

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
PULLTITE VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY**

OZARK NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAYS

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
PULLTITE VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY**

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1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The Pulltite landing and campground (Pulltite) is one of six developed campgrounds administered by the National Park Service as part of Ozark National Scenic Riverways (OZAR), the first river system given Federal protection by Congress for the river itself. The site is located on the upper Current River at the end of County Road EE off State Highway 19 in Section 34, Township 31N, Range 5W, in Shannon County, Missouri (Figure 1).

Pulltite serves both as a put-in and take-out for watercraft (canoes, tubes, kayaks, and rafts), although the majority (60%) of activity is from taking-out. On the ten Saturdays during the busiest summer months (June – August), 1,000 floaters per day may pass through Pulltite on their way to or from the river. In addition, many visitors use the site for day use activities and/or for overnight camping at one of the 55 family camp sites or one of the three group sites.

Among the structures considered deficient in their function within Pulltite are the camp store building, the vault toilet near the campground entrance, and the ranger contact station. In addition, none of these structures currently meet the accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The vault toilet has no running water. The fact that each of these facilities is separated from each other by a road requires individuals wishing to visit more than one facility to cross this road.

The purpose of this project is to enhance public accessibility and visitor experience by constructing a new ADA-accessible visitor contact facility that would include a 1,050 square foot building with visitor interpretive services, ranger and maintenance office space, modern men's and women's restrooms, and ADA-accessible showers.

The following needs have been identified and will be addressed to achieve the stated purpose of this project:

- Display more prominently the presence of the National Park Service to visitors entering Pulltite from County Road EE.
- Provide better services to park visitors by having a ranger contact facility with orientation and interpretive information.
- Consolidate visitor restrooms and showers, ranger contact, office space, and interpretive services into one modern facility
- Increase facility usefulness and accessibility.
- Remove inadequate, obsolete or deficient facilities.
- Identify a location for a new concession store.

2.0 APPLICABLE REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS & COORDINATION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to evaluate the impacts of the alternatives described in Section 3.0. The EA is prepared in accordance with the *National Park Service's Director's Order No. 12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making*, and its accompanying Handbook, and the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (PL#91-190, 42 USC 4321-4247). Detailed procedures for developing this document comply with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508).

Regulatory requirements, which may be applicable to the activities addressed in this EA, include:

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- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) addressing any activities directly or indirectly impacting prehistoric or historic archeological sites, historic structures, or cultural landscapes eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Section 106 consultation also includes coordination with any Native American Tribes as appropriate.
- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act permitting and State water quality certification through Section 401 of the Act.
- Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act.
- Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands.
- Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Protection.
- Missouri 10 CSR 60 – 3.010, 60-16.010, and 60-16.030 – Public Drinking Water Systems.
- Missouri 10 CSR 20 – 6010, 20-16.011, and 10 CSR 20–8 – Sewer or Sewage Treatment Construction.

Relationship of Environmental Assessments to Other Planning Efforts

A variety of NPS, Federal, and State plans, policies and actions influence the management of the OZAR and the writing of Environmental Assessments in general. The most pertinent plans and policies are summarized as follows:

Management Policies 2006 (NPS 2006)

This volume is the basic policy document of the NPS for managing the National Park System which administers a broad range of programs that serve the conservation and recreation needs of the nation. Adherence by NPS employees to policy is mandatory unless specifically waived or modified by the Secretary of the Interior, the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, or the Director.

Director's Order #12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making (DO-12)

A supplement to NPS Management Policies, DO-12 contains uniform Servicewide implementing procedures for, and such supplemental material as may be necessary to carry out, NPS responsibilities under NEPA and related statutes. Where other directives and guidelines appear to differ from this Director's Order and Handbook in the areas of impact analysis and other responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act, this Director's Order and Handbook take precedence.

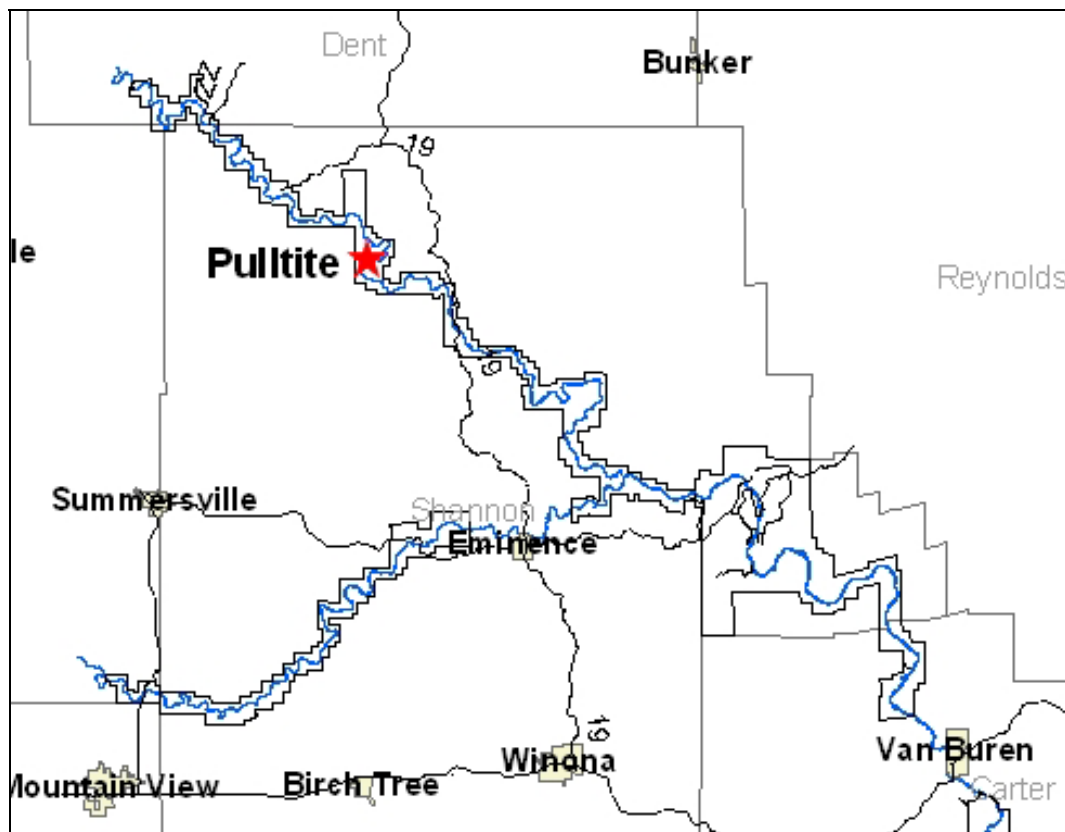
1984 OZAR General Management Plan (GMP) and Development Concept Plan (DCP) (NPS 1984)

