

Finding of No Significant Impact Zoning Management Plan/ General Management Plan Amendment/ Environmental Assessment Wind Cave National Park

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Park Service (NPS) has prepared a Zoning Management Plan/General Management Plan Amendment/Environmental Assessment for Wind Cave National Park (park). The Environmental Assessment documents the results of the Zoning Management Plan/General Management Plan Amendment and the potential environmental impacts associated with the preferred alternative.

There are three primary purposes of an environmental assessment: 1) To help determine whether the impact of a proposed action or alternative could be significant; 2) To aid in National Environmental Policy Act compliance when no environmental impact statement is necessary by evaluating a proposal that will have no significant impact, but that may have measurable adverse impacts; and 3) To facilitate preparation of an environmental impacts statement, if one is determined to be necessary.

The Zoning Management Plan focuses specifically on the portions of a General Management Plan (GMP) process required by law and policy that address landscape and resource based requirements necessary to achieve Park Purpose. While the Zoning Management Plan does not assess specific construction and development activities as a GMP would normally address, the Zoning Plan does address appropriate locations for these type activities and stipulations regarding the appropriate locations for each.

Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations specifically direct that "Agencies shall integrate the NEPA process with other planning at the earliest possible time to insure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values, to avoid delays later in the process, and to head off potential conflicts" [§1501.2]. Additionally, both CEQ regulations and NPS policies direct Environmental Assessments to be prepared when compliance with NEPA can be achieved and environmental analysis is sufficient and preparation of an environmental impact statement is therefore not necessary.

The basis of applying management zones in this plan was built upon a suitability analysis that involved a process to determine the relative fitness and/or appropriateness, of individual tracts of land within the Park for specific uses.

The intent of conducting a suitability analysis as part of the management zoning process is that by first understanding the various environmental constraints for each resource type, desired resource conditions, uses and development can then be prescribed in such a manner that does not create future significant adverse impacts. Another way of saying this is that through this planning process, areas with inherent characteristics that make them suitable or unsuitable for certain kinds of management and use

were identified with the underlying goal being to avoid permitting any future land uses, activities or development that would create significant impacts based on the suitability analysis principle.

For these fundamental reasons, this plan was conducted as an Environmental Assessment (EA) rather than an EIS and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been determined.

The purpose of the park is to protect the unique Wind Cave resources and preserve and enhance the mixed-grass prairie and native wildlife, while providing for the enjoyment of the public.

Purpose of Plan

The purpose of this project is to prepare a Zoning Management Plan and update the existing 1994 General Management Plan for the Park. This plan will provide the basis for future planning and decision making related to geographically distinct areas at the Park, and will be incorporated into all existing and future planning documents. Existing plans will evaluate future actions based on management zones as outlined in this plan. Management zones have been created to support and uphold the purposes for which Wind Cave was established as a national park (*NPS Management Policies* 2006, section 3.2.1).

This plan, based on a comprehensive resource suitability analysis and in conjunction with the Foundation document, will define allowable types and general intensities of uses, activities, and development associated with public enjoyment and use of the Park specified locations. As part of this analysis, desired conditions for the preservation of key resource categories at the Park have been defined.

The recently completed Foundation document will inform and provide overall direction for delineating management zones based on identified broad scale landscape issues, conditions, trends, threats, and general Park-wide desired conditions. This project continues to build on work originally initiated as a General Management Plan (GMP)/Environmental Impact Statement in February 2010. It was determined that a zoning plan would address the most immediate needs of the Park, and would be more feasible to complete than a full General Management Plan. This plan does not take the place of the compliance necessary to implement site-specific actions such as the construction of a trail or building.

Need for Plan

Developing management zones will help uphold the purposes for which the Park was established. The planning process will be coordinated within the broader regional context of the Black Hills and prairie grasslands to outline and provide potential existing and future collaborative management strategies for the Park with other adjacent land management agencies and land owners. The 1994 Park General Management Plan (1994 GMP) provides limited direction for the protection of the cave resources, wildlife, air quality, water resources, geology, soils, vegetation, cultural resources, and visitor experiences. Most of the issues and concerns identified at the time of that planning effort have been addressed or accomplished with the exception of construction of adequate maintenance facilities.

Issues that park managers face today are changing or have changed since the early 1990s, and are either not mentioned in the 1994 GMP or have increased in importance due to previous management actions,

land uses, or visitor use patterns. Road rehabilitation, the incorporation of wildland fire into management actions or decisions, research needs, housing, backcountry management, adjacent land uses and development, and sewage treatment all have direct geographical resource management considerations that management zoning addresses. As such, up to date, comprehensive, area-specific management direction is needed.

In addition to the needs based on outdated and limited guidance, on September 21, 2005, (PL 109-71) was approved by Congress allowing for the expansion of the Park to include a 5,675 acre tract of land, 5,556 of which included the 2011 Addition Lands (Casey Property, which includes the historic Sanson Ranch). Funding to purchase this land came from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and on September 22, 2011, this tract of land became part of the Park, constituting an approximate 20% increase in the park's current land base.

No broad level management plan exists for the 2011 Addition Lands (Casey Property) and therefore this recent addition requires comprehensive analysis and integration with parkwide management guidance regarding resources protection, access, use, and development. Major issues to be addressed for these additional lands include: cultural and natural resource planning with emphasis on archeological resource protection and expanded wildlife range, visitor use facilities and programs, access for resource patrols and visitor protection, trail development and backcountry recreational opportunities, vegetation management, scenery conservation, and protection of threatened and endangered species.

General Management Plan Amendment

This project builds on work originally initiated as a General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement in February 2010. Due to programmatic changes in the NPS planning program, this zoning management planning process has been designed to address the new planning program standards and will produce a Zoning Management Plan that will include general parkwide desired resource conditions and appropriate uses, use types, and activities based on specific geographic locations. This plan updates the existing management zones from the 1994 GMP.

Considerable development and land use pressures exist in the surrounding area and on the ranchlands directly adjacent to the park. The pressures include recreational use and suburban residential and guest ranch land development. Impacts to Park resources and values must be addressed in an updated, prescriptive Zoning Management Plan. A visual resource inventory and classification will also be addressed as part of this formal plan.

Articulation of general parkwide desired resource conditions will address wildlife populations, and cave and karst resource management issues related to surface activities. Parkwide desired conditions will incorporate these and other broadscale landscape issues and resource concerns into defined management zones as appropriate. Park purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values will provide direction with regard to general allowable actions and activities within individual management zones.

