

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

Natchez Trace Parkway
Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee



Environmental Assessment for a Trail Connection from the Old Trace Interpretive Site to the Mississippi Craft Center

Submitted To:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzes the potential environmental effects associated with the proposed construction of a pedestrian walkway by the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi (Guild) from the National Park Service (NPS) Natchez Trace Parkway (Parkway) Old Trace interpretive site to the Guild's Mississippi Craft Center. This EA has been prepared to identify, analyze and document the potential physical and environmental effects associated with the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action is located between mile markers 104 and 105 to the existing pedestrian walkway at the Guild's Mississippi Craft Center (Craft Center) building located on Rice Road within the City of Ridgeland, Madison County, Mississippi.

This EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and implementing regulations, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508; the National Park Service Director's Order 12 (DO-12) and the Handbook, *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making*; Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and implementing regulations, 36 CFR Part 800.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the No Action Alternative and the Action Alternative. In addition, this section describes and analyzes alternative pathways to achieving a particular result.

The No Action Alternative is required for the NEPA process to review and compare feasible alternatives to the existing baseline conditions. Under the No Action Alternative, NPS would not allow the construction of the proposed pedestrian walkway. This alternative is not preferred as it would not meet the purpose and would not allow Parkway visitors or local patrons utilizing the existing multi-use trail system to access the Craft Center directly from the Parkway or the trail system as was the case at the Center's previous location.

The Craft Center design includes the construction of the pedestrian walkways around the center and includes a walkway on the west side of the building that would provide the preferred access point to the NPS property and would provide the interconnection to the proposed pedestrian walkway across the NPS property to the existing parking area and multi-use trail system.

The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment, and that best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources. Alternative A (No Action Alternative) is the environmentally preferred alternative because it would result in no additional impact the natural and cultural resources of the Parkway, including the Old Trace. However, it does not meet the proposed project purpose and need as compared to Alternative B. The ability to provide direct access to the Craft Center for Parkway visitors would enhance the educational, historical and cultural experiences of the visitors traveling the Parkway and therefore meeting the project purpose. As a result, Alternative B is considered the preferred alternative.

Chapter 4 contains a discussion of each of the impact topics considered for the No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and the Preferred Alternative (Alternative B). This chapter provides the details of the analysis performed for each of the impact topics for each of the two alternatives and a determination of the effects of each alternative on the impact topic. Minor,

short-term impacts to soils, vegetation and wildlife resources would be anticipated with the implementation of Alternative B. Additional minor, long-term adverse impacts to Parkway operations and maintenance, land use, visitor use and experience and public health and safety would also be anticipated from the construction of the proposed pedestrian walkway.

Public Comment

If you wish to comment on the EA, please access the document on the National Park Service's Planning Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. This site provides access to current plans, environmental impact analyses, and related documents on public review. Users of the site can submit comments for documents available for public review.

Alternatively, comments may be mailed to the name and address below.

Superintendent
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Attention: Trail Connection from the Old Trace Interpretive Site to the
Mississippi Craft Center

This EA will be on public review for 30 days. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. We will make all submissions from organizations, businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses publicly available in their entirety.

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The National Park Service (NPS) is reviewing a proposal by the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi (Guild) to construct a pedestrian walkway from the existing NPS Natchez Trace Parkway (Parkway) Old Trace interpretive site parking area and multi-use trail to the existing pedestrian walkway at the Guild's Mississippi Craft Center (Craft Center) building. The mission of the Guild is to preserve, promote, market, educate and encourage excellence in regional crafts. The Parkway has a longstanding partnership with the Guild, and historically the Craft Center was located within the NPS-owned Parkway Information Cabin, a historic structure located to the south of the proposed project. During that period, patrons traveling the Parkway had direct access to the Craft Center at the Parkway Information Cabin (Cabin), including parking at that location. The Craft Center served as a contact station for visitors travelling the Parkway, and was an information source about Parkway resources. When the new Craft Center was constructed off NPS land at the current location in 2007, access to the Craft Center was no longer directly from the Parkway, but rather via Old Canton Road. From Old Canton Road, travelers currently travel to Rice Road and then back north to the Craft Center in order to visit the Craft Center. The proposed pedestrian walkway connection to the existing Old Trace interpretive site parking area on the Parkway would allow for an easier and more direct connection to the Craft Center for those traveling the Parkway. In addition, it would provide a connection to the existing system of multi-use trails that parallel the Parkway.

Because there is currently, no direct pedestrian connection between the Parkway property and the Craft Center, the purpose of the proposed action is to construct a pedestrian walkway that would connect to the existing parking area from the Parkway and the existing multi-use trail that parallels the Parkway to the existing pedestrian walkway system at the Craft Center. The project is needed to create the ability for users of the Craft Center to access the Parkway and associated multi-use trail system, and vice versa.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and implementing regulations, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508; the NPS Director's Order 12 (DO-12) and Handbook, *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making*; and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and implementing regulations, 36 CFR Part 800.

This EA is intended to be a concise public document that:

- Briefly provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI);
- Aids the NPS compliance with NEPA when no environmental impact statement is necessary;
- Facilitates preparation of an EIS, when one is necessary;
- Includes a list of agencies and persons consulted in preparation of the EA; and

- Briefly discusses the need for the proposal, the alternatives to recommended courses of action (40 CFR 1507.2(d)), the environmental impacts of the proposed action and the alternatives and the recommended and required mitigation of unacceptable impacts.

Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) a reasonable opportunity to comment. The historic preservation review process mandated by Section 106 is outlined in regulations issued by the ACHP. Revised regulations, *“Protection of Historic Properties”* (36 CFR Part 800), became effective on January 11, 2001.

1.2 PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARKWAY

The Natchez Trace or “Old Trace” was an early transportation route developed from a series of trails used by Native Americans and subsequently by European explorers and settlers. The Natchez Trace provided an important route for transportation of people and goods for traders and settlers during the colonial and early American periods by providing a land route connecting interior portions of what was to become the southeastern U.S. with the major port city of Natchez. The Natchez Trace was designated as a national post road for mail delivery in 1800, and later figured prominently in movement of troops during the War of 1812 and the Civil War. More modern modes of transportation eventually replaced the Natchez Trace, and many sections became parts of modern local road systems, while other sections were simply abandoned.

The Natchez Trace Parkway was established by Congress on May 18, 1938, and roughly follows the original Natchez Trace, or Old Trace, for 444 miles from Natchez, Mississippi to Nashville, Tennessee. It is a National Scenic Byway managed by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service. The Parkway is one of 75 designated National Scenic Byways and 21 All-American Roads and is unique among federal parkways because it commemorates an earlier transportation route. The Parkway motor road is designed principally for recreational traffic, and is also a designated bike route. Its design includes a wide insulating zone and excludes commercial roadside development to preserve scenic, recreational, natural, and historic features. The Parkway and associated National Scenic Trail includes opportunities for hiking, horseback riding. The Parkway includes numerous designated stops that reflect the history and natural features of the Parkway including Civil War, early American and colonial period historical sites, American Indian sites, scenic viewpoints, and natural areas. The primary themes commemorated by the Parkway are: American Indian Populations, westward expansion of the British colonies and the United States, the War of 1812, transportation and American expansion and the Civil War.

The NPS manages the Parkway resources to maintain them in unimpaired condition for future generations in accordance with NPS statutes including the Organic Act of 1916 and the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998, as well as various applicable environmental laws such as the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act and the NHPA.

1.3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.3.1 Previous Planning

The mission of the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi is to preserve, promote, market, educate and encourage excellence in regional crafts, believing that regular contact with the skilled work of the hand enhances both producer's and patrons' lives. The Guild moved into the current location in the Craft Center building in 2007. The Craft Center is a 20,000 square foot modern structure that houses the Guild's permanent collection and a large retail gallery of fine craft used for a variety of education activities.

The Guild and the NPS have enjoyed a productive partnership dating back to 1973 when the Guild was formed. After regularly hosting Guild craftsmen on weekends at the Parkway Information Cabin, the NPS offered the Guild a permanent presence at that location as a Concessioner in 1974. During this period, Joan Mondale, the wife of Vice President Walter Mondale who herself was a potter and artist activist, came for a visit at the Cabin. She worked with the NPS to establish ten (10) craft outlets in National Parks across the United States. The only successful one was the one in Mississippi in the Cabin. This was in great measure because of the good working relationship between the Guild and the NPS.

It was also the success of this partnership between the Guild and NPS that led the Mississippi Legislature to appropriate funds for the Guild to have their own building through House Bill 1734 passed in 1997. The Guild first pursued a location directly on the Parkway. However, the costs involved and location of the available property in a floodplain resulted in this not being a viable option. From there, the Guild was able to locate and obtain the current property adjacent to the Parkway lands at the Brashear's Stand/Old Trace interpretive site near the Milepost 104.5.

