

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior



Fire Management Plan/Environmental Assessment

January 12, 2016

Purpose and Need/Background

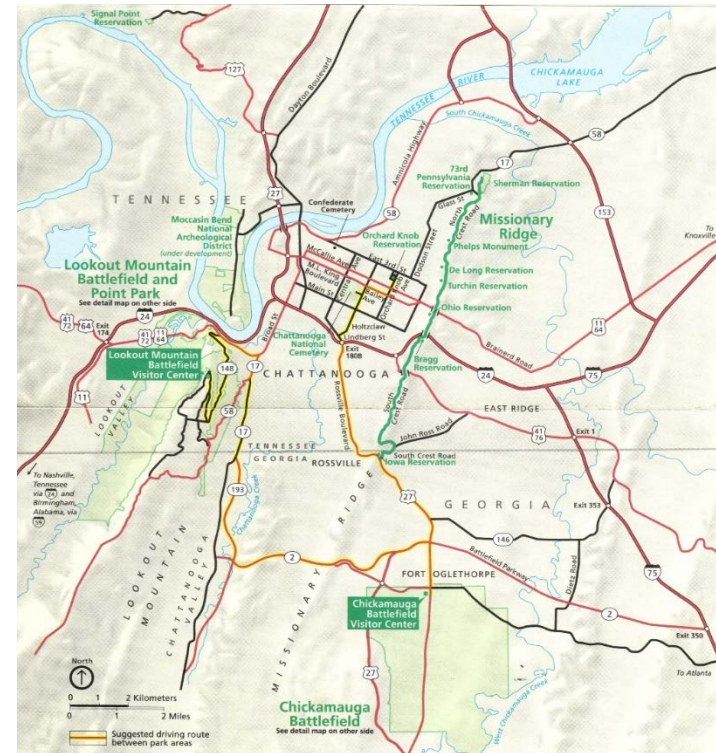
The National Park Service (NPS) is proposing to revise the Fire Management Plan for the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park (the park) in northern Georgia and Tennessee.

The **purpose** of the revision is to incorporate new land acquired since 2004 into the park's Fire Management Plan and to add the use of prescribed fire as a potential resource management tool.

The park currently uses a combination of wildland fire suppression and non-fire applications, such as mechanical treatments to create and maintain hazardous fuel breaks along the park's perimeter, maintain defensible space around park buildings, and maintain the park's cultural landscape. The existing Fire Management Plan does not allow for the use of prescribed fire. Fires have been prevented and suppressed for the last 70 to 90 years on most public lands, which has greatly affected the vegetation communities and the historic cultural landscape within the park. There is a **need** to re-establish the historic cultural landscape, reduce fuel loads within the park, and manage invasive plant species while at the same time protecting visitors, facilities, and resources on and adjacent to the park.

The park is preparing an Environmental Assessment to analyze the effects of the proposed project on the human environment and provide an opportunity for public input in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

The park was established in 1890 "for the purpose of preserving and suitably marking for historical and professional military study the fields of some of the most remarkable maneuvers and most brilliant fighting" in the Civil War. In 2003, Moccasin Bend National Archeological District was added to the park's land base. The park attracts approximately 900,000 visitors each year.



Objectives

Internal scoping has defined the following objectives for the Fire Management Plan:

1. Comply with NPS wildland fire policy directives and Director's Order 18, Wildland Fire Management;
2. Incorporate new lands into the FMP; and
3. Incorporate prescribed fire into the fire management toolbox available to the park.

Overview of the Process

(Bold text indicates current step in the planning process.)

Step 1. Define objectives and formulate concepts for alternatives.

Step 2. Initiate public scoping (closes February 11, 2016).

Step 3. Potentially conduct public scoping meeting.

Step 4. Refine alternatives and analyze environmental impacts.

Step 5. Prepare Draft Environmental Assessment.

Step 6. Public review of Draft Environmental Assessment.

Step 7. Analysis of public comments.

Step 8. Prepare Fire Management Plan and release Decision Document.

Alternatives to be Evaluated

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative, the park would maintain the status quo with regard to wildland fire management and the Fire Management Plan would not be revised.

Proposed Action: Revise the Fire Management Plan to incorporate new lands and include prescribed fire as a potential resource management tool within the park. The Fire Management Plan would include large-scale maps to assist with effective planning and incident response.

Resources and Issues

Initial internal scoping identified the following resources and other issues for consideration in the EA for the Fire Management Plan:

Air Quality	Land Use
Archeological Resources	Special Status Species
Cave and Karst Features	Transportation
Cultural Resources	Vegetation
Historic Structures	Visitor Use and Experience

Questions for the Public to Consider Include:

1. Are there any other resources or issues with the project you think we should consider?
2. Are there any other alternatives you think we should consider?
3. Do you have any comments or suggestions you think we should consider?

**Please submit comments on the proposed
Fire Management Plan by February 11, 2016.**

Submit comments to:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/chch>

(click on project name)

If you would prefer to submit a written response, please do so at:

Superintendent
Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park
Attn: Fire Management Plan
P.O. Box 2128
Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, 30742

Will there be other opportunities to comment on the project?

Yes. Once the Draft EA is developed, it will be made available for public review. A public meeting will be held during the public review period to receive additional comments on the Draft EA.

In addition, a public meeting may be held if responses to this initial public scoping notice indicate a need for one.

If you wish to be added to the park's mailing list for this and other announcements, please indicate that in your response.