As Park operations and infrastructure are improved over time, updated management zones will outline the appropriate locations, types, and general intensities of development associated with public enjoyment and use of the Park, including support operations, to ensure that Park resources and values are adequately preserved and protected for future generations. A Zoning Management Plan, complete with desired future conditions, is critical for providing comprehensive long-term management direction for future uses, actions, and operations within the Park boundary. This plan will address new addition lands and the continued need for additional maintenance facilities as identified in the 1994 GMP.

Updating management zones lay the groundwork for future user capacity analyses by identifying locations where various visitor uses could potentially be permitted based on resource resiliency, sensitivity, desired future conditions, and suitability analyses.

Selection of the Agency Preferred Alternative

Greater Park Alternative 2, Visitor Center Alternative B, and Sanson Ranch Alternative iii is the Preferred Alternative formulation. This Preferred Alternative configuration will ensure balanced protection of park fundamental resources and values that collectively uphold established Park purpose while providing and identifying appropriate areas of use and restricting areas based on suitability analysis.

Greater Park Alternative 2

This alternative zones two areas adjacent to US Highway 385 at the southern entrance as primary visitor services. These locations provide opportunities to create an initial introduction to the Park environment for visitors entering from the south and allows for the greatest level of development.

Under this alternative State Highway 87 corridor is zoned as Historic in recognition of this potentially eligible historic district. The historic zone emphasizes future landscape treatments to restore this historic transportation corridor to an appearance resembling the original designed scenic road that predates the 1946 Park expansion that incorporated this segment of roadway into the expanded Park boundary. The road was designed as a scenic drive to incorporate Wind Cave within a larger system of roads developed by the South Dakota State Highway Commission to facilitate automobile tourism in the Black Hills. The vision for the historic zone is to emphasize the greater continuity of this historic, scenic road with the northern segments outside of the Park boundary, and to emphasize desired treatment prescriptions for this historic resource.

The area along the southern boundary of the Park is zoned frontcountry natural to provide development opportunities between the primary visitor services development zones along the US Highway 385 entrance area and the Sanson Ranch visitor service developments. The majority of the Park is zoned remote natural to continue fulfilling the overall desired natural setting for wildlife, scenery, and opportunities for remote natural visitor experiences.

The existing bison corrals and the water supply units to the west of the Park are zoned for Administrative Services. Opportunities to relocate some park support functions such as maintenance facilities and operations to the newly acquired bison corral on the Casey Property is provided under this alternative. This location also fulfills the need for a potential second future bison corral at the southern

end of the Park as its location provides easy access to the southern end of the Park in a visually nonintrusive location.

Alternative 2 zones road corridors in a configuration which is essentially equivalent to the existing experience, where US Highway 385 is a primary state highway, State Highway 87 is a secondary scenic byway and NPS Roads 5 and 6 are primitive, graded, gravel access roads. Additionally, the existing two-track road that begins at County Road 7/11 and bisects the Casey Addition (including the Sanson Ranch) is zoned as a tertiary transportation corridor. The tertiary road begins at County Road 7-11 and ends at the Sanson Ranch/266th Street. This tertiary road corridor provides an opportunity to be a minimally improved two-track road for public use and would be characterized by loose-surface road such as gravel and would be subject to closure during weather events or as needed for park operations. Upgrades and improvements are allowed and may include similar construction standards to those of the Custer County Road Specifications. As such, this improved access road would be maintained as a minor, backcountry access road to the more primitive setting of the Sanson Ranch structures, thus supporting limited transportation use only.

Visitor Center Alternative B

This alternative provides greater emphasis on the historic resources in the existing visitor center area and the need to carefully manage surface activities directly above Wind Cave. This alternative allows for relocation of certain facilities, functions and park operation or visitor service activities not required to be situated directly above the cave to other more suitable locations. Specifically, this emphasis and future opportunity applies to noncontributing structures and infrastructure not necessary to be located directly above this fundamental resource to more suitable locations within the Park. Example activities and functions that could potentially be relocated in the future include maintenance and administrative functions. This alternative also provides emphasis on continued use and possible restoration of historic structures and the cultural landscape surrounding the existing visitor center area. The Elk Mountain Campground is zoned primary visitor services development as a continuation of existing conditions in the immediate campground area only and permits future modification and facility improvements as needed. The wastewater lagoons are zoned administrative services in continuation of the existing function. Alternative B applies six zones: primary visitor services development, historic, administrative services, resource protection, remote natural, and primary passage corridor.

Sanson Ranch Alternative iii

This alternative emphasizes continued use and reuse, including possible restoration, of the historic Sanson Ranch. The Buffalo Jump site is zoned resource protection to emphasize the sensitive cultural resources. The primary visitor service development zone includes the relatively confined area immediately adjacent to and just north of the main entrance road between the Park boundary and the dry wash of Beaver Creek permits considerable development for visitor service purposes. The area surrounding the resource protection zone is zoned frontcountry natural to provide opportunities for moderate levels of development to accommodate public visitation to this site. The remainder of this alternative is zoned remote natural to correspond with the adjacent remote natural area as zoned in the

Greater Park alternatives. Alternative iii applies six zones: remote natural, frontcountry natural, historic, resource protection, primary visitor service development, and a tertiary transportation corridor.

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the No-Action Alternative, the Zoning Management Plan/General Management Plan Amendment and EA considered two other action alternatives for the Greater Park, two action alternatives for the Visitor Center Area and three action alternatives for the Sanson Ranch:

No-Action Alternative

Under the no-action alternative, the Park's existing management zones would remain as they were from the 1994 GMP. The no-action alternative is included in this EA for two reasons, (1) to describe current or existing park unit management and, (2) to provide a baseline for comparison. Currently, the Park is managed under two management zones, "natural" and "park development." The natural zone includes 27,292 acres and is managed to conserve the natural resources and processes of the park while accommodating uses that do not adversely affect those resources and processes. Facilities in this zone are dispersed and limited to those that have little effect on scenic quality and natural resources. Wind Cave is managed as natural zone even though a portion of the cave underlies the development zone.

