

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Pea Ridge National Military Park  
Arkansas

## PEA RIDGE NATIONAL MILITARY PARK HIGHWAY 62 MITIGATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/ ASSESSMENT OF EFFECT 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/ Assessment of Effect (EA/AoE) for providing new access and improved visitor circulation to the Pea Ridge National Military Park (park). The project is taking place in conjunction with the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department's (AHTD) and Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) relocation of Highway 62 in northwestern Arkansas. 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 process. As such, implementation of this project, as written, will satisfy all of the requirements for compliance.

### 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 Highway 62 relocation is a separate project with the AHTD and FHWA. Highway 62, which currently serves as the main park access road, would be removed and relocated south of the park boundary. The AHTD started the initial phase of the Highway 62 relocation this year.

The park's General Management Plan (GMP), completed in 2006, identified issues and concerns with Highway 62 within the park. Heavy traffic on Highway 62 contributes to noise, visual impacts, resource damage, and safety issues within the park. Traffic levels are high and are expected to increase significantly in the next 20 years. Although the GMP identified the expansion of Highway 62 as a four-lane road within the park boundary as the preferred alternative, other options were considered during the project development, including an avoidance alternative (which would run much farther south of the existing Highway 62) and the rerouting of Highway 62 directly south of the park boundary. The rerouting of Highway 62 directly south of the park boundary was identified as the overall preferred alternative (for the purposes of the AHTD/FHWA Highway 62 project).

The purpose of this project is to identify a safe and convenient access road (and parking) to key features in the park while minimizing impacts on cultural and natural resources. Implementing mitigation measures in conjunction with the Highway 62 realignment will protect and preserve cultural and natural resources and improve the visitor experience.

This FONSI and the EA/AoE constitute the record of the environmental impact analysis and decision-making process associated with selecting and implementing the selected alternative, which will provide a safe and convenient access road and parking to key features in 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 determined after careful review of resource and visitor impacts and public comment.

This document records 1) a FONSI as required by NEPA and 2) a determination of no impairment as required by the NPS Organic Act of 1916 (see Attachment A).

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The EA/AoE considered four 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, access to the park would still be available from the existing Highway 62, but other mitigation actions to improve internal park roads, visitor circulation, parking, and other facilities would not be implemented. Access to the park would occur at the intersection of the existing Highway 62 and the new Highway 62 west-southwest of the current park entrance. There would be no change to the width of the existing Highway 62 to the park entrance, and the existing Highway 62 east of the park entrance would not be reclaimed and revegetated. Additional parking at the visitor center, new parking at Elkhorn Tavern, and a new horse trailhead would not be constructed. Improvements to the Tour Road and visitor circulation in the park would not be implemented. A new restroom would not be constructed at Elkhorn Tavern.

## Action Alternatives

### *Components Common to All Action Alternatives*

Four action alternatives were determined to meet the park's purpose, need, and objectives for taking action. All of the action alternatives contain several common features. The park would acquire the land that is within the right-of-way of the existing Highway 62 (currently owned by AHTD) within the park boundaries. Access to the park would be provided by a new intersection constructed as part of the Highway 62 relocation. The new intersection would be located about 900 feet east of where the new Highway 62 departs from the existing Highway 62, west of the current park entrance (Figure 4). A stop sign would be used to control traffic at this intersection. The existing Highway 62 used for access to the park would be reconstructed to a narrower footprint with two 12-foot travel lanes and 2-foot shoulders. Margins of the reconstructed park access road would then be revegetated, as would abandoned sections of existing Highway 62 not used for access to park facilities.

The parking area at the visitor center would be expanded to provide additional capacity for about 80 to 100 cars and capacity for 10 recreational vehicles (RVs) and buses. The reconstructed two-way park access road along the existing Highway 62 route would provide a connection to a new horse trail parking area west of the visitor center. The horse trail parking area would accommodate up to 20 vehicles and horse trailers. A new visitor restroom would be constructed near Elkhorn Tavern. All of the alternatives include improvements to the existing Tour Road or a new Tour Road route linking Elkhorn Tavern parking to the visitor center. The existing community recycling facility located in front of the administrative buildings in the parking lot (southwest of the visitor center) would be moved to the east side of the park entrance and would be accessible to the public even when the park is closed. The new parking area would be integrated with the topography to minimize visibility.

Common construction techniques and materials would be used under all four of the action alternatives.

