

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Cades Cove Opportunities Plan

Appendix A **Management Policies**

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Management Policies and the Opportunities Plan

Throughout the planning process National Park Service management policies have been used to direct and guide the development of alternatives. The development of summary reports on transportation, visitation, cultural/natural resources and facilities cite the General Management Plan, pertinent sub-plans as well as related policies and Director's Orders. The development and narratives related to the alternative were also built upon existing NPS policy. This includes policy on concession operations, campground operations, picnicking, alternative transportation, partnerships and visitor center development. The bibliography of each summary report includes references to the pertinent documents used in their development. In addition, the following list of policy and director order documents was included as a part of the general reference library used by the project team.

Alternative Transportation Systems (ATS):

- ◆ **Management Policy 9.2** – The location, type, and design of transportation systems and their components (e.g., roads, bridges, trails, and parking areas), and the use of alternative transportation systems, all strongly influence the quality of the visitor experience. Traditional practices of building wider roads and larger parking areas to accommodate more motor vehicles are not necessarily the answer.
- ◆ **Management Policy 9.2.2** – The Service will work cooperatively with other federal agencies; tribal, state and local governments; regional planning bodies; concessionaires; citizen groups; and others to design and promote alternative transportation systems for park access and circulation.
- ◆ **Memorandum of Understanding between Secretary of Transportation and Secretary of the Interior, November, 1997** – Many Federally-owned lands established for tourism and recreation are no longer able to meet the transportation demands placed upon them by the public. High visitation levels are causing problems due to the growing volumes of traffic and spiraling demands for visitor parking. This is especially true of many National Park units. The challenge of balancing stewardship of park resources against the pressure for more public access has become considerably more difficult in recent years. For the NPS to continue to fulfill the mandate of providing visitor enjoyment and conserving the unique resources found in the National Park units, a combination of improved facilities and transportation systems and visitor use management, with careful attention given to resource protection, will be required.
- ◆ **Director Memorandum D30 (2420)** - Transportation is the “crosswalk” or connection between resource protection and visitor enjoyment which is often the platform for opportunity in achieving the NPS dual mandate.

Concession Operations

- ◆ **Management Policies 6.4.4** – Wilderness-oriented commercial services that contribute to public education and visitor enjoyment of wilderness values or provide opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation may be authorized if they meet the “necessary and appropriate” tests of the National Park Service Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 and section 4(d)(6) of the Wilderness Act (16 USC 1133(d)(5)), and if they are consistent with the wilderness management act objectives contained in the park’s wilderness management plan, including the application of the minimum requirement concept.
- ◆ **Management Policies 9.2.2** – The Park Service may permit commercial visitor services that are necessary and appropriate for public use and enjoyment of the park, and that are consistent to the highest practicable degree with the preservation and conservations of the park’s resources and values.
- ◆ **Management Policies 10.2.2** – Concession management plans or commercial services plans will support a park’s purpose and significance, exceptional resource values, and visitor experience objectives, and will be consistent with enabling legislation.

Facilities Planning

- ◆ **Management Policies 9.1** – The National Park Service will provide visitor and administrative facilities that are necessary, appropriate, and consistent with the conservation of park resources and values. Facilities will be harmonious with park resources, compatible with natural processes, esthetically pleasing, functional, energy- and water- efficient, cost effective, universally designed, and as welcoming as possible to all segments of the population. Park facilities and operations will demonstrate environmental leadership by incorporating sustainable practices to the maximum extent practicable in planning, design, siting, construction, and maintenance.
- ◆ **Management Policies 9.1.1** – The protection of each park’s resources and values will be the primary consideration in facility development decisions.
- ◆ **Management Policies 9.1.5** – In-park utilities will be as unobtrusive as possible, and have the least possible resource impact.
- ◆ **Management Policies 9.3.1.3** – When necessary to provide visitor information and interpretive services, visitor centers may be constructed at locations identified in approved plans. To minimize visual intrusions and impacts to major park features, visitor centers will generally not be located near such features. Where an in-park location would create unacceptable environmental impacts, authorization should be obtained to place a visitor center outside the park. As

appropriate, a visitor center may include information services, sales of educational materials and theme-related items, audiovisual programs, museums, museum collections storage, exhibits, and other staffed or self-help programs and spaces necessary for a high-quality visitor experience. Additionally, the need for restrooms, drinking fountains, and other basic visitor requirements will be considered during the planning and design stage.

