

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**



**Pea Ridge National Military Park
Arkansas**

PEA RIDGE NATIONAL MILITARY PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

INTRODUCTION

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and implementing regulations published by the Council on Environmental Quality and the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service (NPS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for implementing preferred cultural landscape treatment alternatives at Pea Ridge National Military Park (the park) in Pea Ridge, Arkansas. In addition, the NPS is using the EA to document compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800.8(c). This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) describes the alternative the NPS has selected for implementation, provides the rationale for its selection, and explains why it will not have significant impacts on the human environment. This FONSI concludes the NEPA compliance processes. NPS will continue to consult with the Arkansas State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) during implementation of the selected alternative to satisfy Section 106 compliance. As such, implementation of this plan, as written, will satisfy all of the requirements for compliance and will be implemented as funding and personnel allow.

BACKGROUND

The park was established by Congress on July 20, 1956 to "preserve and protect the landscapes and resources associated with the Battle of Pea Ridge" and "interpret the battle as an integral part of the social, political, and military history of the Civil War" (70 Statute (Stat.) 592). The Battle of Pea Ridge (also known as the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern) in northwest Arkansas was the largest Civil War battle west of the Mississippi River and essentially secured northwest Arkansas and the state of Missouri for the Union. The name of the battle was derived from the nearby city of Pea Ridge, supposedly named for the wild "turkey peas" or "hog peanuts" that were harvested by the indigenous American Indian tribes.

The park's General Management Plan (GMP), completed in 2006, set the goals for cultural landscape management at the park. The overarching goals of the GMP include "refining cultural and natural resource management strategies", "returning the battlefield landscape to the 1862 appearance" and "ensuring that all visitors understand and appreciate the significance of Pea Ridge National Military Park." The NPS has completed the combined Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Assessment (CLR/EA), the purpose of which is to provide guidance for preserving the cultural landscape of Pea Ridge National Military Park as the historic site of the Battle of Pea Ridge. The CLR is being prepared to facilitate implementing the park's cultural landscape management goals outlined previously in the park's GMP.

Natural and man-made changes to the landscape of the park area and environs have occurred over the past 150 years since the time of the battle. The CLR is needed to generate baseline documentation, document the changes to the cultural landscape over time, to transfer knowledge, and to provide holistic and integrated guidance for the long-term preservation and stewardship of the cultural landscape.

This FONSI and the CLR/EA constitute the record of the environmental impact analysis and decision-making process associated with selecting and implementing the selected alternative, which defines the management and treatment of the cultural landscape at the park. The selected alternative includes measures to protect cultural resources, improve visitor enjoyment, and provide long-term conditions necessary to sustain natural and cultural resources. The selected alternative was selected after careful review of resource and visitor impacts and public comment.

This document records 1) a FONSI as required by NEPA and concurrent compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, and 2) a determination of no impairment as required by the NPS Organic Act of 1916 (see Attachment A).

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The CLR/EA considered three action alternatives and a no action alternative. These alternatives are discussed below.

No Action Alternative

The no action alternative provides "a baseline of existing impact continued into the future against which to compare impacts of action alternatives." Under the no action alternative, the present level of use, management, interpretation, operations, and maintenance would continue. As identified in the 2006 GMP, "park management would retain and enhance a substantial portion of the historic character of the battlefield landscape." Current management and maintenance activities would continue over time, as park funds allow. Current management activities include the following:

- The existing visitor center / administration complex would remain until such a time a new facility would be built. The sites of existing buildings would be repaired after the facilities were removed. This repair would include the abandonment of some utilities with rehabilitation of these areas to a condition that would reflect the historic 1862 setting.
- A new visitor center/facility would be constructed on the west edge of the park. As part of the visitor center relocation, adjustments would be made to the tour road to provide access to and from the new facilities.
- The recommendations for treatment of vegetation within the study area, identified by the Vegetation Management Plan (VMP), would be followed.

Under the no action alternative, the least change to the existing cultural landscape would occur. Although the management items listed above would continue to be implemented slowly over time, the natural and man-made changes that have altered the landscapes and resources associated with the Battle of Pea Ridge would not be noticeably changed. The integrity of the cultural landscape would continue to deteriorate over time due to issues such as a lack of guidance on stabilizing and managing cultural landscape features and the continued growth of vegetation that obscures the cultural landscape; which would reduce the interpretation value and visitor understanding of the battlefield landscape.