The Craft Center's original location on the Parkway afforded the opportunity for many of the Parkway travelers to have direct access to the Craft Center and its displays and education activities as a pull off from the Parkway. The new (current) location is now accessed via the Old Canton Road exit from the Parkway and then to Rice Road. As a result, it is less convenient for patrons traveling the Parkway to visit the Craft Center. The project, as proposed, would help re-establish the direct Parkway link and once again provide limited direct access to the Craft Center building from the Old Trace interpretive site parking area. Additionally, because the multi-use trail system also connects to the parking area, the proposed pedestrian walkway would also provide an interconnection to the multi-use trail system and the Craft Center.

1.3.2 Project Location

The proposed project is located at milepost 104.5 of the Parkway, behind the Craft Center at 950 Rice Road, Ridgeland (Madison County, MS. See Appendix 1). As proposed, the walkway would connect to the parking area at the Brashear's Stand/Old Trace interpretive site and transect the Parkway property to connect to the existing walkway system at the Craft Center. The proposed walkway would interconnect to the existing walkway system for the Old Trace interpretive site, cross the Old Trace and interconnect to the Craft Center walkway system. Figure 1 depicts the proposed project location and the location of the preferred action alternative route that was considered in the EA.

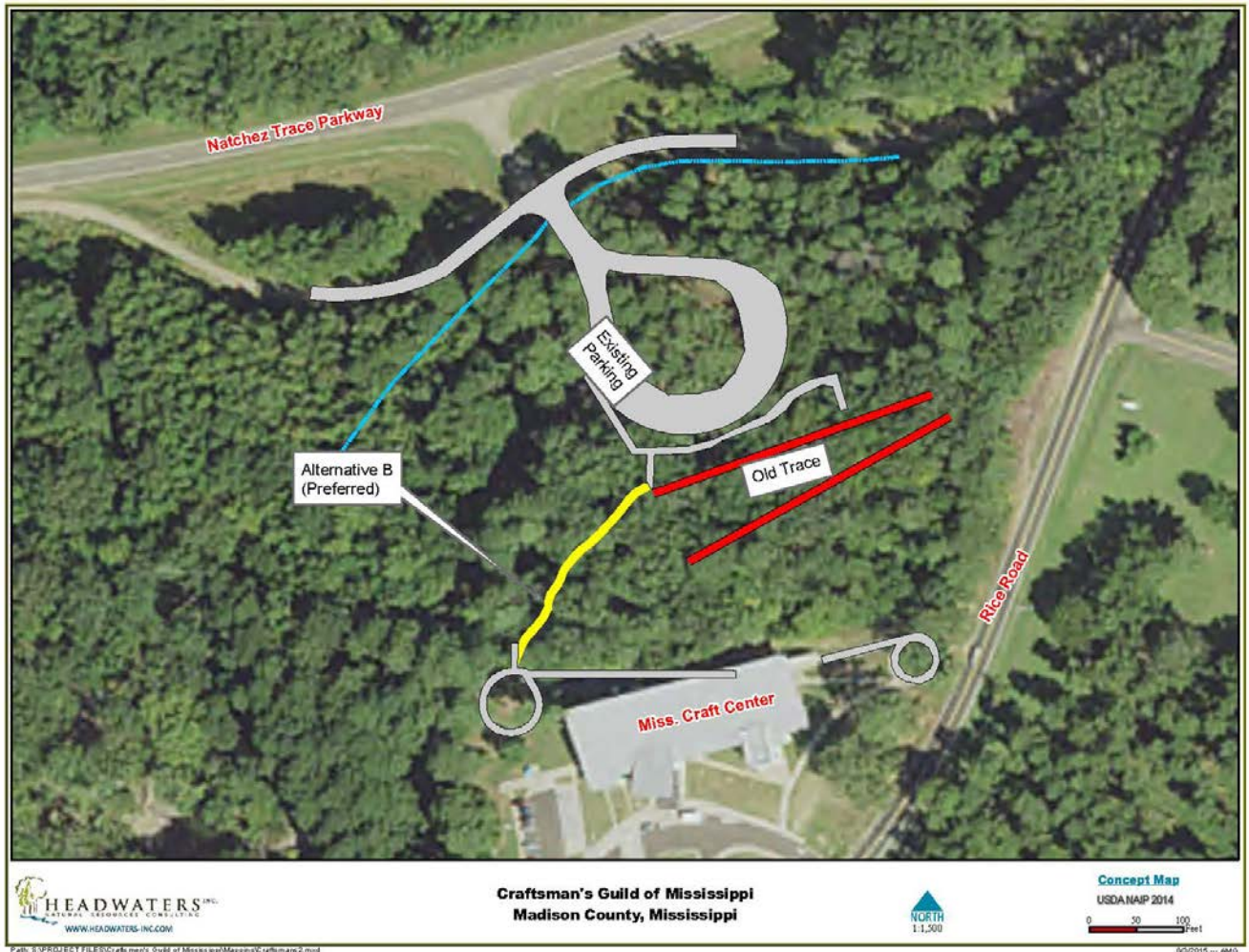


Figure 1. Project location for the proposed connector trail from the Parkway interpretive area (Old Trace) to the Craft Center.

1.3.3 Project Scoping

Scoping is the process of involving government agencies, organizations, and public in determining the extent of environmental issues associated with the Proposed Action and the alternatives to be addressed. The scoping process allows for relevant issues to be considered and allows for determination of those issues not considered important. Scoping identifies other permits, surveys, and consultations that may be required with other agencies and stakeholders, and develops a schedule for preparation and distribution of the environmental document for public review and comment. The scoping process is intended to allow for provision and consideration of opinions and consultation from the interested public, affected parties, and agencies with interests or legal jurisdiction.

1.3.4 Internal Scoping

National Park Service and Parkway staff members with relevant expertise and roles have been consulted regarding the issues and impact topics appropriate for consideration in this environmental document. In addition, internal scoping for this project employed interdisciplinary processes to define issues, alternatives, and data needs.

In addition to NPS staff, the Craftsmen's Guild and the City of Ridgeland played an integral role in internal scoping.

1.3.5 External Scoping

The NPS informally consulted with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding the potential of the proposed action to affect federally protected species and critical habitat, consistent with the conditions of the Endangered and Threatened Species Act. In addition, the NPS formally consulted with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) concerning the potential of the proposed action to affect state listed species and habitats of special concern. In addition, the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi and Headwaters, Inc. have previously coordinated with the Mississippi Department of Archive and History (MDAH), State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding the potential of the proposed action to affect cultural and historic resources, consistent with the conditions of Section 106 of NHPA. This EA will undergo public review, and the NPS will consider comments received from the public, agencies, and other entities.

2.0 ISSUES

The issues relevant to the proposed action were identified through evaluation of the proposed action with respect to the potential direct and indirect impacts to the Parkway resources as directed by the Department of Interior, Department Manual, Part 516 (DM 516), NPS Management Policies (NPS 2006), and National Park Service, DO-12 and Handbook. In addition, topics were also identified based upon legislative requirements, guidance from NPS, Federal and State governmental agencies' response to scoping request letters and the professional experience and knowledge of NPS personnel. Issues considered fall under the following general categories:

1. Natural Resources – The potential of the proposed action to have direct or indirect impacts to the Parkway's soils, vegetation, and wildlife;
2. Visitor Experience and Land Use – The potential for the proposed action to have direct or indirect impacts to visitors' experience because of impacts to the Parkway viewscape and road conditions; and
3. Cultural Resources- The potential for the proposed action to have direct or indirect impacts to archeological resources or cultural landscapes.
4. Parkway Operations – The potential for the proposed action to have direct or indirect impacts to Parkway commitments and maintenance operations.

2.1 DETERMINATION OF IMPACT TOPICS

Specific impact topics were developed to focus the analysis and allow comparison of the potential environmental consequences of each alternative. The impact topics were identified through internal and external scoping, review of applicable federal laws, regulations, and Executive Orders, NPS Management Policies, and NPS knowledge of resources. A brief rationale for the selection of each impact topic discussed is provided in the following sections, as well as the rationale for dismissing other topics from further consideration.

2.2 Determination of Non-Impairment Discussion

The *NPS Management Policies 2006* requires consideration of the impacts of the proposed action and a written determination that the activity will not lead to an impairment of park resources and values. *Management Policies 2006*, Section 1.4.5 states impacts are considered more likely to constitute impairments to the extent that they affect a resource or value whose conservation is necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park, 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. A written determination of non-impairment will be prepared for the selected action and included as an appendix to the decision document.

2.3 IMPACT TOPICS ANALYZED IN DETAIL

2.3.1 Soils

The Department Manual, Part 516 (DM 516) requires protection of park resources, including soils, to maintain a park's scenery, natural and historic objects, and the processes and conditions that sustain them. NEPA requires an examination of impacts from proposed federal actions to include all components of affected ecosystems. The soils type found within the project area includes the Oaklimer silt loams and the Providence silt loams. Because the proposed action would have a potential for minor impacts to soil materials, soil is an impact topic analyzed in further detail in this environmental assessment.