- ◆ **Management Policies 9.4** – When management facilities must be located inside the park, they will be located away from primary resources and features of the park, and sited so as to not adversely affect park resources or values, or detract from the visitor experience.

Natural Resources

- ◆ **Management Policies 4.0** – The National Park Service will preserve the natural resources, processes, systems, and values of units of the national park system in an unimpaired condition, to perpetuate their inherent integrity and to provide present and future generations with the opportunity to enjoy them.
- ◆ **Management Policies 4.1.3** – Planning, environmental evaluation, and public involvement regarding management actions that may affect the natural resources of the National Park System are essential for carrying out the Service’s responsibilities to present and future generations. The Service will ensure that the environmental costs and benefits of proposed operations, development, and resource management are fully and openly evaluated before taking actions that may impact the natural resources of parks.
- ◆ **Management Policies 4.1.5** – The Service will re-establish natural functions and processes in human-disturbed components of natural systems in parks unless otherwise directed by Congress. The Service will seek to return human-disturbed areas to the natural conditions and processes characteristic of the ecological zone in which the damaged resources are situated.
- ◆ **Management Policies 4.4.2** - Whenever possible, natural processes will be relied upon to maintain native plant and animal species, and to influence natural fluctuations in populations of these species. The Service may intervene to manage individuals or populations of native species only when such intervention will not cause unacceptable impacts to the populations of the species or to other components and processes of the ecosystems that support them.

Cultural Resources

- ◆ **Management Policy 5.0** – The National Park Service will preserve and foster appreciation of the cultural resources in its custody, and will demonstrate its

respect for the peoples traditionally associated with those resources, through appropriate programs of research, planning, and stewardship.

- ◆ **Management Policy 5.2** – Planning decisions will follow analysis of how proposals might affect the values that make resources significant, and the consideration of alternatives that might avoid or mitigate potential adverse effects.
- ◆ **Management Policy 5.3.1.6** – Park superintendents will set, enforce, and monitor carrying capacities to limit public visitation to, or use of, cultural resources that would be subject to adverse effects from unrestricted levels of visitation or use.
- ◆ **Management Policy 5.3.5** – The Park Service will provide for the long-term preservation of, public access to, and appreciation of, the features, materials, and qualities contributing to the significance of cultural resources.
- ◆ **Management Policy 5.3.5.2** – The treatment of a cultural landscape will preserve significant physical attributes, biotic systems, and uses when those uses contribute to historical significance. The treatment implemented will be based on sound preservation practices to enable long-term preservation of a resource’s historic features, qualities, and materials.

Visitor Management

- ◆ **Management Policy 8.2** – The Service is committed to providing appropriate, high quality opportunities for visitors to enjoy the parks, and will maintain within the parks an atmosphere that is open, inviting, and accessible to every segment of American society.

To provide for enjoyment of the parks, the National Park Service will encourage visitor activities that can be sustained without causing unacceptable impacts to park resources or values.

- ◆ **Management Policy 8.2.1** – Visitor carrying capacity is the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining the desired resource and visitor experience conditions in the park. By identifying and staying within carrying capacities, superintendents can prevent park uses that may unacceptably impact the resources and values for which the parks were established. For all zones, districts, or other logical management divisions within a park, superintendents will identify visitor carrying capacities for managing public use. Superintendents will also identify ways to monitor for, and address, unacceptable impacts to park resources and visitor experiences. When making decisions about carrying capacity, superintendents must utilize the best available natural and social science and other information, and maintain a comprehensive administrative record relating to their decisions. A carrying capacity planning

process, such as the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) framework, should be applied in an implementation plan or an amendment to an existing plan. As use changes over time, superintendents must continue to decide if management actions are needed to keep use at acceptable and sustainable levels.