS conducted Section 106 consultation with the VDHR/VA SHPO as part of this project. The NPS also requested and received information from the U.S. FWS and the Virginia DCR regarding any known threatened or endangered species within the project area.

In addition, the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect provided a substantive basis for the NPS's consistency determination under the Coastal Zone Management Act. The NPS submitted the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect to the Commonwealth of Virginia for its concurrence during the public and comment review period. The consistency determination and the Commonwealth of Virginia's concurrence will comply with the requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act. The Commonwealth of Virginia's concurrence is included in the errata sheet of this decision document.

Prince William Forest Park conducted a visitor survey to collect information for this project and to provide targeted input on specific issues that relate to the Park. This survey was a multi-component project, which included a mail survey that was sent to four neighboring zip codes, two on-site surveys for Prince William Forest Park visitors, and an internet survey. A total of 4,387 surveys were sent and/or contact made to the public and a total of 1,780 responses were received.

The Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect was distributed for public and agency review and comment from June 1, 2006 until July 15, 2006. Notices and the text of the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect were posted on the Park's website and in local newspapers, and a press release issued. The Park also sent a press release to their electronic mail distribution list. The Park also mailed approximately 25 to 30 copies of the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect to various interested parties and local and civic organizations for their review and comment. Copies were also made available for review at the Park's Visitor Center and the Prince William County Chinn Park, Potomac, Independent Hill, and Dumfries libraries. The Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect was also

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

available for public review on the World Wide Web at the National Park Service Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website.

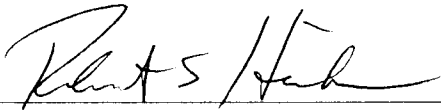
As of the end of the public review period on July 15, 2006, the NPS received 15 comments on the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect. Eleven of the comments were from interested individuals; two were from community organizations, one from the County of Prince William, and one from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality – Office of Environmental Impact Review. Five of the comments were in favor of Alternative B and/or D, which is a full vehicular access; nine were in favor of the selected action; and one comment provided general comments that did not support any specific alternative.

CONCLUSION

The selected action (preferred alternative) does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement. The selected action (preferred alternative) will not have a major impact on the human environment. Negative environmental impacts that could occur are considered short term and negligible to moderate in intensity and long term, negligible to moderate in intensity. Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the selected action (preferred alternative) to reduce or eliminate impacts. There are no foreseen significant adverse impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, historic properties, either listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law, nor will it cause impairment of park resources or values.

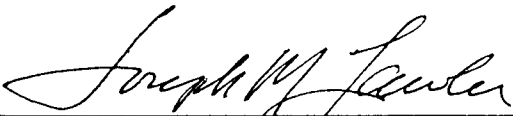
Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for this project and, thus, will not be prepared.

Recommended:



Robert Hickman, Superintendent
Prince William Forest Park

Approved:



Joseph M. Lawler, Regional Director
National Park Service, National Capital Region