

Glossary of Terms

3R: Road work in this category includes resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation. Funds in this category may only be used for work undertaken to extend the service life of an existing road and enhance safety. Work includes the placement of additional surface materials and/or other actions necessary to return an existing roadway, including shoulders, the roadside, and appurtenances, to a condition of structural adequacy. Most 3R work occurs on the existing road bench and generally cannot involve widening beyond the existing road bench or require the construction of new retaining walls, or cuts and fills.

4R: Road work in this category includes road reconstruction or realignment, which consists of altering the geometry of the roadway through widening or modifying the current horizontal and/or vertical alignment. These types of projects are typically much more complex and costly than 3R projects and result in more impacts to resources along the road. The numbers of roads selected for 4R types of work is limited to only the most critical, high priority segments. Work that will not qualify as 3R work includes paving previously unpaved roads or parking areas, constructing new parking areas or pullouts, widening off the present road bench, realigning and relocating roads (vertical or horizontal realignments), and constructing new bicycle paths.

Action alternative: An alternative that proposes a change to existing conditions or current management direction. The environmental consequences of an action alternative are analyzed in relation to the No Action Alternative. Also see No Action Alternative.

Activity area: Developed area or trailhead in the park.

Affected environment: The existing biological, physical, cultural, social, and economic conditions that are subject to both direct and indirect changes as a result of actions described within alternatives under consideration.

Alluvial: Pertaining to sediment deposited by flowing water, as in a riverbed.

Alternatives: A reasonable range of options that can accomplish an agency's objectives.

Aquifer: An underground bed or layer that yields ground water.

Backcountry: Backcountry is defined as 50 feet from the roadway.

Braided stream: A stream in which flow is divided at normal stage by small islands. This type of stream has the aspect of a single large channel within which there are subordinate channels.

CEQ: The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) was established by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The council's mission is to oversee and develop national environmental policy.

Choosing by Advantages: A decision-making process used as part of developing the Transportation Plan/EIS to analyze and refine the alternatives.

Class I Airshed: A Class I Airshed is the most restrictive air quality category, and was created by Congress to prevent further deterioration of air quality in national parks and wilderness areas of a given size which were in existence prior to 1977, or those additional areas which have since been designated Class I under federal regulations (40 CFR 52.21). The Clean Air Act established stringent requirements for "Class I" areas, national parks over 6,000 acres and national wilderness areas over 5,000 acres. Forty-eight National Park Service (NPS) units are Class I areas and the Clean Air Act (CAA) affords the greatest air quality protection to these areas.

Cub-of-the-year: A cub born in the current year.

Cultural landscape: A geographic area, including both cultural and natural elements, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.

Cultural resources: Properties such as landscapes or districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, or cultural practices that are usually greater than 50 years of age and possess architectural, historic, scientific, or other technical value. By their nature, cultural resources are non-renewable.

Cumulative effects: Effects on the environment that result from the incremental impacts of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of which agency (federal or non federal) or person undertakes such actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period of time.

Cygnets: A young swan.



Degradation (natural resources): Refers to negative impact(s) to natural resources or natural processes. The impact may be singular or cumulative; the extent may be local or ecosystem-wide. The term degradation is used broadly and may refer to: reduction in habitat size, reduction in extent of plant populations, declining species vigor exhibited as reduced population numbers, reduced reproductive success, increased mortality rates, and/or decreased percent of available habitat utilized.

Environmental consequences: A section of an environmental impact statement that is the scientific and analytic basis for comparing alternatives. This discussion includes the environmental effects of the alternatives, any adverse effects that cannot be avoided, and short-term, long-term and cumulative effects. These environmental effects include ecological, aesthetic, historical, cultural, economic, and social issues.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): A detailed statement required by NEPA when an agency proposes a major action that significantly affects the quality of the human environment. This document describes and analyzes the activities that might affect the human environment.

Environmental justice: Ensuring the rights of low-income people and communities of color to experience and enjoy clean and healthy environments. Executive Order 12898 requires that the NPS ensures that its programs, policies, and activities do not exclude, discriminate, or deny persons because of their race, color, or national origin.

Extirpated: Totally destroyed or exterminated.

Facilities: Refers to buildings, houses, campgrounds, picnic areas, visitor-use areas, operational areas, and associated supporting infrastructure such as roads, trails, and utilities.

Fixed route: Scheduled route for bus transit.

Frontcountry: Frontcountry means an area in a park or recreation area that is generally accessible by vehicle and offer designated campsites, facilities and recreational opportunities.

Graminoid: Grasslike plant or of the grass family.

Habitat fragmentation: The partitioning of larger habitats into smaller more isolated parcels, usually as a result of development. Fragmentation of habitat can negatively affect the abundance and diversity of plants and animals in an area.

Hibernacula: The shelter of a hibernating animal.

Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)/Historic American Engineering Record (HAER): An architectural and engineering documentation program that produces a thorough archival record of buildings, engineered structures, and cultural landscapes significant in American history and the growth and development of the built environment.

Historic character: The sum of all visual aspects, features, materials, and spaces associated with the historic nature of a site, structure, or landscape.

Historic district: A geographically definable urban or rural area, possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, landscapes, structures, or objects united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical developments. A district may also be composed of individual elements separated geographically but linked by association or history.

Hydric soils: Soils that are characterized by an abundance of moisture, periodically producing anaerobic conditions.

Hydrology: The science dealing with the properties, distribution, and circulation of water on the surface of the land, in the soil and underlying rocks, and in the atmosphere.