The Park development zone classifies up to 1,000 acres and includes the Elk Mountain Campground, visitor center / administrative offices, parking, access roads, employee quarters, maintenance facilities, the corral/pasture area, and the well site. The exact delineation of areas zoned for park development was never clearly identified in previous planning efforts and as part of this management zoning planning effort, an attempt to identify these areas was made using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping software to georectify the previous management zone map in order to compare the delineated Park development zone with actual on-ground development. The actual acreage of the illustrated development zone as delineated in 2014 is approximately 563 acres. Also included in the development zone is the 100-acre detached unit containing the spring that serves as the Park's backup water supply. For locations where pets are permitted please see the Superintendent's Compendium, as amended and updated.

Since the 1994 GMP the Park officially acquired the title to the 5,556 acre Casey Property in 2011 along the southeastern boundary. As a result, under the no-action alternative the Casey Property does not have prescribed management zones that outline the desired resource conditions, associated management requirements, or the appropriate types and intensities of visitor use and development. The existing management zones do not provide adequate detailed direction with regard to allowable uses and future desired conditions throughout the Park. Some existing Park uses are not in harmony with the limited direction that was provided by the 1994 management zones.

The No-Action Alternative was not the selected alternative as this would not fulfill the purpose of meet the needs addressed by the Zoning Management Plan/General Management Plan Amendment/EA and did not address desired site conditions or future land management direction for 2011 land acquisitions.

Greater Park Alternative 1

Under this alternative, the administrative services zone would provide for continued park operations at the existing bison corral. Opportunities to relocate some park support functions such as maintenance facilities and operations to the newly acquired bison corral on the Casey Property would also be provided under this alternative. This location would also serve as a needed second future bison corral at the southern end of the Park as its location provides easy access to the southern end of the Park in a visually nonintrusive location. The water supply units to the west of the Park would also be zoned for administrative services. The southern entrance along US Highway 385 would be zoned frontcountry natural to provide a transitional area from the more developed areas adjacent to the Park boundary to the natural park setting. This location provides greater suitability for development and provides a good location for the initial introduction to the Park environment for visitors entering from the south. Rankin Ridge would also be zoned frontcountry natural to continue to provide interpretive trail and scenic vista experiences for park visitors. The majority of the Park would be zoned remote natural to continue fulfilling the overall desired natural setting for wildlife, scenery, and opportunities for remote natural visitor experiences.

Alternative 1 zones road corridors in a configuration which is essentially equivalent to the existing experience, where US Highway 385 is a primary state highway, State Highway 87 is a secondary scenic byway, and NPS Roads 5 and 6 are primitive, graded, gravel access roads.

Greater Park Alternative 3

This alternative would zone the State Highway 87 corridor as Historic in recognition of this potentially eligible historic district. The Historic Zone would emphasize future landscape treatments to restore this historic transportation corridor to an appearance resembling the original designed scenic road that predates the 1946 Park expansion that incorporated this segment of roadway into the expanded Park boundary. The road was designed as a scenic drive to incorporate Wind Cave within a larger system of roads developed by the South Dakota State Highway Commission to facilitate automobile tourism in the Black Hills. The vision for the Historic zone is to emphasize the greater continuity of this historic, scenic road with the northern segments outside of the Park boundary, and to emphasize desired treatment prescriptions for this historic resource. The southern entrance along US Highway 385 would be zoned frontcountry natural to provide a transitional area from the more developed areas adjacent to the Park boundary to the natural park setting. This location provides greater suitability for development and provides a good location for the initial introduction to the park environment for visitors entering from the south. A corridor west of US Highway 385 around the Cold Brook Canyon Trail and extending to the Park boundary would also be zoned frontcountry natural to permit moderately developed opportunities for natural immersion experiences (see examples below in "Frontcountry Natural Zone") for visitors. The majority of the Park would be zoned Remote Natural to continue fulfilling the overall desired natural setting for wildlife, scenery, and opportunities for remote natural visitor experiences. The existing bison corrals and the water supply units to the west of the Park would be zoned for Administrative Services. In addition, where US Highway 385 and County Road 7/11 converge would be zoned for Administrative Services as this would provide an opportunity to place park support functions at a strategic location out of the known cave extent area.

Alternative 3 would zone State Highway 87 as a secondary scenic byway and NPS Roads 5 and 6 as primitive, graded, gravel access roads, generally as a continuation of the existing conditions. US Highway 385 would be zoned as a Secondary Transportation Corridor in conjunction with Park and Regional efforts to relocate hazardous materials transportation and commercial traffic to a more suitable alternative route that would not risk contaminating subsurface cave/karst resources. Under this alternative, the vision for the existing US Highway 385 corridor would be comparable to the scenic driving route on State Highway 87. This would be a future change to the existing highway driving experience through the Park.

Visitor Center Alternative A

Under this alternative, most of the existing Park headquarters and Visitor Center Service area would be zoned for primary visitor services development for a future condition that is generally comparable to the existing conditions. The remaining area would be zoned remote natural. Alternative A applies three zones: primary visitor services development, remote natural, and primary passage corridor.

Visitor Center Alternative C

In this alternative the entire area directly above the known cave extent would emphasize Wind Cave and the need to carefully manage all above ground uses and activities. This concept would permit future park managers the opportunity to relocate current ancillary visitor services and park operations. Specifically, this would apply to noncontributing structures and infrastructure that are not necessary to be located directly above this fundamental resource to more suitable locations within the Park. The Park recognizes such a transition would be a slow and gradual process that may take decades to implement. The Elk Mountain Campground would be zoned primary visitor services development as a continuation of existing conditions and would permit future modification and facility improvements as needed. Alternative C applies four zones: primary visitor services development, resource protection, remote natural, and secondary passage corridor.

Sanson Ranch Alternative i

Under this Alternative, the core Sanson Ranch area and Buffalo Jump site would be zoned resource protection in this alternative as these resources warrant heightened resource protection emphasis. The area immediately adjacent and north of the main entrance to this site would be zoned frontcountry natural to provide opportunities for moderate levels of development to accommodate public visitation to this site. The remainder of this alternative would be zoned remote natural to correspond with the adjacent remote natural area as zoned in the Greater Park alternatives. Alternative i applies three management zones: remote natural, frontcountry natural, and resource protection.

Sanson Ranch Alternative ii

This alternative would allow for greater development of facilities and infrastructure. Alternative ii applies three management zones: frontcountry natural, primary visitor service development, and tertiary passage corridor. This zone configuration has the most contrast with the proposed zone configurations in the Greater Park alternatives.

