

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Scoping is the effort to involve agencies and the general public in determining the scope of issues to be addressed in the environmental document. Among other tasks, scoping determines important issues and eliminates issues that are not important; allocates assignments among the interdisciplinary team members and other participating agencies; identifies related projects and associated documents; identifies other permits, surveys, and consultations required by other agencies; and creates a schedule which allows adequate time to prepare and distribute the environmental document 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 Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the State Historic Preservation Officer, and Indian tribes) to obtain early input (see Appendix A).

The National Park Service conducted both internal scoping with appropriate National Park Service staff, as well as federal, state and local agencies, and external scoping with the general public and affected groups. The internal scoping meetings were held at parkway headquarters during the week of August 2, 2004. In addition, scoping letters were mailed to the following agencies (a copy of the scoping letter is included in Appendix A):

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- North Carolina National Forest Service
- North Carolina State Clearinghouse
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina Historic Preservation Office
- North Carolina Department of Environment, Health & Natural Resources
- North Carolina Natural Heritage Program
- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- North Carolina Division of Environmental Management
- North Carolina Department of Agriculture

The North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources responded to the letter with a request that coordination with the department continue as the project progresses. The area around the Folk Art Center has not been systematically surveyed and areas outside the previously surveyed area for the parkway headquarters have also not been surveyed. These areas have a high probability for the presence of prehistoric and historic

archaeological sites, according to the state agency. They requested that site plans and location maps be sent to them so they could continue their review. This letter and the response are located in Appendix A.

A letter was received from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission regarding the project. The letter listed nine points of information that they requested be included in the regional destination visitor center Development Concept Plan / Environmental Assessment. In addition to the points of information, the agency made recommendations for measures that would protect the natural resources in the vicinity, such as using best management practices during construction, and limiting impervious surfaces to reduce stormwater runoff. This letter is also located in Appendix A.

The US Army Corps of Engineers responded to the scoping letter on November 30, 2004, stating that the proposed action may impact waters of the United States and associated wetlands, but indicated that the scoping letter did not provide enough information to determine the extent of the wetlands in the vicinity of the project or the type of permit that would be required for the action. They requested additional data for review and comment, as well as a determination of the Department of the Army permit eligibility. The staff of Blue Ridge Parkway determined that there are no wetlands in the construction area, nor in the vicinity of the project, and no further coordination was undertaken. A discussion of the impacts to wetland resources was dismissed from analysis in the Affected Environment.

The external scoping meetings were held at a local hotel and parkway headquarters during the week of September 6, 2004. Comments were solicited during external scoping until September 17, 2004. These external scoping comments are presented in Appendix A. Most of the responses stated that the regional destination visitor center should be sited at the Folk Art Center site, approximately two miles north of the Hemphill Knob site. The headquarters of the Southern Highland Craft Guild are located in the Folk Art Center. Southern Highland Craft Guild provides interpretation of the southern Appalachian Mountain culture and also operates the Allanstand Craft Shop at the Folk Art Center. Southern Highland Craft Guild artisans sell their crafts in the craft shop. The comments indicated that constructing the regional destination visitor center at the Hemphill Knob site would negatively impact the livelihoods of the Southern Highland Craft Guild artisans by drawing visitors away from the Folk Art Center.

Meetings were also held with stakeholders during the week of September 6, 2004. these meetings included the Southern Highland Craft Guild, the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, the National Parks Conservation Association, public sector stakeholders, and possible partners. Summaries of these meetings are included in Appendix A.

PLANNING TEAM PARTICIPANTS

Dan Brown	Superintendent	National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway
Gary Johnson	Chief, Resource Planning and Professional Services	National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway
Patty Lockamy	Chief of Interpretation	National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway
Phil Noblitt	Management Assistant	National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway
Bambi Teague	Chief of Resource Management	National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway
John Wilburn	Supervisory Civil Engineer	National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway
John Gentry	Chief of Maintenance	National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway
Michael Molling	Facility Manager	National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway
Rick Wyatt	Concessions Management Specialist	National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway
Michele Maertens	District Interpreter	National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway
Francis Peltier	Associate Regional Director	National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office
Steven Wright	Environmental Protection Specialist	National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office
Richard Sussman	Chief of Planning and Compliance Division	National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office
Richard Ramsden	Chief of Architecture Division	National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office
Lydia R. Creager	Project Manager	National Park Service, Denver Service Center
Ray Todd	Design and Construction Branch Chief for Inter- mountain, Midwest, and Southeast Regions	National Park Service, Denver Service Center
Jack Cook	Project Specialist	National Park Service, Denver Service Center
Lisa Royse	Project Manager	National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center

PREPARERS

Noel Fehr	Project Manager	Parsons
John Hoesterey	Technical Director	Parsons
John Martin	Principal Planner	Parsons
Kathy Kuhlman	Environmental Scientist	Parsons
Colleen Conklin	Environmental Scientist	Parsons
John Hager	Landscape Architect	Parsons
Susan Bupp	Cultural Resources Manager	Parsons
Rachael Magnum	Cultural Resources Manager	Parsons