A GMP provides park managers with the direction, goals and objectives for making decisions on park operations. The GMP is the foundation of previous developments in the park and will continue to be used to develop management actions for Pulltite. A new GMP is in the beginning phases and is expected to be put into operation within the next 4-6 years. Until that time, any proposals in this EA must be consistent with the 1984 GMP. The DCPs included within the GMP are site specific development recommendations for the redesign, replacement, relocation, or upgrading of facilities.

1989 River Use Management Plan (NPS 1989)

Due to a dramatic increase in the number of canoes within the OZAR in the 1970's and 1980's, park managers noticed problems that included resource damage, crowding, increased conflicts between river users, a need to protect water quality, a lack of sanitation facilities, proliferation of litter, and congestion at river accesses and campgrounds. In order to address these issues, the River Use Management Plan separated OZAR into zones and designated the amount of canoe use allowed within each zone on a scale of low, medium and high. The 9.1 mile zone between Akers Ferry and Pulltite is designated as a high use zone on weekends (an average of 41-70 canoes per mile) and the 9.7 mile zone between Pulltite and Round Spring is designated as a medium use zone on weekends (an average of 11-40 canoes per mile).

Figure 1. Vicinity Map of Pulltite Campground and Landing



3.0 ALTERNATIVES

As a result of the public and internal scoping process, the no-action alternative and one action alternative for addressing the purpose and need were selected for analysis in this EA. Each of the alternatives has been analyzed independently. The alternatives that have been evaluated are:

Alternative A – No action

Alternative B – Construct new visitor contact facility and associated wastewater treatment system (Preferred Alternative)

3.1 Description of Alternatives

ALTERNATIVE A – No action (Figure 2, page 4)

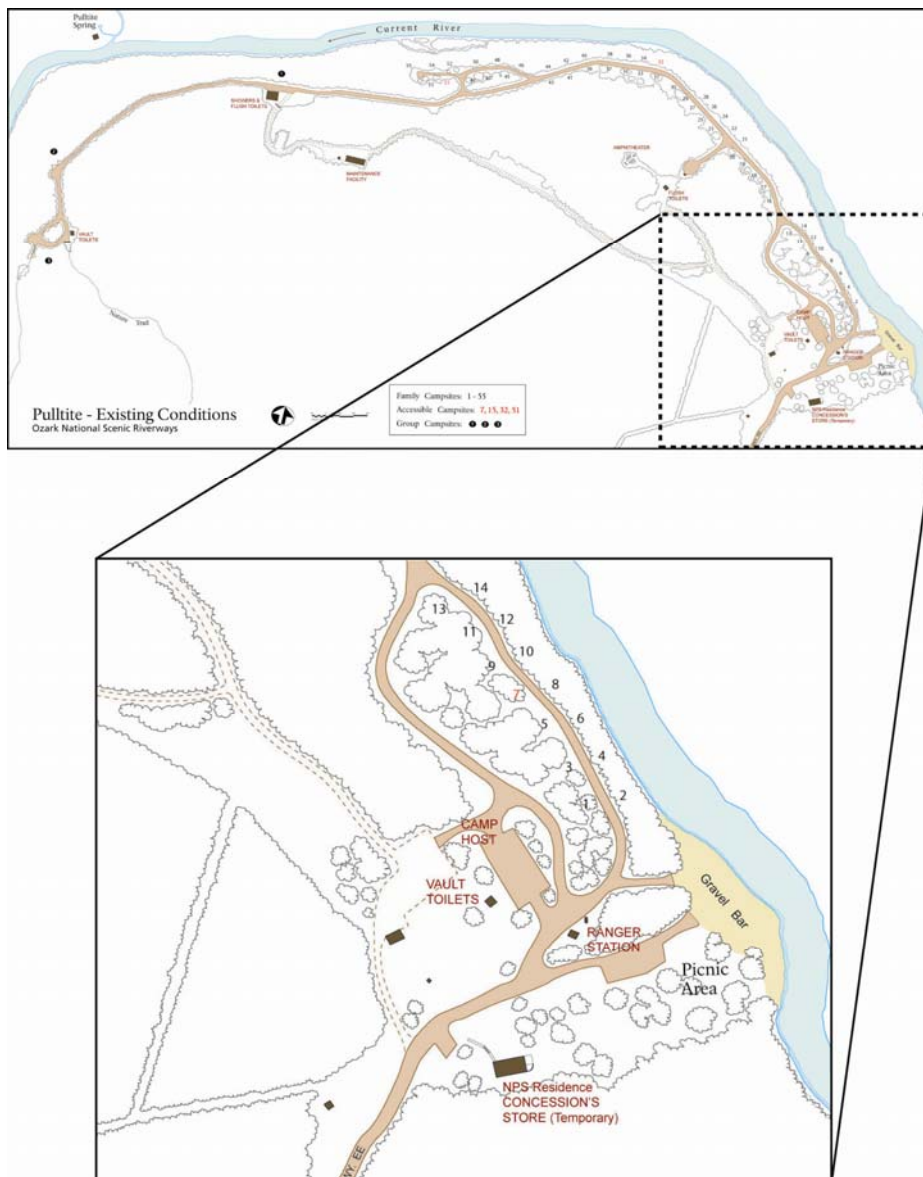
Under the No-Action alternative, no modifications or improvements to existing facilities would occur. The concession's store building, vault toilet near the campground entrance, and the small ranger contact station would remain and would continue to operate out of compliance with the ADA. The camp host site would continue to operate from its current location adjacent to the parking area. As visitors enter Pulltite, no obvious National Park Service presence would be apparent.