2.3.2 Vegetation

DO-12 requires protection of park resources, including vegetation, to maintain a park's scenery, natural and historic objects, and the processes and conditions that sustain them. NEPA requires an examination of impacts from federal actions to include all components of affected ecosystems. Since the project entails the construction of a pedestrian walkway, primarily herbaceous vegetation would be cleared and impacted. However, some woody vegetation, predominantly understory trees and potentially some shrub species, may be removed to facilitate the construction of the proposed walkway. Because the proposed action would have a potential impact to vegetation within the NPS lands, vegetation is an impact topic analyzed in further detail in this environmental assessment.

2.3.3 Wildlife

DO-12 requires protection of park resources, including wildlife, to maintain a park's scenery, natural and historic objects, and the processes and conditions that sustain them. NEPA requires an examination of impacts from federal actions to include all components of affected ecosystems. As previously noted, the project would include limited clearing of herbaceous and potentially some woody vegetation which could affect habitats within the project area. Because the proposed action would have the potential to impact wildlife within the NPS lands, wildlife is an impact topic analyzed in further detail in this environmental assessment.

2.3.4 Aesthetics

The construction of the proposed pedestrian walkway would result in a change in the aesthetics within the project area. The proposed project would be built to the NPS standards relative to aesthetics and the impact on aesthetics is expected to be minimal. Because the proposed action would have the potential to impact aesthetics within the NPS lands during construction, aesthetics is an impact topic analyzed in further detail in this environmental assessment.

2.3.5 Cultural Resources

As previously noted, the portion of the Old Trace within the proposed project area is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, a specific cultural resources survey has not previously been conducted at the proposed project location. As a result, cultural resources are an impact topic analyzed in further detail in this environmental assessment.

2.3.6 Visitor Use and Experience

The current parking area is used to provide Parkway visitors an opportunity to pull off and view a portion of the Old Natchez Trace. The parking area and a pedestrian walkway to an observation point provide the access for the public to view the Old Trace. In addition, the multi-use trail system paralleling the Parkway interconnects to the City of Ridgeland trail system and to the existing parking area. The proposed project includes the addition of another pedestrian walkway from the parking area to the Craft Center located adjacent to the NPS property.

Given the nature of the proposed action, it is anticipated that more visitors would be utilizing the parking area at the Old Trace interpretive site. There is the potential that traffic congestion relative to entry and exit from the parking area to the Parkway could increase. Typically, the non-local visitors utilizing the Parkway stop at the Old Trace interpretive site for a relatively short period of time. Conversely, those patrons who may utilize the proposed walkway to visit the Crafts Center would occupy the parking area for longer periods of time. As a result, the few parking areas available at the Old Trace interpretive site could likely be unavailable to those visitors who would park there to experience part of the Old Trace. Because the proposed action would have the potential to impact the parking and the visitor use for the Old Trace interpretive site and, to some extent, the multi-use trail system, visitor use and experience is an impact topic analyzed in further detail in this EA.

2.3.7 Public Health and Safety

Access to the parking area is already in place and the area is currently utilized by the Parkway patrons to view the Old Trace and also for local patrons who use the multi-use trail. The proposed action will possibly result in increased congestion at the parking lot area and could therefore contribute to decreased safety for Parkway visitors, especially during peak traffic times. In addition, the Parkway's multi-use trail crosses the driveway access from the Parkway to the parking lot area and so an increase in vehicular traffic could result in increased safety risks to the multi-use trail users. Also, the additional and probable longer term parking at the Old Trace interpretive site could also impact the multi-use trail users. Because the proposed action would have the potential to impact the public health and safety within the project area, public health and safety is an impact topic analyzed in further detail in this environmental assessment.

2.4 IMPACT TOPICS DISMISSED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS

2.4.1 Wetlands

Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, requires an examination of impacts to wetlands. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, and amendments contained in the Clean Water Act, set forth a national policy to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters, to enhance the quality of water resources, and to prevent, control, and abate pollution of the nation's waters. NPS Director's Order 77-1 establishes NPS policies, requirements, and standards for implementing Executive Order 11990, and DO-12 provides direction for the preservation, use and quality of water in national parks. NPS utilizes the U.S Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States*, Cowardin et al. 1979 (DOI Report FWS/OBS-79/31) to classify wetlands pursuant to E.O. 11990. According to the Cowardin definition a wetland must possess one or more of the following three attributes: at least periodically, the land supports predominately hydrophytic vegetation; the substrate is predominately undrained hydric soils; or the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year.

The proposed action does not meet the requirements of the federal wetland permitting process under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. USFWS, National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps do not indicate the presence of designated wetland areas within the Parkway within the proposed project area. The soil descriptions published by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service do not list the soil type as hydric. A wetland delineation was performed at the site to document conditions relative to the presence or absence of potential wetlands and other "Waters of the U.S." and is included as an attachment. The investigation revealed no areas that meet the criteria for classification as wetland according to the Cowardin classification system or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) wetland delineation procedures. A copy of the NWI map showing the approximate project location is also included as attachment. Neither the proposed action nor the no-action alternative will impact wetlands within the project area. Therefore, wetlands are not analyzed in further detail in this environmental assessment.

2.4.2 Air Quality

The federal Clean Air Act, as amended, establishes procedures for improving air quality conditions including establishment of a set of National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The Air Quality Standards are based on six constituents of concern; carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, and lead. A system of monitoring is established across the nation to measure levels of these constituents, and if an area is found to exceed allowable levels, the area is considered in “nonattainment” and local officials are required to develop a plan for achieving air quality that meets the standards.

The proposed action will not occur within designated nonattainment areas and will not require new source permitting by Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) or directly result in additional volumes of constituents of concern. Therefore air quality is not analyzed further in this environmental assessment.

2.4.3 Floodplains

Executive Order 11988 (*Floodplain Management*) requires examination of potential impacts to floodplains and potential risk involved in placing facilities with designated special flood hazard areas. NPS DO-12 establishes guidelines for considering actions within floodplains and provides direction for the preservation, use, and quality of water in national park lands.

The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for the project area was assessed and analyzed to determine that the site is not in a floodplain. The proposed action is not within a designated floodplain or other special flood hazard area and will not result in placement of structures or modifications to flood patterns within regulated floodplains. Therefore, floodplains are not analyzed in further detail in this environmental assessment.

2.4.4 Unique or Important Wildlife Habitat

No areas of unique or habitats of special concern have been identified in proximity to the proposed action. Habitat impacts resulting from the limited construction activities and limited clearing within the proposed pedestrian walkway footprint may have temporary minor impacts to the existing wildlife habitats. The existing habitat within the proposed project area consists of mixed pine and hardwood forestland dominated by species typical for the geographic area, and is not considered unique, uncommon to the area, or of exceptional value to native wildlife species of concern. Therefore, unique or important wildlife habitat is not analyzed in further detail in this environmental assessment.

2.4.5 Threatened and Endangered Species

The federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, requires an examination of potential impacts on all federally listed threatened and endangered species and designated critical habitat. NPS DO-12 establishes policies for considering potential impacts on federal candidate species, as well as state listed threatened, endangered, candidate, rare, declining, and sensitive species.

The proposed action will result in no direct or indirect impacts to known protected species including federally listed or candidate species and critical habitat, and including state

listed species of special concern. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined that the proposed project will have “No Effect” on federally listed species or their habitats. Refer to Appendix B, a letter from the USFWS Mississippi Field Office dated July 24, 2014. The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) also reviewed the project area and concluded that three (3) species of concern, the Crested coralroot (*Hexalectris spicata*), the Paddlefish (*Polydon spathula*) and the Southern hickorynut (*Obovaria jacksoniana*) are known to occur within 2.0 miles of the project area. The MDWFP further concluded “...that if best management practices are properly implemented, monitored and maintained.... the project likely poses no threat to listed species or their habitats.” Refer to Appendix B, a letter from the MDWFP dated August 4, 2014. Therefore, threatened and endangered species is not analyzed in further detail in this environmental assessment.

2.4.6 Paleontology and Geology

The area of the proposed action is within the North Central Hills physiographic province and is underlain by the Cockfield and Yazoo Formations, neither of which is considered geologically active. Surface topography is gently sloping to undulating with elevations ranging from 325 to 355 feet above mean sea level. The fossil record from surface and near surface soils is very low with only 128 fossils recorded statewide from soils developed during the same period as soils in vicinity of the proposed action. Therefore, geology and paleontology are not further discussed in this environmental assessment.

2.4.7 Indian Trust Resources

Secretarial Order 3175 requires that any anticipated impacts to designated Indian Trust resources from a proposed action by Department of Interior agencies be explicitly addressed in the related environmental documents. The federal Indian Trust responsibility is a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation on the part of the United States to protect tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights, and it represents a duty to carry out mandates of federal law with respect to American Indian and Alaskan Native tribes. The lands in proximity to the Parkway and proposed action are not held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the benefit of Indians due to their status as Indians. Therefore, Indian Trust Resources are not analyzed further in this environmental assessment.