- The new entrance road into the park along the existing Highway 62 would have two 12-foot lanes with 2-foot shoulders. The new entrance road and other roads would be surfaced with brown aggregate to maintain the park character.
- A detached bicycle trail would be constructed on the north side and adjacent to the new entrance road and would terminate at the visitor center.
- Sustainable LED lighting systems with manual switches would be installed at the visitor center and Elkhorn Tavern.
- Culverts and drainage features would be installed with new roads as necessary to maintain natural drainage patterns.
- Existing road pavement and fill material for abandoned sections of road would be removed, the site graded to match the natural contours, and the area revegetated with native plants and vegetation as prescribed in the Vegetation Management Plan (VMP)/EA. Removed material would be used for new road construction or recycled.

- New parking areas would be paved. Various types of pavement surface options are under consideration such as brown aggregate and/or permeable pavement. In lieu of road striping, recessed pavement markers (or similar alternative methods to traditional road striping) would be used to reduce visual impacts.
- Parking lots would provide dedicated handicap spaces. Parking areas would accommodate buses, RVs, and large delivery vehicles (e.g., semitrailer trucks).
- The horse trailhead parking areas would allow pull-through parking and capacity for 20 parking spaces.
- Previously disturbed areas would be used to stage equipment and supplies during construction.
- Any waste soil or material generated during construction activities would be removed to a suitable facility outside the park.
- Traffic-control measures would be established during construction to maintain visitor access and safety.
- Road construction and improvements are estimated to take about 12 months depending on available funding. Work would be phased and conducted from approximately summer of 2015 to summer of 2016. Park facilities would remain open during construction.
- The estimated cost for construction of any of the four action alternatives is \$1.5 to \$2.0 million.
- Revegetation of all disturbed areas would be conducted in accordance with the VMP/EA (NPS 2014).

*Alternative A – New Short Tour Route (Selected Alternative)*

Under this alternative the existing one-way Tour Road will be paved within the existing road prism to accommodate two-way traffic from the visitor center to the new Elkhorn Tavern parking area. This will allow visitors to visit Elkhorn Tavern without driving the entire one-way Tour Road loop (Figure 4). The new Elkhorn Tavern parking lot will be located off this new road, and the existing Elkhorn Tavern parking lot will be removed and restored to historic conditions. A new short one-way Tour Road segment will be constructed from the new Elkhorn Tavern parking area to allow reclamation of the paved road through Elkhorn Tavern and Telegraph Road.

The existing Highway 62 east of the visitor center will be obliterated and revegetated to the park boundary on the east. Impacts on the cultural landscape will be minimized by confining all road modifications to the existing width and alignment, where feasible. The alignment for the new short Tour Road segment near Elkhorn Tavern will follow the natural topography of Elkhorn Mountain. The new Elkhorn Tavern parking area will be located to avoid impacts on the historic battlefield and to not obstruct the sight lines from the Elkhorn Tavern (and the two monuments near the Elkhorn Tavern) toward the battlefield. Sight lines from the battlefield to the rock outcrops will be maintained.

*Alternative B – New Long Tour Route*

The existing Highway 62 east of the visitor center would be obliterated and revegetated to the park boundary on the east, similar to Alternative A. The existing single-lane Tour Road between the visitor center and a new Elkhorn Tavern parking lot would be paved to accommodate two-way traffic similar to Alternative A. A new longer one-way route would extend down the slope of Elkhorn Mountain below the East Overlook to the new parking area near Elkhorn Tavern (Figure 5). This route would more closely follow the terrain of Elkhorn Mountain than the alignment in Alternative A. The abandoned section of the Tour Road would be removed and revegetated and the segment of Telegraph Road restored. The new Elkhorn Tavern parking area would be located to minimize impacts on the historic battlefield and to not obstruct the sight lines from the Elkhorn Tavern (and the two monuments) toward the battlefield. The existing Elkhorn Tavern parking lot would be removed and restored to historic conditions. Sight lines from the battlefield to the rock outcrops would be maintained.

*Alternative C – New Long Tour Route and New One-Way Access to Elkhorn Tavern*

The park entrance road along the existing Highway 62 would be reconstructed as described for Alternative A, but would extend for the full length of the southeastern park boundary (Figure 6). The existing Tour Road between the visitor center and the Elkhorn Tavern would remain a one-way route. The existing historic Huntsville Road would be paved and used as one-way access to Elkhorn Tavern. A new one-way route would be constructed from Elkhorn Tavern and the new parking lot down the slope of Elkhorn Mountain, below the East Overlook along Ford Road, to the connection with the existing Tour Road. The existing Elkhorn Tavern parking lot would be removed and restored to historic conditions. Telegraph Road would not be restored since it would remain part of the Tour Road.