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The concession's store, park staff housing that has been temporarily converted to a store with quarters, would remain in its current location at the entrance to the site. The store consists of less than 400 square feet in three separate rooms and there is inadequate storage space for convenience-type inventory. Vehicles would continue to park in front of the concession's store along the main access road. The current location of the concessioner's land assignment causes some visual degradation of the site and contributes to a shortage of adequate parking space. As you enter Pulltite, you would be met with a land assignment that is used by a concession-operated retail float operation to store buses, canoes, and other equipment.

The vault toilet located adjacent to the parking area would remain. This facility is of the old, concrete vault type construction and would continue to lead to foul odors, especially during periods of high use. The restrooms also lack water service that is necessary for hand washing, flushing toilets, and shower service for visitors. The old, dilapidated ranger contact station would remain in its current location. This small, 12 feet by 12 feet building would continue to provide inadequate space needed by staff to provide the level of service expected from the public at this site.

Figure 2. Pulltite Landing and Campground Site Map (insert of project area)



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ALTERNATIVE B – Construct new visitor contact facility and associated wastewater treatment system (Preferred Alternative) (Figure 3)

This alternative proposes to make changes to Pulltite Developed Area that would fulfill the need for increased NPS visibility, provide an improved visitor experience with opportunities for public orientation, education and interpretation of the park, and provide adequate and improved working space for ranger, fee collection, interpretive and maintenance staff. The most apparent action taking place under this alternative would be the construction of an approximately 1,050 square foot visitor contact facility. In addition to the construction of this facility, modifications to the site would include the associated wastewater treatment system, removal of an existing ranger contact station and vault toilet, relocation of the camp host site, and the construction of a floater pavilion.

The proposed visitor contact facility would consist of an L-shaped building with a centrally-located covered plaza (see Figure 3 for general location). One wing of the building would contain office space for park staff and a separate room to provide visitor information services. The other wing would contain men's and women's restrooms and showers. A covered plaza between the two wings would provide interpretive waysides and seating out of the hot sun or rain. Construction of this facility would impact approximately 0.1 acres of an open grassy area within the developed portion of the site. The building and restrooms would comply with the accessibility requirements of the ADA.

A wastewater treatment system (3,000 gallons/day capacity) with two drain fields approximately 60 feet by 100 feet would be constructed in the open mowed field west of the proposed facility site (Figure 3). Each drain field would have seven chamber-type laterals spaced nine feet apart buried to a depth of approximately 22 inches. Sufficient areas have been set aside for future drain field replacement and construction should the existing system need to be expanded or replaced. Three septic tanks (5,000 gallon total capacity) would be used for the new facility. A septic line measuring 310 linear feet would carry wastewater to the leach field from the new visitor contact facility where it would be distributed among 1,200 feet of leach infiltrators. In addition, a small Simplex type septic lift station with pump would be installed adjacent to the new camp host site. A septic line measuring 300 linear feet would carry wastewater from the camp host site to tie in with piping from the new contact facility. Soil would be removed for trenches during the installation of the leach infiltrators and then immediately replaced upon completion.

The Pulltite concessioner uses the above open fields to park his vehicles and equipment. If the new drain field is constructed the concession would have to move his fleet to a new area of about 200 by 220 feet as shown on Figure 3.

The construction of a small pavilion in the picnic area would provide shelter for floaters during inclement weather. The pavilion would be approximately 480 square feet (24 feet by 20 feet) in size. Construction of this pavilion would require the removal or temporary displacement of a small amount of soil.