2.4.8 Prime or Unique Farmland

The Council on Environmental issued a 1980 directive for federal agencies to assess the effects of proposed actions on farmland soils classified as prime or unique by the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service. Prime or unique farmland is defined as containing soils particularly suited to production of crops such as common foods, forage, fiber, and oil seed. Unique farmland produces specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts.

Review of the soils status for lands in proximity to the proposed action indicates no soils classified as prime or unique farmland occur in proximity to the proposed action. In addition, coordination with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) revealed that since the project is located within the corporate limits of the City of Ridgeland, Mississippi, the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) does not apply. The NRCS letter dated July 31, 2014 confirming

this status is included in Appendix B. Therefore, no impacts to prime or unique farmland are identified and are not analyzed further in this environmental assessment.

2.4.9 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 (*General Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations*) requires that all federal agencies incorporate environmental justice into their missions by identifying and addressing the disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects of their programs and policies on minorities or low income populations or communities.

The proposed action will have no direct or indirect impacts to individual residences or populations of individuals and as such will not have a disproportionate adverse health or environmental effect on minority or low income populations or communities as defined in the Environmental Protection Agency's *Draft Environmental Justice Guidance*. Therefore environmental justice is not analyzed further in this environmental assessment.

2.4.10 Socioeconomic Environment

The proposed action will provide a beneficial short-term impact to the local economy due to increased employment opportunities for the construction work force and revenues for local businesses and governments generated from construction activities and workers. An internal zoning system, described as the *Natchez Trace Parkway General Management Plan* identifies land management requirements within the Parkway. The proposed action will not require any significant changes in land use or have no significant impacts to Parkway land use. Therefore, socioeconomic environment is not analyzed further in this environmental assessment.

2.4.11 Migratory Birds

As previously noted the proposed project includes the construction of a pedestrian walkway and will include only limited clearing of primarily a herbaceous habitat type. Given this, potential impacts to migratory bird populations would be minimal. Therefore, migratory birds are not analyzed further in this environmental assessment.

2.4.12 Coastal Zone Management

The Gulf of Mexico is the nearest coastline which is a distance of approximately 150 miles to the proposed project area. Therefore, Coastal Zone Management is not analyzed further in this environmental assessment.

2.4.13 Sole Source Aquifer

The proposed project is located in Madison County, Mississippi which is not one of the counties served by the Southern Hills Regional Aquifer System, the only sole source aquifer present in Mississippi. Therefore, sole source aquifer is not analyzed further in this environmental assessment.

2.4.14 Wild and Scenic Rivers and Streams

The only federally-listed Wild and Scenic River or Stream in the state of Mississippi is a 21-mile segment of Black Creek from Moody's Landing to Fairly Bridge Landing, which is located over 100 miles to the south of the project area. Therefore, wild and scenic rivers and streams are not analyzed further in this environmental assessment.

2.4.15 Soundscapes and Noise

NPS Directors Order 47 (*Sound Preservation and Noise Management*) identifies preservation of natural soundscapes within national park lands as an important part of the NPS mission. Natural soundscapes are those sounds that exist in the absence of human-caused sound. The natural ambient soundscape consists of the aggregate of all the natural sounds that occur together with the landscapes physical capacity for transmitting those sounds. Natural sounds occur within and beyond the range of sounds that humans can perceive and can be transmitted through air, water, or solid materials. The frequencies, magnitudes, and durations of human-caused sound considered acceptable varies among NPS units and throughout a given park unit, being generally greater in developed areas and less in undeveloped areas.

Traffic along the Parkway and surrounding city streets is the primary source of artificial noise in the area. The construction related activities from equipment, vehicles and workers would introduce dissonant sound, but such sounds would be temporary. Construction noise would be audible above typical background noise and therefore adverse, however, it would be localized, short-term and minor. Therefore, this topic has been dismissed from further analysis in this EA.

2.4.16 Water Resources/Quality

NEPA requires an examination of impacts from major federal actions to include all components of affected ecosystems. In addition, the 1972 Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by the Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 U.S.C 1251 et seq.), is a national policy to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters, to enhance the quality of water resources, and to prevent, control, and abate water pollution. Section 401 of the Clean Water Act requires a permit for any activity which may result in discharge into navigable waters of the United States. Negligible short-term impacts to water quality within the immediate project area may occur during the construction period due to erosion. Because the proposed action would utilize best management practices during construction within NPS lands, water resources is an impact topic that has been dismissed from further analysis.

2.5 RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PROJECTS AND PLANNING

Other planned projects in the region were considered for potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts that might affect resources within the Parkway and in proximity to the proposed project area. No other projects were identified within the proposed project area.

2.6 APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Applicable Federal policies, executive orders and regulations, and how they relate to the resources originally considered are listed in Table 1-1 below. In addition, NPS *Management Policies* (NPS 2006a) was used for guidance for numerous impact topics. Other regulations specific to NPS include the Director's Orders listed below and the NPS Organic Act of 1916.

Table 2-1. Applicable Federal Laws and Regulations

Resource	Relevant Laws and Regulations
Aesthetics	NPS Organic Act
Air Quality	Clean Air Act NPS Organic Act
Coastal Zone Management	Coastal Zone Management Act
Cultural, Historic, and Archaeological Resources	National Historic Preservation Act Archaeological Resources Protection Act NPS Director's Order #28 NPS Organic Act
Ecologically Critical Areas	Endangered Species Act
Energy Requirements and Conservation	Energy Policy Act Executive Orders 13031, 13123, 13149
Environmental Justice	Executive Order 12898
Floodplains	NPS Organic Act Executive Order 11988 NPS Director's Order #77-2 Clean Water Act Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act
Indian Sacred Sites and Indian Trust Resources	Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretarial Orders No. 3206, 3175 NPS Director's Orders #66 and #71B Executive Orders 13007, 13175
Noise	NPS Director's Order #47 Noise Control Act
Park Operations	NPS Organic Act and NPS Management Policies, 2006
Prime and Unique Farmlands	Farmland Protection Policy Act Memorandum on Prime and Unique Agricultural Lands and NEPA (CEQ 1980)
Public Health and Safety	Architectural Barriers Act Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) NPS Director's Orders #42 and #83 Executive Order 13045
Socioeconomic Resources	NPS Director's Orders #2 and #12
Soils, Geology, Topography	National Cooperative Soil Survey Standards
Sole Source Aquifers	40 CFR 149
Terrestrial Resources	Migratory Bird Treaty Act Wilderness Act Executive Order 13112
Threatened and Endangered Species	Endangered Species Act NPS Organic Act
Visitor Use and Experience	NPS Director's Order #12

Resource	Relevant Laws and Regulations
Water Quality, Hydrology	Clean Water Act Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act Executive Order 11514 Executive Order 12088 Estuary Protection Act
Wetlands	Executive Order 11990 Clean Water Act Executive Order 12088 NPS Director's Order #77-1 Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Wild and Scenic Rivers Act NPS Director's Order #46
Wildlife	Migratory Bird Conservation Act; Migratory Bird Treaty Act

2.7 REQUIRED PERMITS, LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

The Mississippi Craft Center would be required to obtain an NPS Special Use Permit (Construction Permit) for construction of the proposed project.

2.8 SCOPE

This EA examines the consequences of the proposed action on the environment. This document analyzes the short-term, long-term and cumulative effects of all the alternatives considered. By comparing the potential Action Alternative with the No Action Alternative and identifying mitigation measures that would minimize adverse effects, this EA may assist stakeholders in the decision-making process. In addition the environmental assessment was completed in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA, and implementing regulations, 36 CFR Part 800 and is therefore being coordinated with the NEPA process.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The alternatives section provides a detailed description of the No Action Alternative and the Preferred Alternative.

The purpose of considering a No Action Alternative is to provide a basis for comparison of the proposed action and the associated potential environmental impacts. For the purposes of this EA, the No Action Alternative would mean that the proposed pedestrian walkway would not be constructed and the conditions within the project area would remain as they are today.

3.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (ALTERNATIVE A)

The No Action Alternative is required for the NEPA process to review and compare feasible alternatives to the existing baseline conditions. Under the No Action Alternative, no construction of the proposed pedestrian walkway would occur. This would not allow Natchez Trace Parkway visitors or local patrons utilizing the existing multi-use trail system to access the Craft Center directly from the Parkway or the trail system as was the case at the Center's previous location. Visitors' only access to the Craft Center would be via the Old Canton Road exit from the Parkway and then to Rice Road to the Craft Center. This alternative is not preferred because it would not meet the purpose and need of the project. It would not provide a direct access from the Parkway or the multi-use trail system to the Craft Center and therefore not provide a more visible and easily accessible route to the Craft Center for the Parkway visitors. The No Action Alternative is not the preferred alternative because the purpose and need of the proposed project would not be met.