Sanson Ranch Alternative iv

This alternative provides for the least development of this site. The core Sanson Ranch, including associated historic buildings and structures, would be zoned for historic resource emphasis. The area immediately adjacent and north of the main entrance to this site and the Buffalo Jump site would be zoned frontcountry natural to provide opportunities for moderate levels of development to accommodate public visitation to this site. The remainder of this alternative is zoned remote natural to correspond with the adjacent remote natural area as zoned in the Greater Park alternatives. Alternative iv applies three zones: remote natural, historic, and frontcountry natural.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

According to the CEQ regulations implementing NEPA (43 CFR 46.30), the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative "...that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources. The environmentally preferable alternative is identified upon consideration and weighing by the Responsible Official of long-term environmental impacts against short-term impacts in evaluating what is the best protection of these resources. In some situations, such as when different alternatives impact different resources to different degrees, there may be more than one environmentally preferable alternative".

Greater Park Alternative 3, Visitor Center Alternatives B and C, and Sanson Ranch Alternative i were identified as the environmentally preferable alternative configuration. This alternative configuration would cause the least damage to the biological and physical environment, while protecting and preserving historical, cultural, and natural resources.

Why The Agency Selected Alternative Will Not Have A Significant Effect On The Environment and Significance Criteria

As defined in 40 CFR 1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that, on balance, the effect will be beneficial:

The agency selected alternative could result in both beneficial and adverse impacts to park resources. The Zoning Management Plan identified geographically distinct areas through a resource suitability analysis process that has defined allowable types and general intensities of uses, activities, and development associated with public enjoyment and use of the Park specified locations. Areas zoned for more intensive uses/development generally could result in greater adverse impacts to park resources, including cave/karst, vegetation, scenic, archeological, ethnographic, cultural landscapes, historic structures, and visitor experiences compared to those areas zoned for limited to no development where potential impacts to resources would likely be more beneficial.

Potential impacts in the selected alternative could include long term adverse effects to cave/karst resources if continued and/or future ground disturbing actions are permitted to occur above known and unknown cave/karst resources where a connected effect may be triggered. Ground disturbing actions above cave/karst resources could result in the introduction of pollutants into the sensitive

cave environment as well as alteration of surface and subsurface hydrologic processes resulting in long-term adverse impacts. Vegetation could be lost or altered in local and regional areas in the selected alternative, partially from potential development or from actions related to wildlife regimes, fire management activities, and invasive/nonnative species. Adverse impacts would be long-term in the footprint of future development. Scenic resources could be adversely impacted in areas where development is allowed. However, those areas permitted for heavier ground disturbing actions were selected based on suitability analysis. These locations were identified as best for development with limited impacts on scenic resources. Mitigation measures such as height, color, and design components would further reduce potential adverse impacts to scenic resources.

The potential exists for adverse impact to archeological resources where the specific prescribed management zone allows for ground disturbing actions. The suitability analysis also addressed known archeological resources in order to identify suitable locations where potential future development could occur within the Park that would avoid these resources. As a result, adverse impacts should be limited. Potential impacts to ethnographic resources as a result of the management zone overlays in the selected alternative would likely not change in a perceptible manner compared to existing conditions and would likely not alter resource conditions, such as traditional access or site preservation, nor alter the relationship between the resource and the affiliated group's body of practices and beliefs. In the case of newly acquired lands, traditional use access may be enhanced as these lands are now within the public domain. Appropriate environmental compliance and consultation with tribal offices would be completed prior to any allowable action as prescribed in the specific management zone. Long-term beneficial effects to the cultural landscape and historic structures would likely result from the selected alternative. A primary component of the selected alternative includes zoning State Highway 87 as historic in recognition of the setting encompassing this potentially eligible historic district. The cultural landscape would be the emphasis as indicated by this management zone and would be in line with the 2005 Cultural Landscape Report's treatment recommendations.

The visitor experience under the selected alternative provides a range of opportunities for Park visitors by permitting moderate to major levels of development, in specific locations within the Park. Future development to accommodate Park visitors could include various types of trails, overlooks, contact stations, and visitor centers. Any action associated with future development would likely have direct, long-term beneficial impacts on the park's visitor experience. Adverse impacts on the visitor experience are only anticipated where visitor use is restricted, throughout the administrative zoned areas. Those areas identified for potential future development would not take away from the visitors wanting experiences of solitude and remoteness within the majority of the Park.

The selected alternative provides necessary stipulations to ensure resources are protected and visitor experiences are diverse with unique opportunities throughout the park. Through a suitability analysis the park identified optimal locations for specific activities in order to ensure long-term beneficial impacts on all park resources in a balanced manner. Subsequent planning and best management practices will be utilized to reduce overall resource impacts.

The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety:

As described in the EA, the selected alternative will not cause adverse impacts to public health or safety. The selected alternative prescribes management zoning that allows for development in most circumstances that would address and accommodate visitor safety requirements.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas:

As described in the EA, there will be no impacts to prime farmlands, scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. The potential exists for adverse impacts to cultural resources (archeology, ethnography, cultural landscapes and historic structures) where the management zone overlay allows for ground disturbing actions. However, potential future developed as zoned in the selected alternative utilized suitability analysis in an effort of avoidance on where to and not to develop. As a result, adverse impacts should be limited. Prior to implementation of any action, subsequent planning (site specific), consultation, and best management practices would be utilized to reduce overall impacts to all cultural resources.

The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:

There were no highly controversial effects on the quality of the human environment identified during either the preparation of the EA or the public review period.

The degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks:

There are no identified risks associated with the selected alternative that are unique or unknown, and there are no effects associated with the selected alternative that are highly uncertain identified during the preparation of the EA or during the public review period of the EA.

The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration:

This plan will provide the basis for future planning and decision making related to geographically distinct areas at the Park, and will be incorporated into all existing and future planning documents. The selected alternative does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects; however, it does represent future decisions regarding appropriate uses, the location of those uses and stipulations. The implementation of any action will require its own separate compliance process.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts:

Cumulative impacts were determined by combining the impacts of the preferred alternative with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. The EA determined that there will be no significant cumulative impacts associated with the selected alternative.