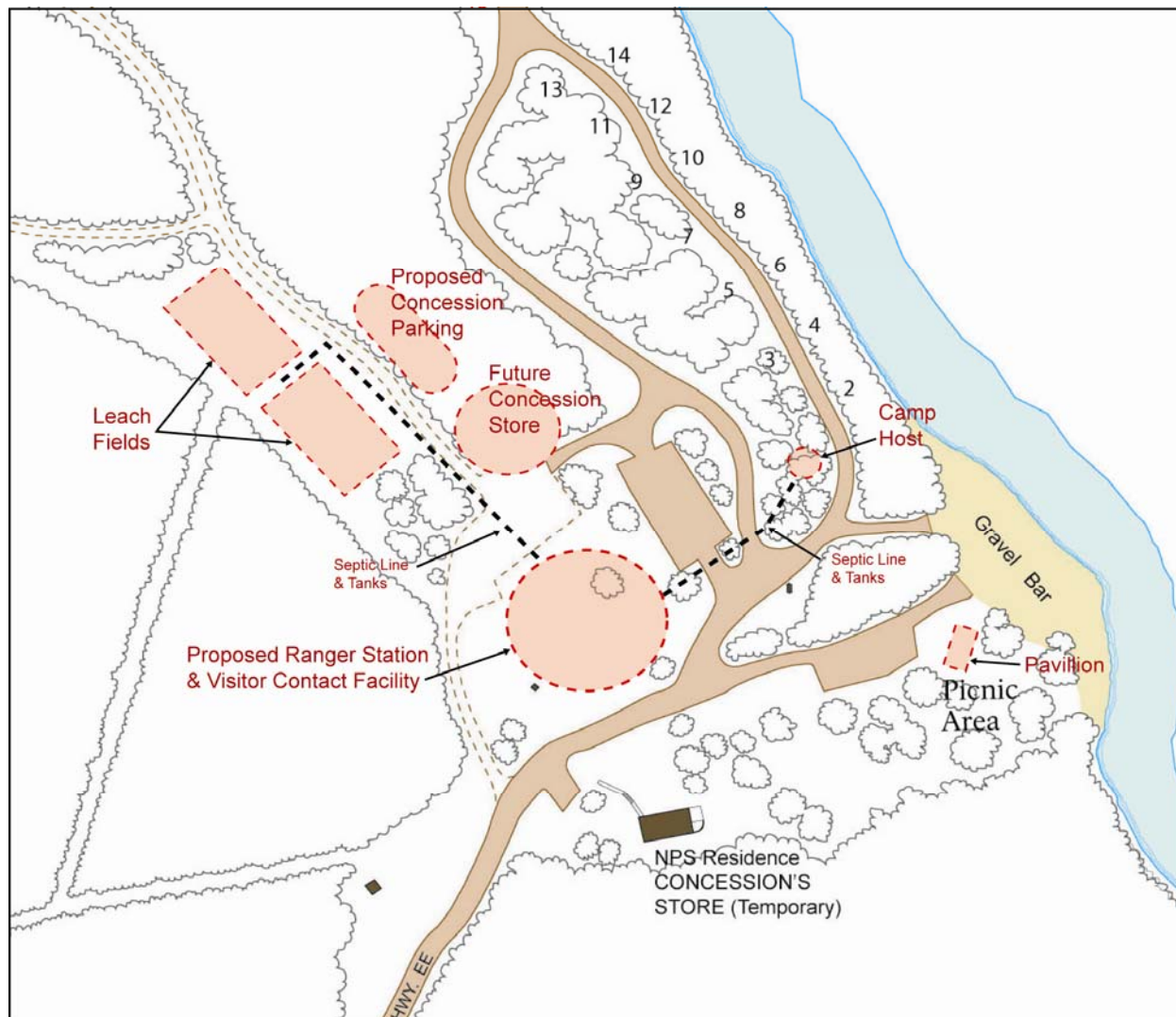
Alternative B is consistent with the direction in the approved 1984 General Management Plan (GMP) and Development Concept Plan (DCP) (pages 75 through 79). Specifically, the Pulltite DCP states that "A combination concession store, quarters, and office will be constructed immediately adjacent to the proposed new campground access. Adequate visitor parking, concession vehicle parking, and canoe storage space will be provided near the new facility." Although current plans are slightly different than the DCP, the general guidance and direction is the same. The GMP also recommended the construction of a permanent concession building to provide rental services, office and camp store to serve the floaters and campers. Although there are currently no plans to construct a store, the proposed location of the store is also shown in Figure 3.

The proposed locations of the visitor contact facility and associated wastewater treatment system were selected based on the topography of the site, area needed for the wastewater treatment system, the desire to avoid development within the floodplain, and the need to provide a facility easily visible from the visiting public as

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they enter Pulltite. Given these constraints, additional development sites within Pulltite were not considered in this EA.

Figure 3. Proposed actions under Alternative B



NOTE : The dashed circles indicate the "general location" for a Ranger Station/Visitor Center and future Concession Store.

3.2 Comparison of Alternative Effects

Table 1 presents a comparison of the effects of the alternatives based on the evaluations of resource areas in the Environmental Consequences section of this EA. Terms used to define the magnitude and intensity of the effects are described for each resource area in Section 5.0.

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Table 1. Comparison of the effects of the alternatives.