3.3 PROPOSED ACTION (ALTERNATIVE B)

For Alternative B, the proposed walkway would be constructed from wood and would be slightly elevated to reduce potential impacts to the Old Trace area. It would be approximately eight (8) feet in width and approximately 250 feet in length, including 75 concrete pier footings (see Appendix E for drawings). The walkway would begin at the sidewalk at the Old Trace interpretive site, transect the Old Trace, and connect to the western end of the existing Craft Center walkway system. The layout of the Craft Center walkway system and the entrance doors also make this route preferable because of the ingress and egress into the Craft Center. The wooden walkway would be built in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The proposed plans and design for the walkway included in the Preferred Action alternative are included in Appendix E.

The field assessment revealed that the proposed pedestrian walkway from the existing Craft Center walkways on the west side of the building would be constructed along a path that would minimize aboveground site disturbance. The design for the walkway would not require significant tree removal and could span over a low lying section of Old Trace, therefore reduce effects on existing Parkway resources. In addition, access to the proposed pedestrian walkway

would be provided via the existing parking area at the Old Natchez Trace interpretive site access point from the Parkway thereby limiting the need for any associated improvements to the existing facilities on the NPS property.

Impacts of Alternative B on Parkway operations and land use are possible due to a potential increase in use of the existing parking area, resulting in an increase in traffic congestion at the entry and exit point onto the Parkway. Impacts from additional parking lot use are anticipated to be minor and self-limiting due to the small size of the existing parking lot. The additional infrastructure would result in a greater maintenance requirement for the NPS. However, maintenance responsibilities of the proposed walkway would be transferred to the Craft Center as outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement, approved by the Superintendent.

Alternative B would accomplish the purpose and need of the project, provide direct access to the Craft Center from the Old Trace interpretive site and cause limited site disturbance and adverse effect to the Old Trace. Therefore, Alternative B is the Preferred Alternative.

3.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

NPS DO-12 requires identification of the environmentally preferred alternative in all environmental documents. The environmentally preferred alternative is the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment, and that best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources. This section summarizes the extent to which each alternative meets the intent of the environmentally preferred alternative as defined above.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative) is the environmentally preferred alternative because it would result in no additional impact the natural and cultural resources of the Parkway, especially the Old Trace. However, it does not meet the proposed project purpose and need as compared to Alternative B. The ability to provide direct access to the Craft Center for Parkway visitors would enhance the educational, historical and cultural experiences of the visitors traveling the Parkway.

Because Alternative A causes the least damage to the natural and cultural environment, it is the Environmentally Preferred Alternative.

3.6 MITIGATION MEASURES FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Mitigation measures would be taken to lessen the adverse effects of the proposed alternative. Due to associated environmental impacts of this alternative, mitigation would be required for impacts to soils, vegetation, wildlife, water resources/quality, soundscapes and noise, aesthetics, parkway operations, and land use. The proposed action has been determined to have the potential for minimal impacts to the impact topics listed below. The mitigation measures proposed to reduce the intensity of the potential impacts are primarily related to minimization of the size and duration of the proposed construction activities. Work would be performed in an efficient manner in order to reduce long term impacts from construction activities.

Soils: Construction activities associated with the proposed action could cause minimal soil erosion. However, proper Storm Water BMPs and industry standard construction techniques will be employed to minimize the potential for soil erosion during the construction period. In addition, the proposed action includes a relatively small construction area and clearing of the herbaceous vegetation along the proposed route would be minimal. In the event that there are additional barren soil areas present following construction, these areas will be re-vegetated with the appropriate native vegetation as approved by the NPS staff.

Vegetation: The effects on vegetation within the project area will be minimized by the route utilized for the proposed pedestrian right-of-way. As proposed, no tree or shrub species will be removed and the walkway will be located within an area that has limited herbaceous vegetation present. As a result, impacts to vegetation will be minimized through the selection of the most optimum route for the walkway.

Wildlife: Construction of the proposed pedestrian walkway from the existing Old Natchez Trace parking area to the Craft Center will result in only a minimal loss of wildlife habitat within the project area. Once constructed, the area will be re-vegetated, as needed, to reinstate any losses in herbaceous vegetation that could be utilized by wildlife within the area.

Water Resources/Quality: Proper Storm Water BMPs and industry standard construction techniques will be employed to minimize the potential for soil erosion and potential storm water runoff from the site during the construction period. In addition, the proposed action includes a relatively small construction area and clearing of the herbaceous vegetation along the proposed route would be minimal. In the event that there are additional barren soil areas present following construction, these areas will be re-vegetated with the appropriate native vegetation as approved by the NPS staff. In addition, the construction will be done in a manner to insure that the existing storm water flows and patterns are maintained through the area.

Soundscapes and Noise: The construction activities will produce some level of noise within the project area. Noise levels are not expected to impact Parkway visitors except within the immediate area during stops to observe the Old Natchez Trace area or patrons utilizing the existing multi-use trail system. Impacts will be mitigated by restricting the construction activities to normal weekday daylight hours.

Aesthetics: Impacts to aesthetics within the project area will be mitigated by constructing the proposed walkway utilizing the approved NPS standards for the construction of such walkways and similar in appearance to the existing pedestrian walkway within the area. In

addition, the actual route utilized for the walkway will be ultimately selected in conjunction with the appropriate NPS staff to insure that impacts to the aesthetics within the project area are minimized.

Parkway Operations and Maintenance: Potential impacts to the current Parkway operations will be mitigated through the appropriate design criteria for the proposed pedestrian walkway to insure the long-term maintenance needs are minimal. In addition, the Guild will take on the maintenance responsibilities for the walkway if constructed.

Land Use: The project design will be developed with the guidance of the NPS staff to insure that the project conforms to the existing land use activities with the project area.

Cultural Resources: Based upon the project design, the proposed boardwalk would be constructed from natural materials (wood) so as to blend in to the environment. Furthermore placement of piers would be such that the actual Old Trace area is spanned and that no/a minimal number footers will actually be located within the Old Trace corridor. In addition, the boardwalk/trail connector would be located to minimize the construction that would take place on the trail directly (south end of Craft Center as opposed to north). In the event previously unknown cultural resources are identified during construction, all work will cease and the NPS will be notified immediately.

3.7 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED

An effort was undertaken to identify other alternatives that would meet the proposed project purpose and need. Specifically, consideration was given to the type of construction that could be utilized for Alternative B (Preferred Alternative). Consideration was given to constructing this alternative as a concrete walkway that would mimic the existing concrete walkways at both the Old Trace interpretive site and the Craft Center. However, this alternative design was dismissed from further consideration due to the potential increased impacts versus the wooden walkway design that is being proposed for Alternative B in terms of footprint and direct impact on cultural and natural resources. An additional alternative location for the boardwalk was considered connecting the east side of the building and crossing the sunken portion of the Old Trace with a bridge. This alternative was dismissed as it would negatively impact the aesthetics of the interpreted Old Trace segment and create more impacts to natural and cultural resources because the bridge and longer boardwalk would require more construction.

4.0 IMPACT ANALYSIS

4.1 OVERVIEW

NEPA requires the disclosure of environmental impacts associated with the alternatives including the No Action Alternative. This section presents the environmental impacts of the proposed Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative on physical resources, natural resources, human environment, visitor use and experience and, park operations. These analyses provide the basis for comparing the effects of the alternatives. NEPA requires consideration of context, intensity and duration of impacts, indirect impacts, cumulative impacts, and measures to mitigate for impacts.

Chapter 4 describes and analyzes potential environmental effects on the physical resources, natural resources, human environment, visitor use and experience, and park operations associated with the Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative. In addition, cumulative impacts, as defined in regulations developed by the CEQ (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, Section 1508.7) are discussed throughout this chapter for each resource. A cumulative impact is the impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of who undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

4.1.1 Statutory Requirements

Primary laws and guidance documents that guided the development of this EA are:

- National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 (16U.S.C. 1-4, et seq.) – Created the National Park Service to promote and regulate the use of national parks, monuments, and reservations, by such means and measures as to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the land in such manner that will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.
- The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 – Public Law 91-190 established a broad national policy to improve the relationship between humans and their environment and sets out policies and goals to ensure that environmental considerations are given careful attention and appropriate weight in all decisions of the federal government. This legislation requires and guides the preparation of this EA.
- National Park Service Regulations and Policies – Actions proposed in this document are subject to the NPS Director’s Order #2 (Park Planning), Director’s Order #12 (Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making), and Director’s Order #77 (Natural Resource Protection). Actions

are also subject to the service-wide policy document, Management Policies (NPS 2006a).

4.1.2 Methods for Evaluating Environmental Effects

The method of analysis of potential effects is based on the *Director's Order No. 12 Handbook* [sec 5.4(f)]. Four categories of effects are considered: direct effects, indirect effects, and cumulative effects. The context, duration, and intensity of the impacts must also be defined. Intensity of effects and thresholds of significance are defined for both beneficial and adverse effects. These are further defined in Section 4.1.2.2.

Where quantitative data were not available, best professional judgment was used to determine impacts. In general, the thresholds used come from existing literature, consultation with subject experts, and appropriate agencies.