The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources:

The park has a number of structures on the National Register of Historic Places, including a national historic district which includes the existing park headquarters and associated cultural landscape. The NPS consulted with the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer (SD SHPO) on December 2, 2014, regarding the zoning management plan/general management plan amendment and environmental assessment. The SHPO provided comments regarding proposed alternatives on January 29, 2015. On August 21, 2015, the NPS provided the EA to the SHPO for review and provided a determination of no adverse effect. On August 25, 2015, the SHPO concurred with the NPS finding of no adverse effect.

The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat:

The Park consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) on December 2, 2014. The FWS concurred with the NPS position, but encouraged the park to make a determination of effects to listed species and if necessary, seek FWS concurrence. The park determination of no effect on threatened or endangered species is based on the nature of the Zoning Management Plan. Any implementation action from the Zoning Management Plan will require site specific compliance, including consultation with the FWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local environmental protection law:

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

Public Involvement

The environmental assessment was made available for public review from August 21, 2015, to September 25, 2015, and public comment was solicited during this period of time. Announcement of review opportunity was made through regional media, including newspapers, and copies were available on the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website, Park Headquarters and local libraries. Hard copies of the EA were sent to potentially interested parties and agencies including affiliated Tribes. During the review period for this proposed plan, five pieces of correspondence were received (two from PEPC and three letters to the park). Some comments provided statements of support for protecting the park's resources for future generations. The United States Forest Service (USFS)

provided technical edit comments as it relates to potential cumulative impacts from USFS operations. Attached to the FONSI is an Errata sheet which includes all comments received and the NPS response.

Conclusion

Based on a review of the facts and analysis contained in this EA, which is incorporated herein, the Selected Alternative for the Zoning Management Plan/General Management Plan Amendment/EA for the park will not have a significant impact either by itself or in consideration of cumulative impacts. Accordingly, the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality, and provisions of the National Park Service Director's Order-12 and Handbook (Conservation Planning and Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision-Making) have been fulfilled. Furthermore, the Selected Alternative supports the legislation establishing the park. An Environmental Impact Statement is not required and will not be prepared for implementation of the Selected Alternative.

I find that the preferred alternative does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9), an environmental impact statement will not be prepared for the project.

Recommended: Vidal Davila
Superintendent, Wind Cave National Park

10/9/15
Date

Approved: [Signature]
Regional Director

11.2.15
Date

Wind Cave National Park

Zoning Management Plan/General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment

Appendix 1: Determination of Non-Impairment

National Park Service's *Management Policies 2006* require analysis of potential effects to determine whether or not actions would impair park resources. The fundamental purpose of the national park system, established by the Organic Act and reaffirmed by the General Authorities Act, as amended, begins with a mandate to conserve park resources and values. National Park Service managers must always seek ways to avoid, or to minimize to the greatest degree practicable, adversely impacting park resources and values.

However, the laws do give the National Park Service the management discretion to allow adverse impacts to park resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of a park, as long as the impact does not constitute impairment of the affected resources and values. Although Congress has given the National Park Service the management discretion to allow certain impacts within parks, that discretion is limited by statutory requirement that the National Park Service must leave park resources and values unimpaired, unless a particular law directly and specially provides otherwise. The prohibited impairment is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible National Park Service manager, would harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources and values. An impact to any park resource or value may, but does not necessarily, constitute impairment. An impact would be more likely to constitute impairment to the extent that it affects a resource or value whose conservation is:

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

An impact would be less likely to constitute impairment if it is an unavoidable result of an action necessary to pursue or restore the integrity of park resources or values and it cannot be further mitigated.

Park resources and values that are subject to the non-impairment standard include:

- the park's scenery, natural and historic objects, and wildlife, and the processes and conditions that sustain them, including, to the extent present in the park: the ecological, biological, and physical processes that created the park and continue to act upon it; scenic features; natural visibility, both in daytime and at night; natural landscapes; natural soundscapes and smells; water and air resources; soils; geological resources; paleontological resources; archeological

resources; cultural landscapes; ethnographic resources; historic and prehistoric sites, structures, and objects; museum collections; and native plants and animals;

- appropriate opportunities to experience enjoyment of the above resources, to the extent that can be done without impairing them; and
- any additional attributes encompassed by the specific values and purposes for which the park was established.

Impairment may result from NPS activities in managing the park, visitor activities, or activities undertaken by concessioners, contractors, and others operating in the park. The threshold for considering whether there could be impairment is based on whether an action will have significant effects.

This determination on impairment has been prepared for the preferred alternative described in Chapter 2 of this EA. An impairment determination is made for cave/karst resources, vegetation, scenery/viewshed, floodplains, and cultural resources, including ethnographic resources, archeological resources, and cultural landscapes.

Cave/Karst Resources

Cave and karst resources are components of the purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values of the park. Currently, there are 43 known caves within the park boundaries, including Wind Cave. Wind Cave is one of the oldest caves in the world, formed approximately 50-55 million years ago. Under the selected alternative, there is a potential for impacts on cave/karst resources where the zoning allows uses, activities, and development. This is most prevalent in the Primary Visitor Service Development and Administrative zoned areas. Surface level activities and certain land uses above cave/karst resources could result in the introduction of pollutants into the sensitive cave environment as well as alteration of surface and subsurface hydrologic processes resulting in long-term adverse impacts. As zoned, allowable types and general intensities of uses, activities, and development associated with public enjoyment and use should not and would likely not generate impacts that would result in impairment of the cave/karst resources.

Vegetation

The protection and management of native vegetation are components of park's purpose, significance, and fundamental resource and values. The park supports an exemplary mixed-grass prairie, ponderosa pine, and riparian plant communities found in the Black Hills. Under the selected alternative, vegetation communities will likely be altered based on a variety of natural and management driven future actions, as allowable within the defined management zones and resource prescriptions in local and regional areas in the selected alternative. These future changes will likely be generated partially from potential development, but primarily from actions related to wildlife management practices and fire management activities taken to simulate and/or restore a regime more closely resembling characteristic natural conditions inherent within this environment. Invasive and exotic species, the rate in which these species affect the natural dynamics of the biological communities (where they occur and the manner by which these species are addressed as part of program management strategies and implanted actions) will also affect Park vegetation and vegetation communities. Adverse impacts would be long-term within the

footprint of potential future development. While these potential future impacts will likely be measurable, such impacts would likely not result in impairment to Park vegetation.