*Alternative D – New Long Tour Route and New Spur Road Off Tour Road*

The park road along the existing Highway 62 would be reconstructed and extended to the new spur road connecting to the Tour Road. The new single-lane spur road would be constructed north from the new park road to connect with the existing Tour Road, which would extend from this point to the new parking lot at the Elkhorn Tavern (Figure 7). The segment of the Tour Road from the new intersection to the new parking area would be paved for two-way travel. A new one-way Tour Road route along the slope of Elkhorn Mountain, below the East Overlook, would extend to the new parking area on the south side of the Tour Road near the Elkhorn Tavern similar to Alternative C. The existing Elkhorn Tavern parking lot would be removed and restored to historic conditions. Abandoned portions of the Tour Road would be revegetated and Telegraph Road restored by removing pavement.

**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 A is the environmentally preferable alternative for several reasons. Compared with the other action alternatives, Alternative A will result in the least amount of new pavement and overall construction disturbance on the Tour Road, the least amount of wildlife habitat fragmentation, and the least impact on cultural resources (including archeological resources and cultural landscapes). Alternative A will also best protect important viewsheds, including battlefield views from Elkhorn Tavern, and will best minimize conflicts between vehicles and visitors. Overall, Alternative A 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; visual resources; and visitor use, recreation, and education and interpretation. 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 visual resources and visitor use, recreation, and education and interpretation. Visual resources will benefit from the obliteration and revegetation of portions of Highway 62 and a section of the Tour Road and from the use of natural materials to allow the surface roads and parking lots to blend into the landscape. The benefits to visitor experience, recreation, and education and interpretation will result from improvements to visitor circulation, restoring the historic setting at Elkhorn Tavern, expanded parking capacity, and construction of a new designated horse trailhead. The removal of Highway 62 and use of natural materials to screen the roads and parking lots will also add to visitor enjoyment.

Adverse impacts on visual resources and visitor use, recreation, and education and interpretation will be local, short- and long-term, and slight, and will result from construction of the proposed alternative. No specific mitigation measures will be needed to reduce adverse impacts of the selected alternative beyond the best management practices (BMPs) listed in Table 2 of the EA/AoE. A summary of effects on resources is found in Table 3 of the EA/AoE.

**Degree of Effect on Public Health or Safety**

The rerouting of Highway 62 south of the park boundary would improve travel and safety for park visitors and staff. Construction activities proposed for the mitigations will be short-term and are not expected to adversely affect the safety of park visitors. Construction zones will be well marked and the Tour Road will likely be closed during construction. The proposed mitigations will provide an overall long-term benefit to public health and safety.

**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 EA/AoE, the selected alternative will not affect prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas because those resources do not exist in the project area. No wetlands will be impacted by the proposed activities. 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 EA/AoE 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 EA/AoE or during the public review period.

**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. In addition, the action will not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

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

The EA/AoE concluded that past, present, and future activities, when combined 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 Historic Resources**

The selected alternative will have no adverse impacts on known archeological sites or historic objects and structures. The Elkhorn Tavern and surrounding historic roads will be treated according to the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) recommendations, which will enhance the cultural landscape. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions will have both long-term direct beneficial impacts and long-term direct slight adverse cumulative effects on cultural landscapes and historic properties by improving the cultural landscape through vegetation management activities and cultural landscape treatments, the relocation of Highway 62, and effects on the landscape backdrop from present and future residential and commercial development outside the park. The NPS initiated consultation with the SHPO with a letter sent on March 1, 2013. A scoping letter was also sent to the SHPO on June 24, 2014. The SHPO also received a copy of the draft EA/AoE 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. A letter response was received from the SHPO on July 24, 2014 stating that Alternative A appears to result in the least removal of the Tour Road, which is likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because of its association with Mission 66. In addition, Alternative A will result in the least amount of ground disturbance and will be less likely to impact archeological resources.

**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 February 27, 2013. A scoping letter was sent to the USFWS on June 24, 2014. The USFWS also received a copy of the draft EA/AoE for review and comment. The USFWS Arkansas Field Office responded to the scoping letter in an e-mail dated August 11, 2014, stating that the alternatives proposed appear to have minor adverse effects on fish and wildlife resources, with no effects anticipated on listed species. No response to the EA/AoE has been received.



