



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument



P.O. Box 1460  
Fritch, Texas 79036

Y14 (LAMR)

February 9, 2012

Dear Interested Party:

Lake Meredith National Recreation Area (LAMR) and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument (ALFL) are proposing to update their Fire Management Plan (FMP) to formally lay out the process and actions for prescribed burning on adjacent private ranchlands, including the attendant vegetation manipulation necessary along firelines to control these prescribed burns. National Fire Policy has changed in recent years and the updated terminology and policy would be incorporated into the FMP; these policy and terminology changes have been analyzed and approved on an interagency basis at the national level. Due to updates in environmental regulations and increasing the size of future prescribed burns, the National Park Service (NPS) has determined that it is necessary to do a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis of the increased prescribed burning on private lands adjacent to LAMR.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates 2 alternatives; a No Action Alternative (I), and the Preferred Alternative (II).

Alternative I, No Action Alternative - This alternative represents what would occur at LAMR if the fire management program is limited to fuels management activities occurring only on NPS lands. This alternative provides a baseline for comparing and evaluating the impacts to the environment by the action alternative. The approved fire and fuels management program at LAMR would continue, but prescribed burning activities would be limited to NPS lands inside LAMR and ALFL. This would likely hinder successful prescribed burning in many areas, and result in limiting the acres and amount of vegetative fuels treated inside the park. This would result in a buildup of fuels in certain park areas that could lead to future uncontrollable wildfires, both within and adjacent to the park. These wildfires could threaten visitors, adjacent communities, NPS infrastructure, and oil and gas facilities both within and adjacent to NPS lands.

Alternative II, Preferred and Environmentally Preferred Alternative – Under this alternative, the LAMR fire management program would continue as it currently exists, with the addition of utilizing prescribed burning on NPS and immediately adjacent private lands, with the permission of landowners. The fire staff would use ranch roads as firelines where prescribed fires could be safely stopped and contained. Hand or mechanical treatments approved in the LAMR Fire Management Plan would be utilized to improve firelines where needed and to protect identified natural and cultural features, or facilities. Larger prescribed burns could be implemented to more effectively reduce wildfire risk, and prevent large wildfires in the area by creating blocks of reduced vegetation that would not carry fire. Thus these activities would protect visitors, nearby communities, park infrastructure, and oil and gas facilities better than the no action alternative.

This EA has been prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) to provide the decision-making framework that:

- 1) analyzes a reasonable range of alternatives to meet objectives of the proposed plan;
- 2) evaluates potential issues and impacts to the natural and cultural resources of Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument; and
- 3) identifies specific and required mitigation measures that are designed to lessen the degree or extent of these impacts.

Resource topics determined to potentially be affected by the alternatives include: Air Quality, Geologic and Soil Resources, Vegetation Resources (including Invasive Weeds), Wildlife, Special Status Species, Water Resources, Archeological, Historic Resources, Oil and Gas Development, Adjacent Landowners and Uses, and Human Health and Safety. Other resource topics were examined and dismissed because it was determined that this plan would result in only negligible or minor effects to those resources. No major effects are anticipated as a result of this program.

The Lake Meredith National Recreation Area FMP EA will be available via the internet at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/Plans.cfm>. If you wish to make a comment on this EA, please submit written suggestions, comments, and concerns regarding the proposed project online at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>. Click on Texas in the "Choose a State" pulldown menu, then click on the Lake Meredith National Recreation Area in the "Choose a Park" menu, then click on the "Expanded Prescribed Burning Adjacent to Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarry," then click on "Open for Public Comment" on the left sidebar, then click on the document and finally click on "Comment on Document".

If you are not able to submit comments electronically and wish to comment on this EA, please mail your comments to the name and address listed below. The EA will be available for public comments for 30 days; the comments are due by March 12, 2012. Please note the names and addresses of comments received become public record. If you wish your name and/or address to not be used, then you must state this at the beginning of your comments. All submissions made by organizations, businesses, and individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be available for public review in their entirety.

**Please address comments to:**

Superintendent; Attn: Lake Meredith National Recreation Area; P.O. Box 1460, Fritch, TX 79036.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cindy Ott-Jones", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cindy Ott-Jones  
Superintendent