Scenery/Viewshed

The Park provides one of the most expansive and unobstructed natural vistas found within the Black Hills Region. Under the selected alternative, scenic resources could be adversely impacted in areas where development is allowed. However, those areas permitting more extensive development, land uses and ground disturbing activities were identified and selected based on the suitability analysis that included consideration of locations where development could occur and have limited impacts on scenic resources. Mitigation measures such as height, color, and design components would further reduce potential adverse impacts to scenic resources. As zoned, allowable types and general intensities of uses, activities, and development associated with public enjoyment and use would likely not generate impacts that would result in impairment to Park scenery and associated viewsheds.

Floodplains

Portions of the existing Park Headquarters, primary visitor center and cave entrance, as well as portions of the historic Sanson Ranch are located in delineated floodplains. Floodplains are very important components of the natural processes and systems. Floodplains serve several functions, including serving to slow and disperse the energy of floodwaters, and providing important habitat for wildlife and plants that thrive on flood disturbance and within this type of environment. The effectiveness of streams and the associated floodplains to convey and store floodwaters can be adversely affected by the placement of impediments within the natural floodway as this impacts the natural process and function of a floodplain to slow and disperse flood energy. Under the selected alternative, there could be adverse impacts on the Beaver Creek 100-year floodplain depending on how potential future permitted and allowable actions might be implemented within, adjacent to or in a manner that directly or indirectly could affect the natural processes of this identified floodplain. Any management action or proposed development allowed within a management zone that are also located within a delineated floodplain would likely require subsequent compliance, depending on the nature and type of proposed action, and may include the preparation of a Statement of Finding to detail potential impacts to the floodplain. One potential location for which this scenario could be likely is at the historic Sanson Ranch, site improvements for visitor access have been proposed, although at this time it is unforeseeable to determine the level of impacts to the floodplains until detailed implementation planning is completed under the separate planning process presently underway. As zoned, allowable types and general intensities of uses, activities, and development associated with public enjoyment and use could likely generate impacts to floodplains, however such impact would likely not generate adverse effects to the extent that the proper function of the associated floodplain would be impaired.

Archeological Resources

The Park contains many archeological sites, including one of the oldest archeological rock shelter sites in the Black Hills, that dates back to nearly 7,000 years before present. At the time of the writing of this EA, 14% of the park has been intensively inventoried, to date and 116 individual archeological sites have been recorded. These include both prehistoric and historic sites with features such as rock art, rock shelters, tipi rings, rock cairns, kill sites, quarries, lithic scatters, lithic reduction sites, and historic

homestead sites. Under the selected alternative, the potential always exists for adverse impact to archeological resources where the specific prescribed management zones permit ground disturbing activities or public uses adjacent to sensitive archeological resources. The suitability analysis performed as part of this management zoning process addressed known archeological resources and sites where archeological resources do not appear to be present in order to identify suitable locations where potential future development and lands uses could occur within the Park that would avoid known resources. As a result, adverse impacts generated by any potential future development, activity or use, as addressed in the management zones, should be limited. As such and as zoned, allowable types and general intensities of uses, activities, and development associated with public enjoyment and use should not impact resources and therefore would likely not result in impairment to archeological resources.

Ethnographic Resource

The Black Hills and specifically Wind Cave are considered sacred for many American Indian tribes. Under the selected alternative, potential impacts to ethnographic resources as a result of the prescribed management zones would likely not change in a perceptible manner compared to existing conditions and would likely not alter resource conditions, such as traditional access or site preservation, nor alter the relationship between the resource and the affiliated group's body of practices and beliefs. In the case of newly acquired lands, traditional use may be enhanced as these lands are now within the public domain providing greater accessibility to lands deemed as private property for more than the past century. Appropriate environmental compliance and consultation with tribal offices would be completed prior to any allowable action as prescribed in the specific management zone. As zoned, allowable types and general intensities of uses, activities, and development associated with public enjoyment and use would likely not generate impacts that would result in impairment of ethnographic resources or values.

Cultural Landscape/Historic Properties

The Park protects several historic structures in the national register, most of which comprise the Wind Cave National Park Historic District located within the Administrative and Utility Area directly above Wind Cave. The 2005 Cultural Landscape Report identified two cultural landscapes; the Wind Cave National Park Historic District and the South Dakota Highway 87 Historic road corridor and this road corridor has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District. In addition to these two identified landscapes, the Sanson Ranch has been preliminarily identified as a cultural landscape and is also likely eligible for listing in the National Register. Under the selected alternative, long-term beneficial affects to the cultural landscape and historic structures would likely result from the selected alternative as zoned. A primary component of the selected alternative includes zoning State Highway 87 as "historic" in recognition of the setting encompassing this historically designed scenic driving route. The historic cultural landscape would therefore be the emphasis of this designated management zone and would be in line with the 2005 Cultural Landscape Report' treatment recommendations. As zoned, allowable types and general intensities of uses, activities, and development associated with public enjoyment and use would likely not generate impacts that would result in impairment of Park cultural landscapes.

In summary, based on the application of a suitability analysis, the park identified optimal locations for specific activities with the underlying goal of ensuring long-term beneficial impacts on all park resources in a balanced manner rather than adverse impacts. Subsequent planning, appropriate application of best management practices and adherence to prescribed management zone provisions will be necessary in order to reduce overall resource impacts resulting from any potential future use, activity or development within the Park.

Zoning Management Plan – General Management Plan Amendment – Errata for the Environmental Assessment

(Attach this document to the Environmental Assessment to comprise a full and complete record of the environmental impact analysis)

Introduction:

The following section addresses the issues raised by the public comment process on the Zoning Management portion of the General Management Plan Amendment/Environmental Assessment for Wind Cave National Park. In addition, the errata sheet includes other questions and topics raised during the public review and comment period.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Correspondence: A correspondence is the entire document received from a commenter. It can be in the form of a letter, email, fax, written comment form, note card, open house transcript, or petition. Each piece of correspondence is assigned a unique identification number in the PEPC system.

Comment: A comment is a portion of the text within correspondence that addresses a single subject. A comment could include information such as an expression of support or opposition to the use of a potential management tool, a request for additional data regarding an existing condition, or an opinion debating the adequacy of an analysis.

Substantive Comment: Substantive comments are defined as those that do one or more of the following:

- (a) question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the EA.
- (b) question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of environmental analysis.
- (c) present reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the EA.
- (d) cause changes or revisions in the proposal.

In other words, they raise, debate, or question a point of fact or policy. Comments in favor of or against the proposed action or alternatives, or comments that only agree or disagree with NPS policy, are not considered substantive.