To analyze impacts, methods were selected to predict the potential change in park resources that would occur with the implementation of the alternatives. Evaluation factors were established for each impact topic to assess the changes in resource conditions of the alternative.

4.1.3 Impact Categories

Three impact categories are used in this analysis and defined below.

Direct Effects – Direct effects are impacts that are caused by the alternative at the same time and in the same place as the action.

Indirect Effects – Indirect effects are impacts caused by the alternatives that occur later in time or farther in distance than the action.

Cumulative Impacts – The CEQ regulations, which implement NEPA, require assessment of cumulative impacts in the decision making process for federal projects. A cumulative impact is the impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of who undertakes such other actions (40 CFR 1508.7). Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

To determine potential cumulative impacts, projects in the area surrounding the Parkway, and particularly in close proximity to the Old Trace interpretive site, were identified. The area included the Parkway and nearby private lands, and lands administered by adjacent communities and State agencies. Potential projects identified as cumulative actions included any planning or development activity that was currently being implemented or that would be implemented in the reasonably foreseeable future.

These cumulative actions are evaluated in the cumulative impact analysis in conjunction with the impacts of each alternative to determine if they would have any additive effects on a particular resource. Because some these cumulative actions are in the early planning stages, the evaluation of cumulative effects is qualitative and based on a general description of the project.

The following past actions could contribute to cumulative effects:

- Construction of the Natchez Trace Parkway including the Old Trace interpretive site adjacent to the proposed project site.
- Construction of the City of Ridgeland multi-use trail paralleling the Parkway, partly on Parkway property, from U.S. Highway 51 eastward to West Ramp Road, and Dyke Road at the Ross Barnett Reservoir.
- The multi-use trail paralleling the Parkway, entirely on Parkway property, from Highland Colony Parkway to U.S. Highway 51.
- The multi-use trail paralleling the Parkway, entirely on Parkway property, from Dyke Road eastward to the Reservoir Overlook pull off.
- Construction of the Mississippi Craftsmen's Guild, Mississippi Craft Center building on adjoining private property adjacent to the project location.

The following future action could also contribute to cumulative effects:

- Construction of the Main Harbor Development on the Ross Barnett Reservoir to the south of the project area.

4.1.4 Impact Definitions

Each potential impact is described in terms of its context (site-specific, local, or regional), duration (short-term or long-term), and intensity (negligible, minor, moderate, or major). For the purposes of analysis, the following definitions, unless stated otherwise, are used for all impact topics:

Duration

Short-term impacts: Impacts that might occur during the site preparation and construction phases of the proposed pedestrian walkway or in the short term (1 to 6 months) after completion of construction.

Long-term impacts: Those impacts occurring from completion of the proposed pedestrian walkway through the next 10 years.

Intensity

Negligible: Impacts would have no measurable or perceptible changes to the resource.

Beneficial: Resource improvements would occur and would have a perceptible change to the resource within the Parkway.

Adverse:

Minor: Impacts would be measurable or perceptible but would be localized within a relatively small area. The overall viability of the resource would not be affected and, if left alone, would recover.

Moderate: Impacts would cause a change in the resource; however, the impact would remain localized.

Major: Impacts to the resource would be substantial, highly noticeable, and permanent.

4.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences chapter describes the existing resources within the proposed project area and the beneficial or adverse impacts that would result from implementing the preferred alternative. A description of existing environmental conditions provides an understanding of planning issues, and establishes a benchmark by which the magnitude of environmental effects of the preferred alternative and the no action alternative can be compared. This chapter also includes definitions of impact thresholds (e.g., negligible, minor, moderate, and major), methods used to analyze impacts, and the analysis methods used for determining cumulative impacts. The resources analyzed in this chapter are those found within the property boundaries of the project area, or resources adjacent to the project area that would be directly affected by one of the alternatives.

4.2.1 Soils

Potential impacts on soil resources were assessed based on the extent of disturbance to soils, including natural undisturbed soils, the potential for soil erosion resulting from disturbance, and limitations associated with the soils. Disturbance to soil occurs when topsoil or native soils have been removed from a portion of land for purposes of construction.

Information on the soils of the project area within NPS land was collected using the National Resources Conservation Service's soil data mapper. This mapping tool was used to gather information on soils within the project area. The soils at the site are Oaklimiter and Providence silt loams, a moderately well drained soil that has a fragipan. These soils are typically formed on stream terraces and uplands in the Southern Coastal Plain. The surface layer and upper part of the subsoil range from very strongly acid to medium acid.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Under the No Action Alternative the proposed pedestrian walkway would not be constructed. No soils within the Parkway boundaries would be disturbed under this alternative. Therefore, there would be no change in the baseline conditions and no effects on soils within the proposed project area.

Cumulative Effects

When considering this project in conjunction with the previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development, the No Action Alternative would not contribute to cumulative effects on soils within Parkway boundaries because no additional construction would occur.

Conclusion

The No Action Alternative would have no additional impact on soils within the project area.

Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)

Soil impacts associated with potential erosion during construction of the proposed pedestrian walkway along the preferred walkway route would occur. Adverse impacts to soils during construction would be and short-term in duration and minor in intensity, due to the limited project size/soil disturbance needed for placing concrete pier footings, and the use of proper construction techniques to prevent soil erosion. Appropriate storm water best management practices would be utilized to mitigate potential erosion. Stabilization using native grass seed or weed-free straw would occur in areas exhibiting risk for erosion, in order to reduce potential transport of soil. Long-term adverse impacts for Alternative B would be negligible.

Cumulative Impacts

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development included impacts from disturbance of soils and sediments, resulting in short- and long-term minor adverse impacts. These impacts were due to the removal and compaction of soils and conversion to impervious surface. Alternative B would have negligible adverse short- and long-term impacts on soils. Negligible impacts are anticipated because changes in soil quantity, quality or function are likely to be imperceptible.

Conclusion

The construction of Alternative B would result in minor short-term adverse impacts during construction period, and negligible adverse long-term impacts. Cumulative impacts on soils would be negligible.

4.2.2 Vegetation

The project area consists of a mixed oak-pine forest dominated by loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) and post oak (*Quercus stellata*). The forest midstory is dominated by non-native Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) and sweetgum saplings (*Liquidambar styraciflua*). Table 4.1 includes the predominant vegetative species present within the project area at the time of this writing. In general, the understory is sparse, with a thick leaf litter layer.

To evaluate impacts on vegetation, vegetative species composition within the project area was considered. Types of shrubs, trees, grasses, and other herbaceous plants potentially affected by the proposed project were determined. Intensity levels of potential impacts were determined based on the anticipated extent of vegetation removal needed for project construction.

Table 4-1. Vegetation in the project area.

Stratum	Common Name	Scientific Name
Tree Stratum	post oak	<i>Quercus stellata</i>
	water oak	<i>Quercus nigra</i>
	loblolly pine	<i>Pinus taeda</i>
	sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>
	hackberry (sugarberry)	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>
	cherrybark oak	<i>Quercus pagoda</i>
Sapling/Shrub Stratum	sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>
	winged elm	<i>Ulmus alata</i>
	eastern redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>
	black cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i>
	eastern red cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>
	ironwood/hornbeam	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>
	Chinese privet	<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>
	red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>
Herbaceous Stratum	wire grass	<i>Aristida stricta</i>
	peppervine	<i>Ampelopsis arborea</i>
	Mayapple	<i>Pedophyllum peltatum</i>
	carex	<i>Carex spp.</i>
Woody Vine Stratum	poison ivy	<i>Toxicodendron radicans</i>
	muscadine	<i>Vitis roundifolia</i>
	southern dewberry	<i>Rubus trivialis</i>
	poison oak	<i>Toxicodendron quercifolia</i>

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Under the No Action Alternative the proposed pedestrian walkway would not be constructed and no vegetation within the Parkway boundaries would be disturbed. Therefore, there would be no change in the current conditions and no additional effects on vegetation within the proposed project area.

Cumulative Effects

When considering this project in conjunction with the previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development, the No Action Alternative would not additionally contribute to cumulative effects on vegetation within Parkway boundaries because no additional construction would occur.

Conclusion

The No Action Alternative would have no additional impact on vegetation within the project area.

Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)

The proposed route for the pedestrian walkway under Alternative B is located within an area that is sparsely vegetated with herbaceous species. It is anticipated that a limited amount of tree or shrub species would be removed during the project construction activities (less than 0.1 acres) within the footprint of the walkway. However, no adjacent vegetated areas would be impacted. The limited removal of approximately 2000 square feet of vegetation within the walkway footprint would be considered a minor adverse long-term impact. Maintenance of the walkway, such as trimming or landscaping adjacent to the walkway, would be the responsibility of the Craft Center as outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement, approved by the Superintendent.

Cumulative Impacts

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development included impacts from vegetative disturbance and removal, resulting in short- and long-term minor adverse impacts. These impacts were due to forest clearing and land conversion. In conjunction with these previous impacts, Alternative B would have negligible adverse short- and long-term impacts on vegetation.