RESOURCE AREAS		ALTERNATIVE A – NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE B – CONSTRUCT NEW VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)
	Soil Resources	Negligible long-term	Minor adverse long-term
	Surface Water Quality	Negligible long-term	Negligible long-term
	Visitor Use and Experience	Minor adverse long term	Moderate beneficial long-term
	Park Operations	Negligible long-term	Major beneficial long-term

3.3 Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The environmentally preferable alternative is determined by applying the criteria suggested by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which provides direction in its guidance Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations (1981). CEQ defines the environmentally preferable alternative as: "...the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment." It also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources. Using these criteria, it was determined that Alternative B provides the greatest level of protection of resources of the alternatives evaluated in this EA.

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Pulltite Landing and Campground is located on the Current River at the end of County Road EE off State Highway 19 in Shannon County, Missouri. Access by land is via County Road EE. Access by river is from the landing/gravel bar at the eastern, upstream end of the site. Visitor facilities located at this campground include 55 family camp sites, three group camp sites, two vault toilets, two flush toilets, showers, an amphitheatre, a ranger contact station, a picnic area, and a concession store. The scope of this environmental assessment is limited to approximately 17 acres of uplands and floodplain forest in the developed portion of the site (Figure 3).

The project area contains approximately seven acres of wooded old field, eight acres of clearing (open grassy field), and two acres of floodplain forest along the Current River (Chastain et al., 2006). Upon entering the site off of County Road EE, one is immediately met with a small clearing. This clearing currently contains a

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public restroom (vault toilet) and small wooden storage shed used by the concessionaire. A parking lot on the northeast side of the clearing, and adjacent to the vault toilet, is used for floater parking. At the northwest corner of the parking lot is the location of the camp host site. Across from the clearing on the south side of County Road EE is the concession store. This building was historically used as a ranger residence and office. Traveling past the concession store, one comes to an intersection. The landing and picnic area are accessed by going to the right and the campground and floater parking lot are accessed by proceeding to the left. A small island in between these two access roads contains a ranger contact station. The family campsites within the project area (sites 1-15) are located along the Current River on either side of the main access road. All of these sites are equipped with a lantern post, picnic table, grill, and parking spaces.

Pulltite is one of the busiest campgrounds and river access points on the Upper Current River. As many as 1,000 people pass through Pulltite on weekend days in the summer months. On many of these weekends, all of the 55 family campsites and three group campsites are occupied. These busiest times occur during the 10 summer weekends from mid-June through mid-August. Within the project area, congestion is a concern as a result of the concentration of campers, floaters, concession buses, other vehicles, and day-users. The fact that the concessionaire's current land assignment is located very near the entrance to the campground adds to the congestion and takes away from the aesthetics of the site.

4.1 Impact Topics Selected for Analysis

Topics addressed in this section and subsequently analyzed in Section 5 (Environmental Consequences) were selected based on their relevance as indicated by site visits, project scoping, reference documents, regulatory agency input, and OZAR personnel. The following topics were selected for further analysis: soil resources, surface water quality, visitor use and experience, and park operations.

4.1.1 Soil Resources

Of the many soil types located within the vicinity of Pulltite, only five soil types will be directly impacted by activities associated with this proposal. These soils are Lecomma, Waben, Relfe, Paintbrush, and Zanoni (CARES 2005; McKee 2006; MODNR 2007).

The Waben and Relfe soil types consist of very deep, well-to-excessively drained soils. Relfe soils are found within the floodplain adjacent to the Current River where the family camp sites and campground road are located. These soils are subject to very brief flooding in most years. Waben soils are found in a narrow section along the northwest side of the access road across from the concession store. These gently sloping to moderately steep soils are generally found on narrow terraces, alluvial-colluvial fans and toe slopes of the Ozark Highlands. Of the five soil types impacted by the proposed action, these two will be the least impacted.

Zanoni, Paintbrush, and Lecomma soils are found within the grassy area proposed for the location of the leach field. The Zanoni soils occur in the terrace escarpment and the convex, old natural levee found on the landform. These soils have the highest percentage of sand throughout the profile and have the ability to treat effluent. Paintbrush soils occur in the slightly concave areas of the landform and have a perched water table between 15 and 24 inches during some periods of the year. This soil has a slower permeability. Lecomma soils occur between the other two soils on the linear portions of the landform. These soils are well drained and have good permeability.

4.1.2 Surface Water Quality

Along the Current River water quality has generally been excellent, based on trends in selected surface water sampling from 1983 to present. The Current and Jacks Fork Rivers are designated as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW) under Missouri's water quality standards. They are Tier III waters that carry with them anti-degradation restrictions. Any lowering of water quality in these waters is not permitted.

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Pulltite is located on a low terrace bordered to the north by the Current River. In 2002, flood waters were as high as they had been for approximately 20 years. In that event water entered the existing ranger station to a height of approximately two feet. Flooding of this magnitude is rare at this location but is a consideration when locating new facilities.

4.1.3 Visitor Use and Experience

Protection Ranger staff working in the Upper Current District report that Pulltite is one of the busier river access/landing sites in their district. It also is the site of a very popular campground consistently full by Friday evening on summer weekends. Rangers report that many of these campers return year after year. On a busy weekend in summer, with a full campground, Pulltite hosts as many as 450 campers (55 Family sites and three Group sites). Most all of these campers have come to the river to take a float trip (canoeing or tubing¹) during their stay. The majority of visitors to Pulltite are floaters who have rented their tubes or canoes from private concessionaires who are under contract with the park to provide equipment (e.g. tubes, canoes, life jackets) and shuttle services for the public.