Action Alternatives

Components Common to All Action Alternatives

Three action alternatives were determined to meet the park's purpose, need, and objectives for taking action. The following components are actions that were proposed for cultural landscape management, regardless of which action alternative was selected. Therefore, these components are noted as being common to all action alternatives.

1. A new visitor center / facilities complex would be located on the west edge of the park as recommended by the GMP/EIS. The complex would be located north of Leetown Hamlet, accessed by Old Leetown Road. This would become the relocated / re-routed Highway 72.
2. The existing visitor center complex would remain for the short-term. It would be screened to visually minimize its impact on the historic battlefield. The complex was built in the 1960s as part of the Mission 66 program, and would be evaluated by NPS MWRO to determine its significance to this period. Repair of the site after the facilities are removed would include abandoning some utilities, and rehabilitating this area to a condition similar to its 1862 setting.
3. Arkansas Highway 72 would be rerouted outside the park boundaries in compliance with the GMP/EIS recommendations. This would assist in the rehabilitation of the cultural landscape and would assist in re-establishing the historic agrarian setting.
4. U.S. Highway 62 would be relocated to the park's southern boundary. The park road, park entry and parking at the visitor center would be modified as would the tour road, parking at Elkhorn Tavern, and the horse trailhead. These modifications would be in accordance with

the preferred alternative for the mitigation of the highway relocation. A restroom facility would be part of the new parking at Elkhorn Tavern.

5. Pedestrian and equestrian uses would be allowed on historic circulation routes with maintenance actions tailored to manage these uses. Bicycle use would be prohibited on historic routes.
6. The horse trail would remain as a park amenity and would be managed according to best practices. The horse trail may follow historic circulation routes when feasible and practicable with maintenance actions tailored to manage this use.
7. The Trail of Tears would be included with the repair of Telegraph Road as it is an important historical event. This importance relates to the road's inception in the 1830s, and its role as part of the northern route of the Trail of Tears.
8. Known sites of mass graves from the Battle of Pea Ridge would be identified and preserved. Investigations on the location, number of dead / buried, and troop identification would be undertaken.
9. Cross Timber Hollow via Telegraph Road would offer an important 'back country' experience, accessible by foot with maintenance actions tailored to use. Further research and investigations would be conducted to identify connections between the tanyard and Van Dorn to determine the role, if any the tanyard had with the battle.
10. Further research and investigations would be conducted for hospital site(s) noted on historic maps of the 1862 battle. These maps indicate several hospital sites in Cross Timber Hollow and other locations within the park.
11. At Winton Springs, historical research would be conducted to define extant features in existence at the time of the battle (potentially foundations, remnants, springhouses, roads). Extant features that date from the period of significance would be stabilized. The existing road and gravel area would be retained and reconfigured for park use.
12. The three monuments would be preserved and repaired. The setting of the two monuments at Elkhorn Tavern would be rehabilitated to reflect the 1880s appearance and to allow for pedestrian access. The setting of the 1930s monument would be preserved.
13. Non-contributing features not needed for functional purposes or that detract from the historic setting would be removed. Maintain existing orchards (at a minimum).
14. The recommendations of the Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) would be followed for the study area. Recommendations for sites identified by the VMP for inclusion in the CLR/EA: Ford Farm, Winton Springs, Leetown Hamlet, Elkhorn Tavern / Williams Hollow, and Federal Trenches would be treated as recommended in this CLR/EA.
15. The natural systems of the Pea Ridge cultural landscape, including the natural drainages of the park, would be preserved and maintained. These drainages include Lee Creek, the South Branch of Winton Spring, and the seasonal drainages of Cross Timber and Williams hollows. The vegetation of these waterways would be maintained in a native state to convey the historic setting and to protect stream banks and channels from excessive cutting and erosion.

Because these aspects of the alternatives do not differentiate between the action alternatives, the remaining discussion is focused on general recommendations unique to each alternative. A full description of the alternatives is contained in the CLR/EA.

Alternative 1 – Investigating and Preserving the Battle Landscape

Alternative 1 would undertake further research and investigations needed to accurately convey the historic setting, particularly at each landscape character area. Preservation and repair of extant contributing features would be undertaken.

This alternative would focus on preservation, stabilization, and repair of extant features. The research and identification of extant below-grade features would be undertaken. Spaces and relationships between non-extant features would be re-established. This alternative would reveal historic spaces and landscape patterns using the simplest approaches with the least amount of modifications to the cultural landscape.