Conclusion

There would be short- and long-term negligible adverse impacts on vegetation associated with Alternative B due vegetation disturbance during construction and long-term maintenance of the walkway. Cumulative impacts to vegetation relative to previous construction in the area would be negligible.

4.2.3 Wildlife

Wildlife habitat on this site is primarily upland mixed forest, heavily impacted by past human development. Bird species observed on site included common backyard bird species such as crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and brown thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*). Small mammals seen on site include eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*). Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are also known to use this site. Other common species likely include raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), and various herpetiles. Overall use of the site is estimated to be low, due to low quality and variability of available browse/food sources and previous fragmentation of habitat by development. However, there is evidence of consumption and use of tree mast species.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Under the No Action Alternative the proposed pedestrian walkway would not be constructed. No habitat for wildlife within the Parkway boundaries would be disturbed under this alternative. Therefore, there would be no change in the current conditions and no effects on wildlife within the proposed project area.

Cumulative Effects

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development have affected wildlife habitat in the vicinity of the project. However, the No Action Alternative would not additionally contribute to cumulative effects on wildlife within Parkway boundaries because no additional construction would occur.

Conclusion

The No Action Alternative would have no additional impact on wildlife within the project area.

Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)

The route for the pedestrian walkway is located within an area limited to primarily herbaceous vegetation with some scattered tree and shrub species and heavy leaf layer. It is anticipated that a limited amount of tree or shrub species would need to be removed during construction, with some clearing of herbaceous vegetation along the walkway. However, no adjacent vegetated areas would be impacted. The construction of the pedestrian walkway would increase the human presence; however the existing human presence is such that the walkway would not be significantly different relative to existing conditions due to the current use of the parking area and interpretive site. No long-term displacement of native wildlife would be anticipated. Overall, the removal of the limited amount of wildlife habitat and the increase in human presence would be considered a minor short- and long-term adverse impacts to wildlife.

Cumulative Impacts

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development included impacts from vegetative disturbance and removal, resulting in short- and long-term minor adverse impacts. These impacts were due to forest clearing and land conversion. In conjunction with these previous impacts, Alternative B would have negligible short- and long-term adverse impacts to wildlife.

Conclusion

There would be minor short- and long-term adverse impacts on vegetation associated with Alternative B due vegetation disturbance during construction and long-term maintenance of the walkway. Cumulative impacts to vegetation relative to previous construction in the area would be negligible.

4.2.4 Aesthetics

The current view of the area is forested, and the pathway of the Old Trace is visible (Figure 2). The interpretive panel located in the parking lot explains the importance and use of the Old Trace, and a gravel trail takes visitors down to a concrete walkway to the site of the Old Trace.



Figure 2. Aesthetics of the signage at the Old Trace interpretive site.



Figure 3. Aesthetic environment of the area of the existing trail to the Old Trace interpretive site (left) and the area near the proposed walkway location (right). Refer to Figure 1 for relative locations.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Under the No Action Alternative the proposed pedestrian walkway would not be constructed. Existing aesthetics within the Parkway boundaries would not be disturbed under this alternative.

Cumulative Effects

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development have affected the aesthetics of the area. However, the No

Action Alternative would not additionally contribute to cumulative effects on aesthetics within Parkway boundaries because no additional construction would occur.

Conclusion

The No Action Alternative would have no additional impact on the aesthetics within the project area.

Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)

Construction of the walkway would create minor short- and long-term adverse impacts primarily by disrupting the historic view of the Old Trace. The proposed walkway would be constructed in a manner to limit the effects to the Old Trace by using natural materials (wood) and by spanning the Old Trace proper. In addition, concrete piers would serve as the footings of the walkway, and would limit belowground disturbance. Other impacts to the aesthetics would result from needed vegetative clearing (see Vegetation section above). The overall impacts to the aesthetics within the project area would be adverse, but minor in intensity and long-term in duration.

Cumulative Effects

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development included impacts from vegetative disturbance and removal, resulting in short- and long-term minor adverse impacts to the aesthetics of the area. These impacts were due to forest clearing and land conversion. In conjunction with these previous impacts, Alternative B would have negligible short- and long-term adverse impacts to aesthetics.

Conclusion

The implementation of the preferred alternative would result in minor, short- and long-term, adverse impacts on the aesthetics within the area primarily due to impact to the Old Trace. The proposed action would result in minor, long-term impacts to aesthetics within the project area in a manner that would not significantly affect aesthetic resources. The cumulative effect would be negligible, but adverse and long-term in duration.

4.2.7 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources in the affected environment include a segment of the Old Trace that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The listing was approved in 1976. The List of Classified Structures (LCS) number for the Old Trace is 102159. Any alterations to the Old Trace would impact the cultural landscape.

A Phase I Cultural Resources Survey was completed by Dr. Jay Johnson along the proposed project route on June 7, 2015. A copy of this survey is included in the Appendix D. Based upon the field survey and associated research, it was determined that no significant archeological resources are present within the proposed project footprint or within close proximity to the project site.

The Guild consulted with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) to comply with Section 106 of the NHPA. The MDAH responded in a letter dated February 19, 2014 that “no cultural resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places are likely to be directly or visually affected.” Furthermore, the MDAH stated that with the permission National Park Service, they had no reservation with the proposed project (Appendix B).

The cultural resource team, including Parkway and NPS southeast regional office evaluated the preferred alternative in conjunction with Parkway staff during July-August, 2015. Due to construction of a structure that would cross the Old Trace, the NPS determined that the preferred alternative would result in an adverse effect to the Old Trace cultural landscape. However, it is the opinion of the NPS that the adverse effect can be mitigated through use of natural materials (wood), locating the walkway to minimize the impact to the Old Trace, spanning the Old Trace proper, and limiting ground disturbance using pier footings. The NPS continued consultation with MDAH on August 19, 2015 to provide the cultural resource survey, a copy of this draft EA, the NPS finding of an adverse effect, and the proposed construction plans. In addition, the NPS consulted with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) to inform of the finding of adverse effect, and to request their input. The ACHP responded that their participation in the consultation to resolve adverse effects was not needed, but that the NPS should submit a final Memorandum of Agreement, developed in consultation with the MDAH, at the conclusion of the consultation process (See Appendix B).

On July 17, 2014, consultation with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was conducted by Federal Highway Administration (see Appendix B). Dr. Ian Thompson responded with a request for more information regarding the level of disturbance associated with the trail corridor (Appendix B). On August 19, 2015, the NPS provided the requested information, the cultural resource survey, and the NPS finding of adverse effect. A copy of this draft EA, the cultural resource survey, the NPS finding of adverse effect, and the proposed construction plans were provided. In addition, consultation was initiated with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Jena Band of the Choctaw Indians. No response has been received at the time of this writing, but any responses received will be incorporated into the final version of this document.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed pedestrian walkway would not be constructed. No cultural resources that might be present within the Parkway boundaries would be disturbed under this alternative.

Cumulative Effects

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development may have affected the archeological resources in the area, but these past activities did not analyze impacts to the cultural landscape. However, the No Action Alternative would not additionally contribute to cumulative effects on cultural resources within Parkway boundaries because no additional construction would occur.

Conclusion

Under the No Action Alternative there would be no change in the current conditions and no additional cumulative effects on cultural resources within the proposed project area.

Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)

The proposed project route for the preferred alternative is clear of archeological resources. Therefore, the potential for adverse impacts to previously unknown archeological resources within the project area would be negligible with the construction of the preferred alternative. In the event that previously unknown or undetected archeological resources are encountered during the project construction, all activities would cease and coordination with the NPS staff would immediately occur. Because the proposed walkway would alter the appearance of the Old Trace, implementation of the preferred alternative would result in an adverse effect to the Old Trace cultural landscape. As discussed above, this impact would be mitigated by design and location of the walkway.

Cumulative Effects

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development may have affected the archeological resources in the area, but these past activities did not analyze impacts to the cultural landscape. However, cumulative impacts to the Old Trace corridor of this project in conjunction with past impacts within or in close proximity to the project area are considered adverse.

Conclusion

The preferred alternative is unlikely to result in adverse impacts to archeological resources, as evidenced by the findings of the cultural resource survey. Cumulative and direct adverse effects to the Old Trace cultural landscape are considered adverse.

4.2.8 Visitor Use and Experience

The 1987 Natchez Trace Parkway General Management Plan identified two general groups of visitors, those who use the Parkway as a means to go to and from destinations off the Parkway and those who come expressly to visit the Parkway and participate in interpretive and recreational opportunities. On average, there are approximately 13 million annual visitors to the Parkway of which about 6 million are recreational visits.

Parkway activities in the immediate project area include automobile touring, bird watching, wildlife viewing, hiking, bicycling, and nature walking. Adjacent to the project site, the paved multi-use trail (10 miles) affords the opportunity for uninterrupted biking, hiking and running. In the general vicinity, there are 22 miles of National Scenic Trail within the Jackson metropolitan area. The National Scenic Trail is unpaved and is available for use by pedestrians and horseback riders.