Based on tallies of concessioners' Equipment Rental Agreements (submitted to OZAR as part of an ongoing management and monitoring of park concessions operations) about 39 percent of the gravel bar traffic consists of floaters who are "putting-in" early in the day to paddle downstream from Pulltite. The remaining 61 percent will "put-in" upstream of Pulltite. Later in the day, the gravel bar and the surrounding area become very congested as these up-stream floaters arrive to "take-out", tired from a day's float. This surge of activity occurs between 2:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. with peak congestion between 4:00p.m.-5:00 p.m. on a typical busy summer Saturday afternoon. Figures obtained from concessioner's Equipment Rental Agreements indicate that an average of 400 canoes a day "take-out" at Pulltite on a busy weekend during the summer. Given the average canoe is carrying two persons between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. an estimated 800 floaters arrive at Pulltite on any given busy summer Saturday afternoon. During these times the Pulltite gravel bar and the area surrounding it is bustling with groups of floaters gathering their belongings, heading to the restroom, and a queue of school buses and vans waiting to shuttle them back to their cars (most of which are parked upstream near their point of departure). A portion of these floaters have camped at Pulltite, and have rented their equipment from the "on-site" concessioner and when they arrive they simply walk back to their campsites. For those floaters who are waiting for their shuttle ride however, the wait can be an hour or more, since concessioners do not leave the site until they have a full bus/van. Normally on the busy Saturday weekends there are sufficient busses available so that the wait does not exceed 30 minutes. Floaters who must wait and have not camped at Pulltite linger on the gravel bar, head up to the vault toilet, sit under the shade trees in the picnic area to the southeast of the gravel bar, or perhaps head to the nearby store.

Any visitor needing to use the existing vault toilet near the gravel bar will find it a very unpleasant experience since this older facility vents fumes very poorly. If the weather becomes inclement, there is no shelter provided for floaters. During their wait, these park visitors are not currently provided with an opportunity to encounter interpretive information about the park. Interpretive staff does not maintain a presence at Pulltite during the day, so unless a floater is camping there, and can attend a weekend evening program in the campground amphitheater, most floaters miss a chance to learn about the park or to inquire about what there is to see and do while here. For most visitors, informational contact, if any, will be provided by the concession shuttle bus driver or the clerk at the camp store.

¹ Concessioner's Equipment Rental Agreements, tallied by the park Concessions Management staff, report that though both canoes and tubes are rented to floaters on the Upper Current, by and large the floaters in this section of the river rent canoes. Tubing is more popular than canoeing on the Lower Current.

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4.1.4 Park Operations

Maintenance: The park's Upper Current District maintenance staff provides routine custodial services at Pulltite which consist of cleaning the existing comfort stations (there are four: two flush facilities with running water and two vault units), routine trash collection, and general grounds care (mowing, brushing, pruning, etc.). These duties require one seasonal staff person assigned to Pulltite on a daily basis from mid-April to early September. In addition, permanent skilled staff covering the Upper Current District is responsible for the operation and testing of the on-site public drinking water system. The two existing vault toilets require pumping on an approximate bi-weekly schedule during the busiest weeks of the summer season (Memorial Day thru Labor Day). The campground is open year round though the pumping requirement for the vault toilets is reduced to an "as-needed" schedule between October and April when visitation to Pulltite decreases. During the winter season the two vault units at Pulltite remain open. Generally, the vaults are pumped down in October/November and do not require pumping until sometime in late May. During the off-season the public water system (two flush toilet facilities, shower house, and the concession's store) are winterized on "water-off" day (no later than October 30) and de-winterized on "water-on" day (no later than April 15). The vault toilet located near the entrance to Pulltite which is proposed for demolition and replacement with a new facility (visitor contact facility) was constructed in 1975 and requires additional maintenance due to the deteriorated condition of the unit. In addition to routine maintenance tasks at Pulltite, the Upper Current District maintenance staff provides emergency repairs to aging infrastructure such as broken water lines, and routine repairs to deteriorating structures.

Law Enforcement (LE) Protection: During the summer season park Rangers regularly patrol the Pulltite campground and the day use area associated with the gravel bar where canoes, tubes, and rafts "put-in" and "take-out". Friday, Saturday, and Sunday see peak visitation. Assisting the two LE Protection staff assigned to patrol Pulltite, two seasonal visitor use assistants (VUA) circulate through the campground, answering questions and monitoring fee collections. LE Rangers and VUAs work out of a small, 12 feet by 12 feet ranger station/fee booth located at the juncture of roads leading out to the gravel bar and west to the campground. The Pulltite campground host also has access to this office and will assist campers with questions concerning registration. A fax machine (required for managing the campground reservation system which is used between April 15 and October 30) is located in this structure, and VUAs register campers and process reservations from this facility. A phone line is provided for staff using this office and has previously been used for dial-up modem access for a computer. A public pay phone is secured to the exterior of the structure for visitor use. Built in 1975, this deteriorating structure is subject to rodent, snake, and wasp infestation on a recurring basis. Consequently LE Rangers assigned to Pulltite have had to rely on LE offices at Round Spring or Akers (where conditions are less hazardous and more sanitary) for storing supplies and for computer access. Round Spring is eight miles from Pulltite, and Akers is 17 miles from Pulltite.