Alternative 1 would provide a sense of the scale and space of the landscape setting that existed at the time of the battle. Extant features such as roads and the rebuilt historic fences would be preserved. Contributing features would be stabilized and repaired but no additional elements would be added. The focus of this alternative would be on additional research and further investigations to understand the appearance of the landscape during the period of significance.

Alternative 2 – Revealing the Battlefield Landscape (Selected Alternative)

The selected alternative would reveal the landscape that soldiers and civilians experienced during the Battle of Pea Ridge in 1862 through 1865. This would be accomplished by re-establishing the spatial qualities of the historic setting. Extant contributing features would be preserved and repaired, and non-extant features that existed at the time of the battle would be identified and marked.

The personal stories of the inhabitants (farm owners, families, slaves, etc.) and accounts from the soldiers would be researched. Opportunities for interpretation of the battle landscape, the influence the battle had on the community, experiences of the soldiers, and the aftermath of the war would be provided.

Further archeological investigations and research would be undertaken, particularly at key sites (e.g., Leetown Hamlet, Elkhorn Tavern). Investigations would focus on identifying below-grade remnants of buildings, structures, roads and features.

The spatial relationships and views of the physical setting would be re-established through the removal and thinning of vegetation, and repair and use of the 1862 circulation system. This alternative would focus on the preservation, stabilization and repair of features. Compatible additions and uses would be allowed.

Alternative 3 – Reconstructing the Battle Scene

This alternative would focus on accurately conveying the historic setting of the Battle of Pea Ridge to closely resemble what the fighting soldiers witnessed.

Extant contributing features would be repaired to reflect their historic appearance. Preservation and repair of the spatial qualities of the historic site would be undertaken. The non-extant features that existed at the time of the battle would be marked as extensive three-dimensional representations.

Further archeological investigations and research would be undertaken, particularly at key sites (i.e., Leetown Hamlet, Elkhorn Tavern) to identify below-grade remnants of buildings, structures, and roads. Alternative 3 would closely follow the recommendations of the GMP / EIS to provide access to the Federal Trenches from the north.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative required by 40 CFR 1505.2(b), to be identified in a record of decision, that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources. The “Environmentally Preferable Alternative” is identified upon consideration and weighing by the Responsible Official of long-term environmental impacts against short-term impacts in evaluating what is the best protection of these resources (43 CFR 46.30).

Alternative 2 is the environmentally preferable alternative for several reasons. Based on the enabling legislation of the park, which is “to preserve and protect the landscapes and resources associated with the battle of Pea Ridge, [and] to interpret the battle as an integral part of the social, political, and military history of the Civil War...” (70 Stat. 592), the historic and cultural resources in the park hold great importance and priority for park management. Alternative 2 will provide the best balance between the preservation of historic and cultural resources and the protection of the natural resources within the park.

WHY THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE WOULD NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

The intensity or severity of impacts resulting from implementing the selected alternative is evaluated using the 10 criteria listed in 40 CFR § 1508.27. Key areas in which impacts were evaluated include cultural resources, vegetation, wildlife, visual resources, visitor experience, and park operations. As defined in 40 CFR § 1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria.

Impacts that May be Both Beneficial and Adverse; a Significant Effect May Exist Even if the Park Service Believes that on Balance the Effect Would be Beneficial

The selected alternative will result in both beneficial and adverse impacts. In general, the alternative provides beneficial effects on cultural resources, vegetation, visual resources, visitor experience, and park operations. Cultural resources will benefit from preservation, repair, and rehabilitation of extant contributing features; additional knowledge of archeological resources; and restoration of the special qualities of the historic setting. Benefits to vegetation will result from vegetation management that will improve vegetation health. The benefits to visual resources and visitor experience will result as new knowledge and understanding are incorporated into vegetation management, preservation of cultural landscape features, and interpretative programming. The benefits to park operations will result from providing more guidance on cultural landscape management activities and increasing interpretation and education value.

Adverse impacts on vegetation, wildlife, visual resources, visitor experience, and park operations will be local and parkwide, short- and long-term, and slight, and will result from implementation and maintenance of the proposed circulation and vegetation modifications. No specific mitigation measures will be needed to reduce adverse impacts of the selected alternative beyond the best management practices (BMPs) listed in Table 3 of Chapter 4 of the CLR/EA. A summary of effects to resources is found in Table 3 of Chapter 4 the CLR/EA.

Degree of Effect on Public Health or Safety

Due to the nature of the proposed activities, the selected alternative will not pose a threat to public health and safety. Areas subject to vegetation management and other mechanized activities will be closed to visitors during work periods. In addition, the public will be alerted by signs or barriers.

