



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Great Smoky Mountains National Park
107 Park Headquarters Road
Gatlinburg, Tennessee 37738



D30

December 18, 2007

Dear Park Neighbor:

The National Park Service (NPS) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is planning to prepare an environmental assessment to analyze alternatives for the rehabilitation of a 14-½ mile section of Newfound Gap Road within Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The proposed project is located in Sevier County, Tennessee, and would extend from the Park entrance near Gatlinburg, Tennessee, to the Newfound Gap Overlook Parking Area.

Proposed rehabilitation activities include milling and/or overlaying the existing asphalt on Newfound Gap Road, roadside pullouts and parking areas; rehabilitating or reconstructing stone masonry guardwalls, removing and resetting stone curbs; and replacement or repair of the existing drainage structures. Also under consideration is the addition of left turn lanes at the Chimneys Picnic Area and the Alum Cave Bluffs Trailhead Parking Area; and, providing additional parking at the Alum Cave Bluffs Trailhead and Chimney Tops Trailhead parking areas.

The NPS would like to invite you to join us at one of the public scoping meetings scheduled for this project. The purpose of these meetings is to provide the public and interested agencies and organizations an opportunity to learn about the project and provide comments early in the project planning process.

The meetings will be held at the following locations, dates and times:

Gatlinburg, TN Meeting

WHEN: Tuesday, January 15, 2008
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

WHERE: Garden Plaza Hotel
520 Historic Nature Trail
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

Cherokee, NC Meeting

WHEN: Thursday, January 17, 2008
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

WHERE: Holiday Inn
37 Tsalagi Road (Hwy 19)
Cherokee, NC 28719

The meetings will follow an open house format and will not include a scheduled presentation. Both meetings will provide the same materials and information.

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Your comments regarding potential issues and concerns, alternatives, potential environmental impacts, and mitigation strategies that should be considered during the planning process are welcome. Comments can be provided at the meetings, by mail, or on-line.

To provide comments by mail, please send them to:

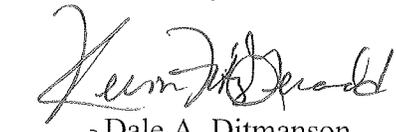
Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park
Rehabilitation of Newfound Gap Road – Environmental Assessment
Great Smoky Mountains National Park
107 Park Headquarters Road
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

To provide comments on-line, please go to the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/GRSM> and follow the appropriate links to *Rehabilitation of Newfound Gap Road – Environmental Assessment*.

The draft EA is currently planned to be released for public review in the winter of 2008/2009. Follow-up notification will be provided prior to the release of that document and we welcome any comments you may have. The construction portion of the project is currently programmed to receive funding in Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011.

If you have any questions or would like additional information prior to the public scoping meetings, please contact Mr. Michael Tomkosky at 865-430-0344.

Sincerely,



Dale A. Ditmanson
Superintendent