Impacts: Effects, both beneficial and adverse, of an action on the human environment. Direct effects are those occurring at the same time and place as the action itself. Indirect effects occur later in time or are farther removed in distance from the action, yet are reasonably foreseeable.

Interpretation: Programs that support the mission of the NPS by assisting people in understanding, enjoying, and contributing to the protection of the park's natural, cultural, and scenic resources and dynamic processes. Interpretive programs include walks and evening programs, guided tours, formal education programs for school groups, exhibits, audiovisual productions, and publications.

Lek: Established sage-grouse breeding area.

Lithic: Of or relating to stone or stone tools.



Loam: Soil composed of a mixture of sand, silt, clay, and organic material.

Mission 66 style (architecture): Refers to buildings developed in national parks between 1956 and 1966, during a period of experimentation with new structural forms, modern materials, and machine-driven methods of construction. The intent was to provide low maintenance, economical, permanent structures.

Mitigation: An activity designed to avoid, minimize, rectify, eliminate, or compensate for impacts of a proposed project. A mitigation measure should be a solution to an identified environmental problem.

Moraine: An accumulation of boulders, stones, or other debris carried or deposited by a glacier.

Multi-use trails: Pathways that serve several types of users including bicyclists and hikers.

Museum collection: Objects, works of art, historic documents, and natural history specimens collected according to a rational scheme and maintained so they can be preserved, studied, and interpreted for public benefit.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): The federal act that requires the development of an EIS for federal actions that might have substantial environmental, social, or other impacts.

National Historic Landmark: A district, site, building, structure, landscape, or object of national historical significance designated by the Secretary of the Interior under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and entered in the National Register of Historic Places.

National Register of Historic Places: The comprehensive list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of national, regional, state, and local significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. This list is maintained by the NPS under authority of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Natural resources: Features and values that include plants and animals, water, air, soils, topographic features, geologic features, paleontologic resources, natural quiet, and clear night skies.

Neotropical: The biogeographic region of the New World that stretches southward from the Tropic of Cancer and includes southern Mexico, Central and South America, and the West Indies.

No Action alternative: An alternative in an EIS that continues current management direction. A No Action alternative is a benchmark against which action alternatives are compared.

Non-native species: Species of plants or animals that do not naturally occur in a particular area and often interfere with natural biological systems. Also known as alien, introduced, or exotic species.

Non-point sources: Pollutants that enter the environment from general noncontained locations. Examples of non-point sources are roadways, parking lots, and landscaped areas. Pollutants from these locations can include petrochemicals, heavy metals, and fertilizers.

Noxious weeds: Weeds that are exotic and that have become pests; see non-native species.

Overstory: The portion of the trees forming the upper or uppermost canopy in a forest stand. This stratum of trees has outgrown the other vegetation in a forest and have their uppermost crown foliage largely or fully in direct sunlight, usually as a relatively continuous layer (excluding gaps).

Oxbow: A bend in a meandering river channel that is abandoned as the river shifts its course over time. Oxbows can remain saturated with surface water or groundwater for some time, providing diverse wetland habitats for vegetation and wildlife.

Restoration (cultural): The act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of an existing historic structure, landscape, or object as it appeared at a particular period of time, by removing modern additions and replacing lost portions of historic fabric, paint, or other elements.

Restoration (natural): Work conducted to remove impacts to natural resources and restore natural processes, and to return a site to natural conditions.

Revegetation: Replacement or augmentation of native plants in an area largely or entirely denuded of vegetation.

Ridership: The number of transit boardings, trips taken, or people using a transit system.

Riparian areas: Areas that are on or adjacent to rivers and streams; these areas are typically rich in biological diversity (flora and fauna).

Road corridor: The graded, disturbed area on each side of the road approximately tree line to tree line.

Social trails: A social trail is an informal, nondesignated trail between two locations. Social trails often result in trampling stresses to sensitive vegetation types.

Stewardship: The responsibility of caring for the park. This often grows from an understanding of and respect for the principles of the National Park System and the needs of the park's natural, social, and cultural environment.

Substantive comment: A comment that does one or more of the following: questions, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the EIS; questions, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of the environmental analysis; presents reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the EIS; or causes changes or revisions in the proposal.

Surface water: Water that naturally flows or settles on top of natural landforms and vegetation, often as rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and other bodies of water.

Telemetry: Telemetry is the wireless transmission and reception of measured quantities for the purpose of remotely monitoring environmental conditions or equipment parameters in real-time.

Threatened and endangered species: Species of plants and animals that receive special protection under state and federal laws. Also referred to as listed or protected species.

Transportation System Management: A variety of information systems and strategies for managing transportation issues.

Transit: Bus system operated by park or concessioners.

Understory: The trees and other woody species growing under a relatively continuous cover of branches and foliage formed by the overstory trees; also loosely applied to all woody strata below the overstory.

Ungulates: Hoofed herbivores, e.g., mule deer.

Variable messaging signs: Mobile electronic sign that provides timely information on road conditions, accidents, parking capacity etc. as an aid in trip planning/management.

Visitor experience: The perceptions, feelings, and interaction a park visitor has in relationship with the environment. Within the context of the proposed alternatives, visitor experience includes general access, facilities, visitor services, interpretation and orientation, and recreational opportunities. Other elements also contribute to the quality of the visitor experience, such as the condition of natural and cultural resources, air quality, transportation, and noise.

Wetland: Areas that are inundated by surface or groundwater with a frequency sufficient to support, under normal circumstances, vegetation or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction.

Wilderness: Areas protected by provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. These areas are characterized by a lack of human interference in natural processes; generally, there are no roads, structures, installations, and the use of motorized equipment is not allowed.



As the nation's conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has the responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environment and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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