Unique Characteristics of the Geographic Area such as Proximity to Historic or Cultural Resources, Monument Lands, Prime Farmlands, Wetlands, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or Ecologically Critical Areas

As described in the CLR/EA, the selected alternative will not affect prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas because those resources do not exist in the park. Buffer zones will ensure the protection of wetlands. The NPS will continue to identify potential historic properties within areas of the park proposed for ground disturbance and where previous surveys have not occurred.

Degree to Which Effects on the Quality of the Human Environment are Likely to be Highly Controversial

The selected alternative is not highly controversial. No issues arose during public scoping or the preparation of the CLR/EA from park staff. No issues were brought to the park's attention during the public review period that indicated a dispute with either the methods or results of the analysis of topics.

Degree to Which the Possible Effects on the Quality of the Human Environment are Highly Uncertain or Involve Unique or Unknown Risks

No highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks were identified during the preparation of the CLR/EA or the public review period. In addition, the action will not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

Degree to Which the Action may Establish a Precedent for Future Actions with Significant Effects or Represents a Decision in Principle about a Future Consideration

The selected alternative will not have a significant effect and does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects.

Whether the Action is Related to Other Actions with Individually Insignificant but Cumulatively Significant Impacts

The CLR/EA concluded that past, present, and future activities, when coupled with the selected alternative, will have local and parkwide long-term beneficial cumulative effects and local and parkwide long-term slight adverse cumulative effects. No significant adverse cumulative effects were identified. Likely future actions taken individually or collectively will result in no more than local minor adverse cumulative impacts on the human or natural environment.

Degree to Which the Action may Adversely Affect Districts, Sites, Highways, Structures, or Objects Listed on the National Register of Historic Places; or May Cause Loss or Destruction of Significant Scientific, Cultural, or Historical Resources

The selected alternative will have a parkwide long-term direct beneficial effect on cultural landscapes resulting from implementing the recommended treatments, which will not diminish the overall integrity of the cultural landscape. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions will have both a long-term direct beneficial impact and long-term slight indirect adverse cumulative effect on cultural landscapes and historic properties by improving the cultural landscape through vegetation management activities. The relocation of Highway 62 to south of the park will have a beneficial direct impact; the indirect adverse impacts from present and future

residential and commercial development will diminish the cultural landscape. The NPS initiated consultation with the SHPO with a scoping letter sent on June 3, 2013. The SHPO also received a copy of the draft CLR/EA for review and comment, and the park will coordinate with the SHPO in the development of mitigation measures for historic and archeological resources, if necessary. The SHPO responded with a letter of concurrence with the NPS finding of no adverse effect on historic properties in a letter dated June 25, 2014.

Degree to Which the Action May Adversely Affect an Endangered or Threatened Species or its Critical Habitat

No federally listed plant or animal species are known within the park boundaries. In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the park initiated consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on June 3, 2013. The USFWS also received a copy of the draft CLR/EA for review and comment. In a letter dated May 1, 2014, the USFWS concurred with the NPs finding of no effect on threatened or endangered species.

Whether the Action Threatens a Violation of Federal, State, or Local Environmental Protection Law

The selected alternative violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

MITIGATION MEASURES

A number of mitigating best management practices (BMPs) will be incorporated into the implementation of the selected alternative to minimize the degree and severity of adverse environmental impacts. BMPs include general measures such as signage and proper cleaning of equipment prior to use in the park, and other resource-specific measures to ensure protection of natural and cultural resources in the park. No specific mitigation measures will be needed to reduce adverse impacts of the selected alternative beyond the BMPs listed in Table 2, Chapter 4 of the CLR/EA.


PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

During preparation of the CLR/EA, the NPS made efforts to involve the public in the planning process, including soliciting information and data from the public and regulatory agencies. The CLR/EA was made available on the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment website and by hard copies placed in the park Visitor Center and Pea Ridge, Arkansas, public library for public review and comment between May 22, 2014 and June 21, 2014. A public meeting was held in Garfield, Arkansas, on June 5, 2014, to allow interested parties an opportunity to comment on the CLR/EA. The park did not receive any comments from the public regarding the CLR/EA.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