Interpretation: Existing interpretive waysides (which are developed by park staff) at Pulltite consist of a self-guided series of small panels along the 1.5 mile Pulltite Nature Trail. At present, interpretive staff does not maintain offices at Pulltite, and there is no space on-site to store program materials or to provide shelter during breaks or inclement weather. Interpretive Rangers working out of the Upper Current District office at Round Spring travel to Pulltite to offer summer evening programs on weekends in the Pulltite Amphitheater (located to the south of the campground road). Programs are scheduled to begin on the Memorial Day Weekend and run through Labor Day. Evening programs begin at 8:30 p.m. every Friday and Saturday during that period and Interpreters arrive two to three hours in advance to walk through the campground answering general questions and inviting campers to the evening's program. Interpretive programs at Pulltite have the highest attendance in the park, typically 50-75 people on a non-holiday night, and up to a 100 on holiday weekends. Interpreters roving Pulltite also assist with first aid, quiet hour enforcement, and low-key law enforcement duties prior to the time LE Protection Rangers arrive later in the evening. On a typical evening at Pulltite, interpreters might contact around 100 people a night. Interpretive Rangers also oversee the information bulletin boards which are located near the LE Ranger station at the site entrance, as well as near the amphitheater, the gravel bar, and the vault toilet next to the floater parking area. Periodically Interpretive programs are scheduled on Saturdays during the day and may include a guided walk along the 1.5 mile Pulltite

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Nature Trail, though these programs have been temporarily scaled back due to short staffing. Until recently Pulltite provided the setting for school field trips with interpreters offering an archeological program for students during the school year.

Maintenance: The maintenance person assigned to Pulltite has no office or computer available for his/her use. The office space would provide room for a desk so that the maintenance person(s) can have workspace to complete reports, file paperwork and records and check e-mail.

Concession Operations: A determination was made by the National Park Service that concession facilities under a contract with the National Riverways were needed at Pulltite to serve the needs of the park visitors (GMP pages 75 through 79). Thus the concession operation is a partner of the National Park Service. An area of approximately 220 feet by 200 feet would need to be cleared to form a parking lot for concession equipment and vehicles. In the past the concessioner through a land assignment had the authority to park their busses, canoe trailers and other vehicles or equipment in the open fields. However since under Alternative B these open fields would become wastewater drain fields, no vehicle traffic or parking would be permitted in the drain field area.

4.1.5 Impact Topics Eliminated from Further Consideration

Some resource effects were not considered in this Environmental Assessment for analysis because they were not relevant (i.e. not present, discountable, etc.) to the discussion of impacts from the proposed alternatives. These included floodplains and wetlands, cultural resources, and wildlife. The impact area proposed for this project would be completely within the bounds of the existing developed area.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section of the EA forms the scientific and analytic basis for the comparisons of alternatives as required by 40 CFR 1502.14. This discussion of impacts (effects) is organized in parallel with Section 4.0 (Affected Environment) and is organized by resource area. For each resource area, a brief description of the methodologies used to evaluate the impacts is presented, followed by discussions of the No-Action Alternative and each Action Alternative. To the extent possible, the direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, beneficial, and adverse impacts of each alternative are described for each resource area. Cumulative impacts are discussed in the context of the definition given in 40 CFR 1508.7.

The impact analysis involved the following steps:

- Identifying the area that could be affected.
- Comparing the area of potential effect with the resources selected for evaluation.
- Identifying the intensity (negligible, minor, moderate or major), context (Are the effects site-specific, local, or even regional?), duration (Are the effects short-term or long-term?), and type (direct or indirect) of effect, both as a result of this action and from a cumulative effects perspective.
- Identifying whether effects would be beneficial or adverse (the criteria used to define the intensity of impacts associated with the analyses are presented in the methodologies of the individual impact topics).
- Identifying mitigation measures that may be employed to offset or minimize potential adverse impacts.

The impact analyses were based on professional judgment using information provided by park staff, relevant references and technical literature citations, and subject matter experts.

Impairment Analysis—The following excerpt is taken from the National Park Service Management Policies 2006 (section 1.4.5), “What Constitutes Impairment of Park Resources and Values.”

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR PULLTITE VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

“The impairment that is prohibited by the Organic Act and the General Authorities Act is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible NPS manager, would harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values. Whether an impact meets this definition depends on the particular resources and values that would be affected; the severity, duration, and timing of the impact; the direct and indirect effects of the impact; and the cumulative effects of the impact in question and other impacts.

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.”

Using these guidelines, resource specialists analyze potential effects to determine whether or not actions would impair park resources or values.

Cumulative Impacts: The CEQ regulations, which implement NEPA, require assessment of cumulative impacts in the decision-making process for federal projects. Cumulative impacts are defined as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.” (40 CFR 1508.7).

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact—Intensity thresholds are evaluated on a continuum scale from barely detectable (negligible) to substantial alteration of current conditions (major) with certain measurable milestones in between (minor and moderate). Duration of impacts is evaluated based on the short-term or long-term nature of alternative-associated changes on existing conditions. Type of impact refers to the beneficial or adverse consequences of implementing a given alternative. More exact interpretations of intensity, duration, and type of impact are given for each resource area examined. Professional judgment is used to reach reasonable conclusions as to the intensity and duration of potential impacts.

5.1 Soil Resources

Methodology

Field site-specific mapping from State soil scientists, ecological land type data, and a leach field construction soil morphology report were used to analyze potential impacts to soil and groundwater resources. Findings of these assessments and professional knowledge of park Resource Management and Education staff were used to estimate the effects of the actions on the soil resources.