Code: A code is a grouping centered on a common subject.

Quotes: Representative quotes that have been taken directly from the text of the public's comments and further clarify the concern statements.

AE22000 Affected Environment: Visitor Use (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 3 Comment Id: 469179

Comment Text: *"Visitor Experience: Page 114 notes 516,000 visitors in 2013 this is a decline from the reported number of 577,141 in the 2010 (Visitor Service Project Economic Impact Analysis). The Park was listed by Mr. Bill Fink as "bottom five" of national parks. Projected visitor's numbers for the Casey addition Environmental Assessment, range, depending on Alternatives, from 7170 – 8460 visits (pages 4-*

6 & 4-7) are not consistent numbers listed in this document.”

NPS Response: Environmental Assessment cited the Annual Park Recreation Visitation Report from 2014 which listed 516,000 visitors in 2013. Estimated visitation numbers for the Casey Addition as outlined in the separate Casey Addition Environmental Assessment are estimates as part of this separate planning effort and do not directly apply to the Zoning Management Plan.

CR3000 Cultural Resources: Study Area (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 2 Comment Id: 469177

Comment Text: *“This land is sacred to the Lakota Peoples and theirs by treaty. One day it is hoped it will be returned. Do whatever you can to protect these lands for the future generations. Do not allow anything that is destructive or harmful to happen to them.”*

NPS Response: While not assessing specific construction and development activities, the Zoning Management Plan addresses appropriate locations for these types of activities and stipulations regarding the appropriate locations for each within geographically district areas. Affiliated Tribes are routinely consulted under formal government to government consultation to ensure that specific Park projects will not affect ethnographic resources valued by any Affiliated Tribe. It is the intent of the National Park Service that this Zoning Management Plan that is based on a comprehensive suitability analysis will help facilitate future consultation with Tribes who hold this land sacred related to any potential future project or activity to ensure any associated resources or values are protected.

CUS1000 Transportation Corridor (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 469206

Comment Text:

“Secondary Passage Zone US Highway 385 would be zoned as a secondary transportation corridor and would function as a scenic automobile touring road. (Page 72) (Page 63) Highway 385 is the major route between Hot Springs and Custer.”

“Primary Visitor Service Development Zone The area adjacent to the main east - west access road (266th Street) off NPS Road 5 that serves as the primary entrance to the historic Sanson Ranch would be zone for primary visitor service develop. (page 79) All the maps are hard to read as they do NOT include labeled existing roads. The Transportation Corridor Widths state that the primary road is 50 feet on each side of the centerline (page 77) 266th street is a trail through a private pasture. It got a street sign as part of 911 emergency access systems.”

NPS Response:

Secondary: US Highway 385 is zoned in the preferred alternative as primary passage zone, not secondary passage zone. US Highway 385 would continue to function as it has in the past.

Primary Visitor Service Development: Transportation corridor widths are depicted with exaggerated line widths for illustrative purposes only (greater visibility) as indicated on the map key. 266th Street is a two-track road which provides access to the eastern section of Wind Cave National Park.

CUS2000 Unrelated Issue (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 3 Comment Id: 469200

Comment Text: *“Beaver Creek. With the Environmental Protection Agencies Waters of the United States rulings, nothing in this document regarding Beaver Creek and other water ways is of any certainty.”*

NPS Response: United States Environmental Protection Agency’s ongoing rulemaking for the Waters of the United States is not directly related to the Zoning Management Plan.

CUS3000 Cumulative Impact Analysis (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 5 Comment Id: 471074

Comment Text: *"Pg. 119, last paragraph - The Black Hills National Forest implements a range of timber harvest methods. The primary stand density reduction method is commercial thinning. Other methods include seed cuts, overstory removals, and single-tree selection and group selection. Small clearcuts, up to ten acres, may be done to promote landscape diversity. The recent mountain pine epidemic has created overstory tree mortality, resulting in varying pocket sizes of standing dead trees, snags falling and the initiation of pine regeneration. Please delete mention of the ten-year ecological restoration strategy document, "An Island in the Plans", cited in the draft Plan on the bottom of pg. 119. This document did not authorize new decisions and was intended as a strategic scheduling and budgeting tool. Please retain mention of the 2010 Travel Management Plan as a project which could product cumulative effects for some resources. A National Forest decision that could result in cumulative effects would be the Mountain Pine Beetle Response Project (2012). This project will implement up to 122,000 acres of timber harvest and other activities designed to reduce the susceptibility of pine stands to insect attack and other stress agents. The 2012 Myrtle Fire could be considered for possible cumulative effects as well. This fire burned on the Hell Canyon Ranger District near the boundary with Wind Cave NP."*

NPS Response: Through this errata sheet, NPS has redacted the discussion of "An Island in the Plains" (Page 119-120) and included the Black Hills National Forest Mountain Pine Beetle Response Plan (2012) as a cumulative impact.

CUS3000 Cumulative Impact Analysis (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 469205

Comment Text: *"Cumulative Impact Conclusions. development outside the park has impacted park scenery...impact to park and regional scenery....prevent future impacts to park scenery...scenic resources with and adjacent to the park. (page 187) This entire paragraph refers to park desired to control activates beyond the Park boundaries. Contiguous ranchlands...generally compatible with designated Park purposes...continue to be maintained and protected into the future. This implies infringement on private properties rights of adjoining land owners. WCNP has no influence on the development of lands outside of its boundaries. A rancher can do a housing development if he so chooses."*

NPS Response: A cumulative impact is an "impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions" (1508.7). The action is the Zoning Plan Management Plan, as such; a cumulative impact is the result of what actions occur from the Zoning Management Plan. This illustrates what has happened outside the park boundaries (development) as that affects the resource of concern inside the park boundaries. The Zoning Management Plan does not prevent neighboring landowners from developing on their private property. The Park is intent on working with landowners for the long-term conservation of scenery in the area in a manner that is mutually beneficial to all land owners. The Zoning Management Plan does not infringe on private properties of adjoining landowners. The Zoning Management Plan zones park property only.