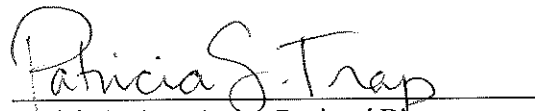
Based on the review of the facts and analysis contained in the CLR/EA the NPS has selected Alternative 2 for implementing the CLR/EA at the Pea Ridge National Military Park. Alternative 2 will not have a significant impact either by itself or in consideration of cumulative impacts. Accordingly, the requirements of NEPA, regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality, provisions of NPS Director's Order-12 and Handbook (Conservation Planning and Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision-Making), and the National Historic Preservation Act have been fulfilled. Furthermore, the selected alternative will not impair park resources or values and will not violate the NPS Organic Act. The selected alternative supports the enabling legislation establishing Pea Ridge National Military Park under the NPS Organic Act with the intended purpose of preserving the scientific and public interests for future generations. An environmental impact statement is not required and will not be prepared for implementation of the selected alternative.

Recommended:


Brenda Waters, Acting Superintendent

09/02/2014
Date

Approved:


Patricia S. Trap, Acting Regional Director
Midwest Region

9.11.2014
Date

ATTACHMENT A
NON-IMPAIRMENT DETERMINATION
PEA RIDGE NATIONAL MILITARY PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PEA RIDGE NATIONAL MILITARY PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NON-IMPAIRMENT DETERMINATION

In addition to determining the environmental consequences of alternatives to proposed actions, National Park Service (NPS) *Management Policies 2006* and Director's Order-12 require an analysis of potential effects to determine if actions will impair park resources. Impairment is an impact that would, in the professional judgment of the responsible NPS manager, harm the integrity of park resources or values, including opportunities that will otherwise be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values. A determination of impairment is made for particular resource impact topics carried forward and analyzed in the environmental assessment for the selected alternative. The selected alternative for meeting the objectives established in the Pea Ridge National Military Park Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Assessment (CLR/EA), Alternative 2, is described in Chapter 4 of the CLR/EA. The CLR/EA also includes detailed information on existing conditions of resources (CLR/EA Chapter 3) and the effects the selected alternative will have on those resources (CLR/EA Chapter 5). Existing conditions and effects are briefly summarized in this impairment determination.

The description of park significance in Chapter 1 of the CLR/EA was used as a basis for determining if a resource is:

- Necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park, or
- key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park, or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park, or
- identified in the park's general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents as being of significance.

This impairment determination is based on current NPS guidance on determining impairment of park resources and values. The impairment determination for each resource and value includes:

- a brief description of the condition of the resource;
- whether the resource is necessary to fulfill the purposes for which the park was established;
- whether the resource is key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park or to the opportunity for enjoyment of the park;
- whether the resource is identified as a significant resource in the park's planning documents; and
- a statement as to why the action will or will not result in impairment of the resource, including a discussion of the context, severity, duration, and timing of any impacts, and

any mitigation measures, if applicable.

Based on the aforementioned guidelines and basis for determining impairment of park resources and values, a determination of impairment is made for the following resource impact topics carried forward and analyzed in the CLR/EA for the selected alternative: cultural resources, vegetation, wildlife, and visual resources.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The park's 4,300 acres encompass about 90% of the actual battlefield. At the time of the battle, the area included the agricultural community of Leetown, which included a number of farms and homes bounded by woodlands. The natural elements of the cultural landscape include agricultural fields, orchards, open prairie, and woodlands. Topography and drainages played a crucial role in the outcome of the battle and, therefore, are part of the cultural landscape. Because the existing structures that were present during the 1862 battle were integral to troop movements and the outcome of the battle, the structures have been evaluated as contributing and noncontributing elements of the National Register-listed military park.

The park's cultural resources, which are necessary to fulfill the purpose of the park, are key to the cultural integrity of the park and are considered a significant park resource.

The selected alternative will include vegetation management that will restore some aspects of the cultural landscape by reestablishing views; clearing trees and dense vegetation from landscape character areas; and providing indications of the location of non-extant structures. Some extant contributing features would be preserved and repaired. Archeological investigation would add to the knowledge and understanding of cultural resources in the park. The selected alternative would also rehabilitate historic circulation patterns, identify and mark sites and locations of non-extant features, and depict the mass, form, and scale of certain non-extant features. These activities would improve the cultural resources in the park and would have a local moderate long-term beneficial effect on the cultural resources. Because the changes to the cultural landscape will be beneficial, there will be no impairment of cultural resources. The cultural resources for which the park was created will remain in good or improved condition and will be enjoyed by current and future generations.

VEGETATION

The existing vegetation that resembles historic vegetation patterns contribute to the park's historic character and are necessary to fulfill the park's purpose of preserving and interpreting the history of the area, are key to the cultural and natural integrity of the park, and are considered significant park resources.