Bicycling is a major component of the visitor recreational experience at the Parkway. The entire length of the Parkway motor road is a designated bike route. Parkway management goals

include minimizing impacts to Parkway resources and minimizing the potential for user conflicts which degrade the quality of the visitor experience, such as conflicts between motorists and bicyclists, pedestrians, and horseback riders.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Under the No Action Alternative the proposed pedestrian walkway would not be constructed. As a result, the visitor use and experience within the Parkway boundaries at this location would not be changed relative to current conditions.

Cumulative Effects

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development have increased visitor use of the area. However, the No Action Alternative would not additionally contribute to cumulative effects on visitor use within Parkway boundaries because no change in use would occur.

Conclusion

The No Action Alternative would have no additional impact on the visitor use within the project area.

Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)

As described in the purpose and need, the proposed walkway would change visitor use by design in that it would afford visitors pedestrian access to and from the Craft Center. This could result in both beneficial and adverse impacts to visitor use. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in Parkway visitors using the parking area with the added ability to access the Craft Center. This may lead to an increase in use of the parking area and a probable increase in the length of time that visitors remain parked in the parking area. The additional visitor use associated with the Craft Center will affect the existing visitor use for the Old Trace interpretive site. Therefore, the effects on the visitor use and experience with the implementation of Alternative B would be minor adverse long-term impacts. In addition, there may be minor short-term adverse impacts during construction, but the construction work would not prevent use of the site, and the site would remain open.

Beneficial impacts of the preferred alternative include the improved pedestrian access to and from the Craft Center, as described in the Purpose and Need section. The implementation of the preferred alternative would be major beneficial long-term impact to visitor use of this site.

Cumulative Effects

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, and Craft Center have improved visitor use by affording opportunities for recreation and interpretation that did not previously exist. In conjunction with these previous impacts, Alternative B would have negligible long-term beneficial impacts to visitor use.

Conclusion

The implementation of the preferred alternative would result in minor, short- and long-term, adverse impacts on visitor use due to increased use of the existing parking area and potential congestion. However, major beneficial impacts would result from the pedestrian access to the Craft Center. The cumulative effect would be negligible beneficial long-term impacts to visitor use.

4.2.9 Public Health and Safety

Human health and safety refers to the ability of the NPS to provide a healthy and safe environment for visitors and parkway staff, to protect human life, and to provide for injury-free visits and appropriate responses when accidents and injuries occur.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Under the No Action Alternative the proposed pedestrian walkway would not be constructed. As a result, the public health and safety within the Parkway boundaries at this location would not be changed relative to current conditions.

Cumulative Effects

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, Craft Center, and surrounding private development have increased traffic and visitation in the area. However, the No Action Alternative would not additionally contribute to cumulative effects on public health within Parkway boundaries because no change in use would occur.

Conclusion

The No Action Alternative would have no additional impact on public health and safety within the project area.

Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)

As described in the purpose and need, the proposed walkway would change visitor use by design in that it would afford visitors pedestrian access to and from the Craft Center. This could result in both beneficial and adverse impacts to public safety. It is anticipated that there may be an increase in Parkway visitors using the parking area and those entering and exiting the parking area onto the Parkway. If this occurs, the effects on public safety with the implementation of Alternative B would be minor adverse long-term impacts. No short-term impacts to public health are anticipated during construction.

Cumulative Effects

The previous construction of the Parkway, parking lot, multi-use trail, and Craft Center has affected public safety by increasing traffic in the area. In conjunction with these previous impacts, Alternative B would have negligible long-term adverse impacts to public safety.

Conclusion

The implementation of the preferred alternative would result in minor, short- and long-term, adverse impacts on visitor use due to increased use of the existing parking area and potential congestion. The cumulative effect would be negligible adverse long-term impacts to public safety.

Table 4-2 Summary of Environmental Consequences

Impact Topics	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)
Soils	No direct impacts to soils in the project area.	Minor, short-term, adverse impacts to surface and near surface soils due to installation of boardwalk piers. Long-term direct impacts would be negligible.
Vegetation	No direct impacts to vegetation in the project area.	Minor, short- and long-term adverse impacts due to clearing of forest understory and maintenance of vegetation along the boardwalk.
Wildlife	No direct impacts to wildlife or habitats in the project area.	Minor short- and long-term adverse impacts to wildlife or their habitats due to limited habitat removal and increased human presence
Aesthetics	No direct impacts to aesthetics within the project area would occur.	Minor, short- and long-term, adverse impacts on the aesthetics within the area primarily due to impact to the Old Trace.
Cultural Resources	No direct impacts to cultural resources within the project area would occur.	Unlikely to result in adverse impacts to underground cultural resources, as evidenced by the findings of the cultural resource survey. Cumulative and direct adverse impacts to the Old Trace would be considered minor and long-term.
Visitor Use and Experience	No direct impacts to the visitor use and experience would occur.	Major beneficial impacts would result from the pedestrian access to the Craft Center. Minor, short- and long-term, adverse impacts on visitor use due to increased use of the existing parking area and potential congestion.
Public Health and Safety	No direct impacts to public health and safety would occur.	Minor, short- and long-term adverse impacts on visitor use due to increased use of the existing parking area and potential congestion.

5.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

5.1 SCOPING

Scoping is an effort to involve agencies and the general public in determining the scope of issues to be addressed in the environmental document. Scoping includes consultation with any interested agency, or any agency with jurisdiction by law or expertise to obtain early input. Among other tasks, scoping determines important issues and eliminates issues determined to not be significant, allocates assignments among the project team members, identifies related projects, and identifies permits required. Scoping includes both internal and external scoping activities.

Internal scoping refers to the process used to define issues, alternatives and data needs for the process. The Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi and the Mississippi Craft Center staff have assessed the needs relative to access to the Crafts Center from its inception. As a part of the site location efforts and the Craft Center design efforts, the Guild envisioned the ability to interconnect the site access to the Parkway. The options for constructing an access from the adjacent NPS property and, more specifically, the Old Natchez Trace parking area, have been explored before and since the Craft Center was constructed.

External scoping consisted of contacting the various state and federal agencies concerning the proposed pedestrian walkway location and construction. Coordination with the appropriate state and federal agencies is further discussed in Section 6.2 below, Agency and Stakeholder Consultation.

5.2 AGENCY AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Consultation letters were mailed to the appropriate state and federal agencies during the EA process requesting their consultation and comments as it relates to the proposed project and the project locations. Agencies contacted included the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Mississippi Natural Heritage Program, National Park Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Copies of those letters and their responses are included in Appendix B.

5.2.1 Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 Consultation

In accordance with the federal and state requirements for special status species, a consultation letter was mailed to the USFWS Mississippi Field Office and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP). Information regarding the location and scope of the proposed project was included in the coordination correspondence. A response was received from the USFWS indicating that the proposed work would have "No Effect" on federally listed species or their habitat. The MDWFP responded that "the proposed project likely poses no threat to listed species or their habitats." Letters and responses can be found in Appendix B.

5.2.2 Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act Consultation

Consultation was conducted with MDAH to comply with Section 106 of the NHPA. The Guild consulted with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) to comply with Section 106 of the NHPA. The MDAH responded in a letter dated February 19, 2014 that “no cultural resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places are likely to be directly or visually affected.” Furthermore, the MDAH stated that with the permission National Park Service, they had no reservation with the proposed project (Appendix B). The NPS re-consulted with MDAH on August 19, 2015 to provide the cultural resource survey results, a copy of this draft EA, the NPS finding of an adverse effect, and the proposed construction plans. In addition, the NPS consulted with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) to inform of the finding of adverse effect, and to request their input. The ACHP responded that their participation in the consultation to resolve adverse effects was not needed, but that the NPS should submit a final Memorandum of Agreement, developed in consultation with the MDAH, at the conclusion of the consultation process (See Appendix B).

On July 17, 2014, consultation with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was conducted by Federal Highway Administration (see Appendix B). Dr. Ian Tompson responded with a request for more information regarding the level of disturbance associated with the trail corridor (Appendix B). On August 19, 2015, the NPS re-consulted to provide the requested information, the cultural resource survey, and the NPS finding of adverse effect. A copy of this draft EA, the cultural resource survey, the NPS finding of adverse effect, and the proposed construction plans were provided. In addition, consultation was initiated with the Mississippi and Jena Bands of the Choctaw Nation. No response has been received at the time of this writing, but any responses received will be incorporated into the final version of this document.

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8.0 ACRONYMS

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DEQ	Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
MDAH	Mississippi Department of Archives and History
MDEQ	Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
MDWFP	Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPS	National Park Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Appendix A

Project Mapping

Appendix B

Agency Coordination and Correspondence

Appendix C

Headwaters, Inc. Wetlands Assessment Report

Appendix D

Phase I Cultural Resources Survey Report

Jay K. Johnson, Archaeologist, Ph.D.