



Project Scoping

June 2006

Environmental Assessment (EA) for Repair of Unstable Roadbed on the Blue Ridge Parkway at MP 270.3

The roadbed movement at Milepost 270.3 in Wilkes County, North Carolina has been active since the spring of 1975. This approximately 200 linear foot section of Parkway has high potential for catastrophic failure and is rated a traffic safety problem due to uneven pavement caused by continued settlement. Visitor complaints of near accidents have been received as the underlying slope and fill materials continue to move and road surfaces deteriorate. As a result this area is considered an extremely high priority. Because attempts to arrest this movement have proven to be ineffective, more advanced geotechnical repair solutions must be considered.

The National Park Service (NPS) is presently conducting an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project. Proposed alternatives include spanning the unstable site by either construction of a bridge on the Parkway or stabilizing the section with an anchor block system. The purpose of the analysis is twofold: 1) carry out compliance responsibilities under various statutes including the National Environmental Policy Act, and 2) investigate the potential for effects on any environmental resources resulting from this proposal.

As the Superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway, I invite you to participate in this scoping process.

Sincerely,

Philip A. Francis, Jr.

Overview of the Process

Project milestones include:

- Public scoping period (closes July 3, 2006)
- Preparation of Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Public review of environmental assessment
- Analysis of public comment
- Preparation of decision document
- Announcement of decision

Resources and Concerns

Initial internal project scoping identified the following resources and other concerns for consideration in the EA:

Geological Resources
Soundscape
Wildlife
Human Health & Safety

Vegetation
Cultural Resources
Recreational Resources
Threatened & Endangered Species

What does the scoping period mean?

Scoping is done in the initial phase of a project to seek input from a variety of sources. The input is used to identify issues, areas requiring additional study, and topics that will be analyzed in the EA process. This is an opportunity for you to provide us with your suggestions, comments, and concerns regarding this proposed project for the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Is scoping my only opportunity to comment on the project?

No, once the EA is developed, the document will be made available for public review for a 30-day period.

Alternatives

The preliminary alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental assessment are:

- 1) Alternative A (No Action):** Leave the unstable roadway as is.
- 2) Alternative B (Anchor Blocks):** The slope would be stabilized using concrete anchor blocks with tendons anchored to rock beneath the slip plane.
- 3) Alternative C (Bridge with paved shoulders):** Construct a bridge to span the unstable area. Some of the material from the site would be removed when placing the bridge and the existing roadway in this section would be obliterated. Bridge shoulders would be paved.
- 4) Alternative D (Bridge with grass shoulders):** Construct a bridge to span the unstable area. Some of the material from the slide would be removed when placing the bridge and the existing roadway in this section would be obliterated. Bridge shoulders would be grass.

Please let us know by July 3, 2006:

1. Do you have any ideas to share about issues/concerns, or are there any issues/concerns about the project that you think we should consider?
2. Are there any other alternatives that you think should be considered?
3. Do you have other comments and suggestions for us to consider in the environmental assessment?

We want to hear from you so that we can make the most informed decisions concerning the alternatives on this project. We appreciate your input into this process and would like your feedback by *July 3, 2006*. You are welcome to write to us at the address below, but our preference would be for you to provide your comments on the National Park Service Planning, Environment & Public Comment (PEPC) web site. Comments can be made directly online by going to the following link: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=10058>.

Written comments may also be submitted to:

Blue Ridge Parkway
Attn: Suzette Molling
199 Hemphill Knob Road
Asheville, North Carolina 28803-8686

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

It is the practice of the NPS to make all comments, including the names and addresses of respondents who provide the comments, available for public review following the conclusion of the scoping process. Individuals may request that the NPS withhold their name and/or address from public disclosure. If you wish to do this, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. Commentators using the PEPC website can make such a request by checking the box "keep my contact information private." The NPS will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law, but you should be aware that the NPS may still be required to disclose your name and address pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.