Current vegetation management in the Ford Area, Leetown Hamlet, and Elkhorn Tavern/Williams Hollow would generally continue, with some minor changes to better reveal the spatial relationships of roads and extant and non-extant buildings. The farmstead character of the Ford and Elkhorn Tavern/ Williams Hollow areas would be expressed by managing vegetation to establish fields and, possibly, orchards. Additional vegetation management would include clearing and thinning trees and/or trimming shrubs in portions of the landscape character areas, including Elk Mountain and the Federal Trenches, to open up historic views and lines of sight. Many of these areas include forest and brush that have encroached into historically cleared areas. The changes in vegetation management would be consistent with the overall goal of improving vegetation health and better depicting the historic character of the battlefield during the period of significance.

Overall, the proposed actions from the selected alternative will result in a parkwide long-term beneficial impact on vegetation. The selected alternative will have a beneficial effect by increasing visitor understanding of the Battle of Pea Ridge and improving vegetation health.

The effects of the selected alternative will be beneficial and will modify the vegetation to improve its role in fulfilling the park's purpose of preserving or interpreting the history of the area. Thus, the selected alternative will not impair vegetation resources because the park's vegetation will remain in the same or better condition and will contribute to the enjoyment of current and future generation of visitors.

WILDLIFE

The dense forests, open fields, and prairies in the park provide year-round habitat for a variety of wildlife. Common species in the park include white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*); coyote (*Canis latrans*); red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*); opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis*); woodchuck (*Marmota monax*); eastern cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridana*); several species of squirrels, mice, and voles; and numerous migratory songbirds.

The wildlife within the park contribute to the park's historic character and are necessary to fulfill the park's purpose of preserving and interpreting the history of the area, are key to the natural integrity of the park, and are considered significant park resources.

The selected alternative will modify and manage some of the park's vegetation to present views and spatial relationships in the cultural landscape that visually represents what would have existed in 1862. This will have both short-term adverse and long-term beneficial impacts to wildlife. Thinning vegetation will allow for an increase in understory development and diversity of species in the park. This will directly improve wildlife habitat in the park by increasing the variety of species and structural diversity. Thinning the vegetation will slightly reduce the food source for some birds and mammals in the park and reduce nesting and roosting cover for birds. Since this will occur slowly over time, the birds and mammals will likely find food sources and nesting cover from nearby trees in the park. These changes will have a minor adverse impact on wildlife.

Overall, the selected alternative will result in both a parkwide long-term beneficial impact and a long-term minor adverse impact on wildlife. The adverse effects of the selected alternative on wildlife will be minor and will not substantially alter the overall wildlife, wildlife habitat, or natural processes within the park or region. Therefore these adverse effects on wildlife will not diminish its role in fulfilling the park's purpose of preserving or interpreting the history of the area or the natural integrity of the park. Thus, the selected alternative will not impair wildlife resources because the modifications to vegetation will allow species and habitat to remain essentially unchanged.

VISUAL RESOURCES

About 90% of the Civil War battlefield where fighting took place is protected within the park. Protecting such a large portion of an original battlefield is uncommon among Civil War parks in the national park system, and this protection is essential to the unique visual character of the park. Much of the land that is now protected in the park underwent extensive changes from the time of the battle until the park was established in 1956. Much of the land that now constitutes the park was historically used for agriculture, raising livestock, and homestead sites. These land uses, along with practices of fire suppression and logging, have combined to alter the landscape and influence the character of the park relative to its historic appearance.

Visual resources on the battlefield are important in the visitor's understanding of the battle events. Visual resources include replica artillery; fencing; historic structures; and historic fields, roads, and trails. Visual resources are necessary to fulfill the park's purpose of preserving and interpreting the Battle of Pea Ridge and are key to the cultural integrity of the park.

The selected alternative includes some preservation, stabilization, and repair of extant features, which would improve visual understanding of the site. Large trees would be thinned Elk Mountain and at the Federal Trenches to open up historic views and lines of sight. The alternative would also focus on depicting the spatial qualities of the historic setting during the period of significance. This focus would provide more accurate depictions of the cultural landscape, which would improve visual resources of the park. Because of the many improvements, the selected alternative would have a parkwide long-term beneficial effect on visual resources.

Because visual resources will be improved and, therefore, will better contribute to fulfilling the park's purpose for current and future generations of visitors, the selected alternative will not impair visual resources.