### **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 BMPs will be incorporated during 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 of the EA/AoE.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

During preparation of the EA/AoE, the NPS made efforts to involve the public in the planning process, including soliciting information and data from the public and regulatory agencies in a June 24, 2014 press release notifying the public of the EA/AoE process. The EA/AoE was made available on the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment website and by hard copies placed in the park Visitor Center and the Pea Ridge, Arkansas public library for public review and comment between December 4, 2014 and January 4, 2015. An open house was held at the park visitor center on December 19 (see attached press release). The park received one comment on the EA/AoE, supporting the project and the selected alternative. No other public comments were received. The one comment received did not provide additional, new, or substantive information that will change the determination of effects in the EA.

### **AGENCY CONSULTATION**

#### **Arkansas State Historic Preservation Office Consultation**

The Arkansas SHPO was notified of the proposed project by letter on March 1, 2013. A response was received from the SHPO on April 12, 2013 stating that the previous EA developed by AHTD and FHWA, as well as the PA for that process (completed in 2012), govern Section 106 review on this undertaking and that the NPS must coordinate with FHWA on any cultural resource surveys since FHWA is the lead federal agency.

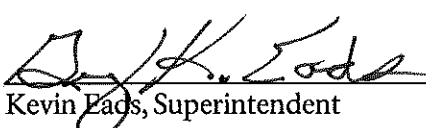
Agency scoping for the EA/AoE began with a letter sent on June 24, 2014 to the SHPO to solicit input on issues of concern (see Appendix B). The SHPO also received a copy of the draft EA/AoE for review and comment. The SHPO responded in a letter on January 6, 2015, indicating that Alternative A continues to be the preferred alternative, and concurring with the NPS finding of no adverse effect. The NPS will forward a final copy of the Phase I archeological assessment to the SHPO upon completion.

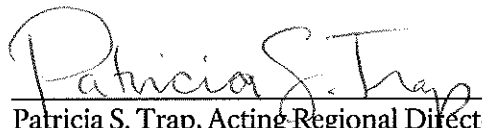
**AMERICAN INDIAN CONSULTATION**

The park initiated consultation with American Indian tribes and organizations on March 1, 2013 informing them of the proposed project. A scoping letter was also sent to the tribes and organizations on June 24, 2014 soliciting comments. Information also was requested from the tribes to determine if any ethnographic resources are located in the project area and if the tribes wanted to be involved in the environmental compliance process. The park received responses from the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation concurring with the determination of no adverse effect on Native American artifacts or archeological features.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

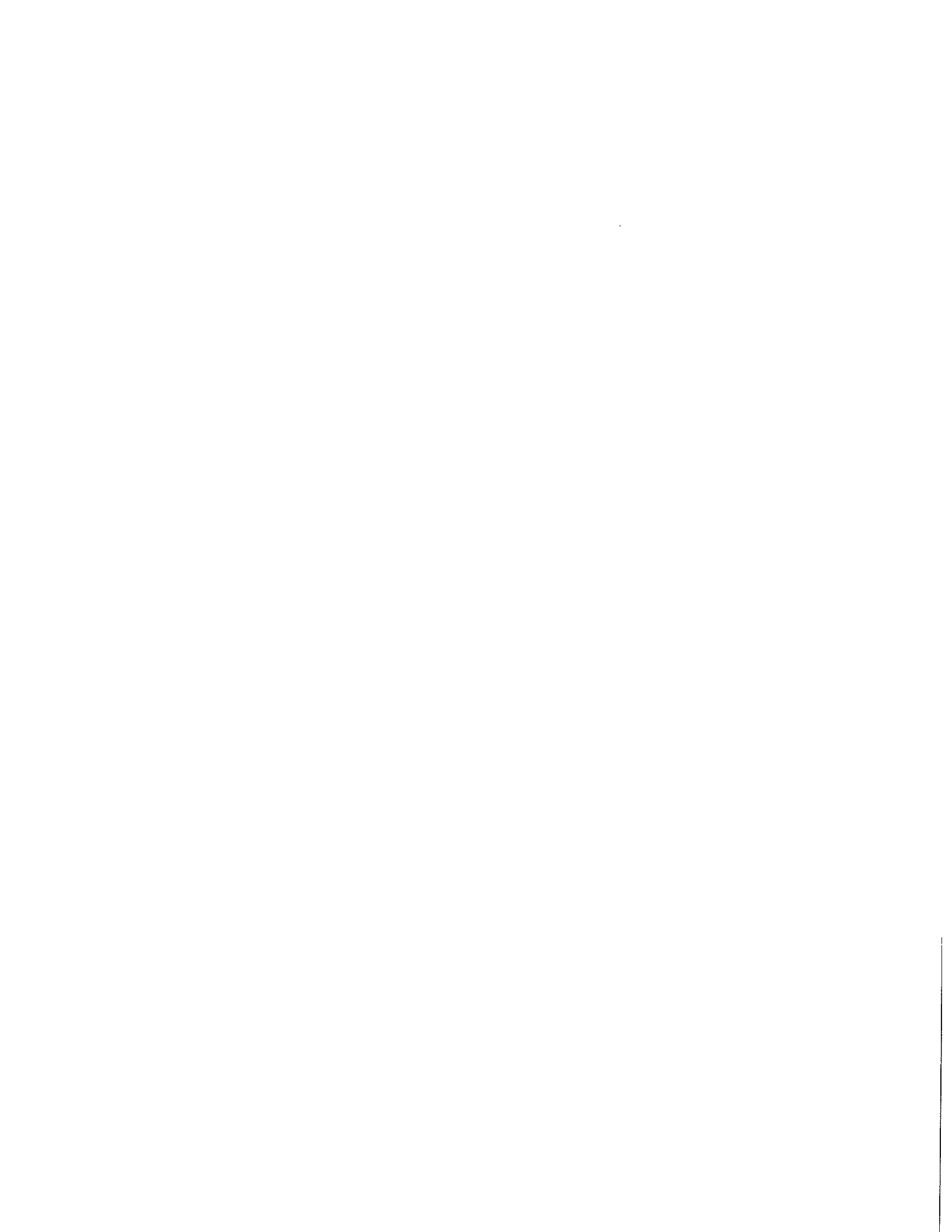
Based on the review of the facts and analysis contained in the EA/AoE, the NPS has selected Alternative A for implementing the EA/AoE at the Pea Ridge National Military Park. Alternative A will not have a significant impact either by itself or in consideration of cumulative impacts. Accordingly, the 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 NHPA 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:  2/28/2015  
Kevin Eads, Superintendent Date