IN100 ISSUES - Natural resource issues (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 3 Comment Id: 469184

Comment Text: *"FIRE: Proactive and successful: The majority of acres burned in WCNP in the past several years have been the result of fires caused by either US Forest Service (Myrtle Fire) or Wind Cave staff (Cold Brook Fire). There are still a large number of acres within Wind Cave that have never been subject to any type of fire management. It would not appear the park is proactive in any sense of the word. Successful: if burning over FOUR times the acreage intended in the prescribed burn (Cold Brook Fire), nearly causing the death/injury of two firefighters (Facilitated Learning Analysis). Destruction of government property (UTV Cold Brook Fire), endangering the safety, property and livelihood of the parks neighbors, health risks for folks many miles from the fire due to smoke, costing the taxpayers an untold amount of dollars, creating "CHAOS" within park headquarters in dealing with the public (FLA Cold Brook Fire) and giving the NPS a very negative image by complete lack of any public response to the Cold Brook Fire by the Wind Cave National Park Superintendent (Rapid City Journal editorials.), would be a very warped definition of success".*

NPS Response: Fire management is not the subject of the Zoning Management Plan but it is one of the activities that will take place within the park. The park is currently in the process of updating the existing Fire Management Plan.

IN100 ISSUES - Natural resource issues (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 3 **Comment Id:** 469198

Comment Text: *"The Spread of nonnative and noxious weeds: Page 92, while it is commendable the park has acknowledge it has a significant problem with its weeds. There does not appear to be any plan noted to bring the park into compliance to good land management practices and SDCL 38-22."*

NPS Response: Control of invasive species is an ongoing threat to park resources as described in the EA. The Zoning Management Plan does not address specific control mechanisms; this would be in implementation plans such as Fire and Vegetation Management Plans, and ongoing Exotic Plant Management and Integrated Pest Management Programs.

IN100 ISSUES - Natural resource issues (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 469204

Comment Text: *"Noxious weeds (page 92) noxious weeds continues to be the major natural resource issue at the park. WCNP has a significant infestation of Canada Thistle and other noxious weeds. The plan is negligent in that it does not address this problem. These noxious weeds need to be sprayed in early spring for the most effective and cost effective treatment. A few years ago the park had a very effective program of spraying noxious weeds. However, of late they have neglected to continue this successful program."*

NPS Response: Control of invasive species is an ongoing threat to park resources as described in the EA. The Zoning Management Plan does not address specific control mechanisms; this would be in implementation plans such as Fire and Vegetation Management Plans, and ongoing Exotic Plant Management and Integrated Pest Management Programs.

MT1000 Miscellaneous Topics: General Comments (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 471071

Comment Text: *"General: We reviewed the document for concerns and opportunities for compatible management across boundaries. We believe the draft Plan allows for Wind Cave NP and Black Hills NF personnel to collaborate on fuels management and achieve our respective objectives by burning adjacent to boundaries, if needed. As you know, the Black Hills National Forest is working under the 1997 Revised Forest Plan for the Black Hills National Forest as Amended by the Phase II Amendment. This programmatic management direction is designed to promote resilience of forest timber stands and*

vegetation to stressors such as insects, fire, and drought. The Forest will continue to operate under this direction at least until 2022, at which time we are scheduled to begin to revise programmatic direction."

NPS Response: Wind Cave NP and Black Hills NF will continue to collaborate on fire management issues and the NPS hereby formally recognizes this official direction by Black Hills NF by inclusion in this prepared errata.

MT1000 Miscellaneous Topics: General Comments (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 469207

Comment Text: *"Scoping Consultation (p210) includes correspondence with numerous entities' across the entire United States. This did NOT include local county commissioners, city or state governments, or local property owning neighbors."*

NPS Response: The NPS did not complete public scoping for the Zoning Management Plan as this is not required for Environmental Assessments. The NPS did consult with the United State Fish and Wildlife Agency, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, and Associated Tribes and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices per statutory requirements. The Zoning Management Plan is a broad level document and no direct action will be taken as a result of the Zoning Management Plan. This plan is intended to give the park broad coverage to assist resource managers in future planning efforts and does not propose immediate direct actions to implement change in the park. As such, no general public scoping was completed.

MT1000 Miscellaneous Topics: General Comments (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 469203

Comment Text: *"Couch Ranch asserts that an EIS is necessary to comply with the ESA, NEPA and the NPS Organic Act. The deficiencies in the Casey Addition Visitor Use Plan Environmental Assessment have not been remedied by the Zoning Management Plan and General Management Plan Amendment. The Couch Ranch again respectfully requests that an EIS be completed for a new General Management Plan for Wind Cave National Park. Couch Ranch resubmits our December 18, 2014, Comment on the Casey Addition Visitor Use Plan Environmental Assessment, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein this formal comment by this reference as Exhibit A."*

NPS Response:

The Zoning Management Plan demonstrated compliance with NEPA, NPS Organic Act, NHPA, and ESA as documented by Chapter 4 "Environmental Consequences" and the fact implementation level actions would require its own, site specific compliance and consultation. No significant impacts would occur as a result of the Zoning Management Plan, as a result, an EA is adequate for compliance with NEPA. Scoping is required for EIS level documents, not EAs. The Zoning Management Plan outlines geographic areas where uses can and cannot occur in the park. This is a broad level management plan where site specific and compliance and consultation would occur for implementation plans. Additionally, no significant impacts were identified or are anticipated based on the proposed management zoning configuration.

MT1000 Miscellaneous Topics: General Comments (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 3 Comment Id: 469201

Comment Text: *"Funding: Noted throughout the Casey Addition EA and the Col Brook Fire FLA there is mention of funding needs and/or lack of funding. We would suggest that until the National Park Service and Wind Cave National Park can clearly demonstrate proposed actions are properly funded, the plans in this document should be put on the shelf."*

NPS Response: The Zoning Management Plan identified geographic areas of the park for various uses based on suitability analysis and shall be immediately implanted following the signature of the Finding of

No Significant Impacts (FONSI) Statement. Funding to implement specific actions would be accompanied by implementation plans and is always subject to and dependent on specific funding, appropriated or otherwise generated and furnished.

WQ3000 Water Resources: Study Area (Non-Substantive)

Correspondence Id: 1 Comment Id: 469176

Comment Text: *"Please do whatever you can to protect this water. Do not allow any corporation(s) to pollute and spoil it. It is necessary for the future generations to have pure water. The Earth and her properties are for all life forms and are not for greedy. We are all part of the creation and should show utmost respect and concern for all."*

NPS Response: The Zoning Management Plan defines appropriate use in geographically district areas. None of the management zones allow for destruction of water resources.