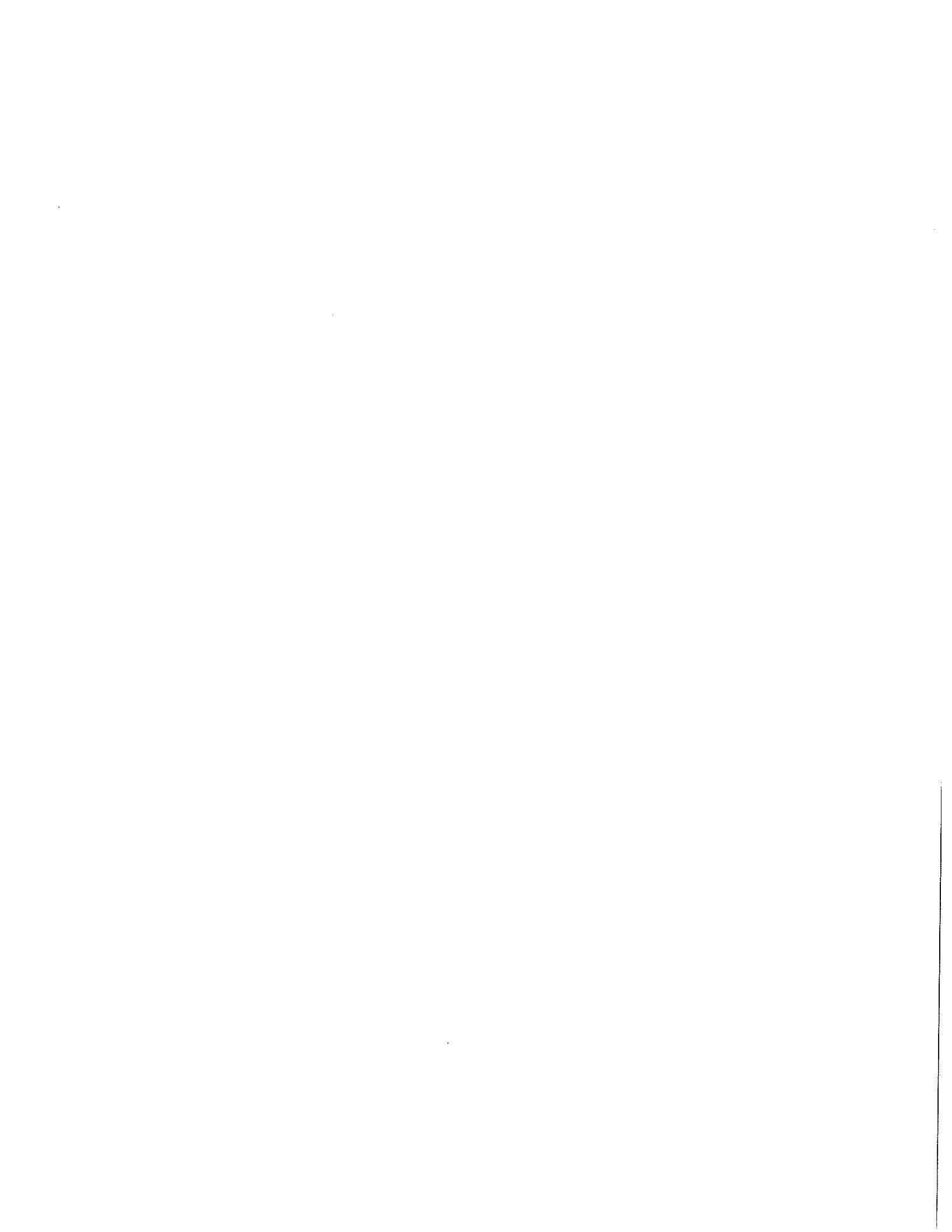
Approved:  3.13.2015  
Patricia S. Trap, Acting Regional Director Date  
Midwest Region

**REFERENCE**

National Park Service (NPS). 2014. Pea Ridge National Military Park Vegetation Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. Public Review draft May 6.



**ATTACHMENT A**  
**NON-IMPAIRMENT DETERMINATION**  
PEA RIDGE NATIONAL MILITARY PARK  
HIGHWAY 62 MITIGATIONS  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/ASSESSMENT OF EFFECT



**PEA RIDGE NATIONAL MILITARY PARK  
HIGHWAY 62 MITIGATIONS  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/ASSESSMENT OF EFFECT  
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 (park) Highway 62 Mitigations Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect (EA/AoE), Alternative A, is described in the EA/AoE. The EA/AoE also includes detailed information on existing conditions of resources and the effects the selected alternative will have on those resources. Existing conditions and effects are briefly summarized in this impairment determination.

The description of park significance in the EA/AoE 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 EA/AoE for the selected alternative: visual resources and cultural resources.

## **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 will improve visual resources by removing and revegetating the portion of the Tour Road that goes by the Elkhorn Tavern and abandoned sections of Highway 62 east of the visitor center. The new section of Tour Road and parking area constructed west of Elkhorn Tavern will be visually screened by vegetation, which will improve the view from the historic tavern. Expansion of the parking lot at the visitor center will be within an area of existing visual intrusion and will not adversely affect visual quality. The new horse trailhead parking area will be screened by vegetation to minimize new visual intrusions in the landscape. The use of natural materials will blend the surface roads and parking lots into the visual landscape, which will be beneficial to visual quality. Construction activities will be visible during implementation of the project, which will result in temporary slight adverse impacts on the scenic quality in the park. Because of the many improvements, the selected alternative will have a local long-term beneficial effect on visual resources. The selected alternative will also result in local direct short-term slightly adverse impacts during construction.

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.

## **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



## ATTACHMENT A

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 of Historic Places.

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 take place in areas previously disturbed except for the new segment of the Tour Road. Because no known historic resources are in the proposed areas of disturbance and the 2013 archeological surveys in undisturbed portions of the project area were negative for buried archeological deposits, there will be no adverse impacts on archeological resources. Following construction of the new portion of the Tour Road and Elkhorn Tavern parking area, treatment recommendations in the CLR to restore the Elkhorn Tavern and surrounding historic roads to historic conditions will enhance the cultural landscape. Road and parking area construction, obliteration, and restoration will be conducted in accordance with the stipulations provided for in the Programmatic Agreement (FHWA et al. 2012). Obliteration and restoration of the paved portion of Telegraph Road (near the Elkhorn Tavern) in conformance with CLR recommendations will enhance the historic road and overall cultural landscape. These activities will improve the cultural resources in the park and will have a local long-term beneficial effect on the cultural resources. Because the selected alternative will be beneficial to cultural resources, 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.

## REFERENCE

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD), Arkansas State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), National Park Service (NPS), Pea Ridge National Military Park, Caddo Nation, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma, The Osage Nation, and United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians. 2012. Programmatic Agreement Regarding the Construction of AHTD Job Number 090204 Avoca-Gateway (Hwy 62), Benton County, Arkansas. March.