Thresholds for Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible**—Soil resources would not be affected or effects would be below or at the lower levels of detection. Any effects to soil erosion or productivity and groundwater quantity or quality would be slight and no long-term effects would occur.
- **Minor**—The effects to soil resources would be detectable. Effects to soil erosion potential or productivity and groundwater flow quantity or quality would be small, as would be the area

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR PULLTITE VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

affected. If mitigation were needed to offset adverse effects, it would be relatively simple to implement and would likely be successful.

- **Moderate**—The effect on soil erosion potential or productivity and groundwater quantity or quality would be readily apparent and likely long-term. The resulting change to soil character would cover a relatively wide area and the change to groundwater would be persistent. Mitigation measures would probably be necessary to offset adverse effects and would likely be successful.
- **Major**—The effect on soil productivity and groundwater quality would be readily apparent, long-term, and would substantially change the character of the soils over a large area and impact local groundwater flow and/or quality in and out of the monument. Mitigation measures to offset adverse effects would be needed, extensive, and their success could not be guaranteed.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Lasting only during the construction period or no longer than the first growing season thereafter.
 - **Long-Term**—A permanent post-construction impact.

ALTERNATIVE A – No-Action Alternative

Analysis: The No-action alternative would result in no changes to the existing infrastructure at Pulltite. There would be no impacts to soil resources as no clearing of vegetation would occur and no construction activities would take place at the site.

Cumulative Impacts: There would be no cumulative impacts to soil resources as a result of the No-action alternative.

Conclusion: Alternative A would have **negligible long-term impacts** to soil resources at Pulltite.

Impairment: There would be no impairment of soil resources as a result of Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE B – Construct new visitor contact facility and associated leach field

Analysis: The activities proposed under Alternative B would include the construction of a visitor contact facility and leach field, installation of sewer lines and associated equipment, relocation of the camp host site, removal of a vault toilet and ranger station, clearing of about one acre for concession storage area, and construction of a floater pavilion. Direct adverse impacts to soil resources would occur to approximately 0.5 acres as a result of the construction of the visitor contact facility, sewer lines, pavilion, and leach fields. Additional impacts to soil resources would occur during the installation of sewer lines between the new visitor contact facility and the leach field and between the camp host site and the main sewer line. The clearing of trees and brush for concession equipment and vehicles would cause additional impacts to soil resources during the construction. After the removal of trees the soil would be smoothed out and road base installed on the parking area. A buffer of trees and vegetation would be left in place between the campground area and the new concession parking area. The above impacts would be temporary and most of the soil would be returned to the impacted area after construction. Soil tests performed at the location of the proposed leach field in October 2006 (McKee 2006) indicated that the soils were suitable for the operation of a conventional absorption system (leach field).

Cumulative Impacts: Under Alternative B, the future construction of a concession building and relocation of the concession land assignment would have adverse impacts to soil resources within the footprint of the proposed actions. Approximately 0.3 acres of wooded old field would need to be cleared to accommodate the new land assignment and concession building. There would be long-term minor adverse impacts to soil resources as a result of these possible future actions.

Conclusion: Alternative B would have **minor adverse long-term impacts** to soil resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR PULLTITE VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

Impairment: There would be no impairment of soil resources as a result of Alternative B.

5.2 Surface Water Quality

Methodology

Numerous on-site visits, NPS water quality datasets, USGS river gauges (USGS 2006), and professional knowledge were combined to estimate the effects of the proposed alternatives on water quality.

Thresholds for Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact

- **Negligible**—Very slight changes in surface water quality or hydrology. Impacts barely detectable.
- **Minor**—Changes in surface water quality or hydrology would be measurable, although the changes would likely be small and the effects would be localized. No mitigation measures would be necessary.
- **Moderate**—Changes in surface water quality and/or hydrology would be measurable and potentially long-term but would be relatively local. Mitigation measures would be necessary and would be effective.
- **Major**—Changes in surface water quality and/or hydrology would be measurable, long-term, and broad-scale. Mitigation measures would be necessary and their success would not be guaranteed.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Recovery in less than a year.
 - **Long-Term**—Permanent post-construction impact.

ALTERNATIVE A – No-Action Alternative

Analysis: The No-action alternative would result in no changes to the existing infrastructure at Pulltite. There would be no impacts to surface water quality since no new construction would take place at the site, however, leakage or a flood would cause contamination from raw sewage. With a 2,000 gallon vault for the toilets that is over 30 years of age, there is always the possibility that old concrete vaults would crack through shifting and raw sewage or effluent would seep into the soil. Depending upon the volume of leakage, a cracked concrete tank may be difficult to determine.

Cumulative Impacts: There would be no cumulative impacts to soil resources as a result of the No-action alternative.

Conclusion: Alternative A would have **negligible long-term impacts** to surface water quality at Pulltite.

Impairment: There would be no impairment of surface water quality as a result of Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE B – Construct new visitor contact facility and associated leach field

Analysis: The construction of a visitor contact facility and floater pavilion and the removal of the existing vault toilet and ranger station would have negligible impacts to surface water quality at the site. The new leach field would be constructed to handle a daily capacity of 3,000 gallons. This daily limit would be very close to the estimates of use calculated from known visitation at the site. The subsurface discharge associated with this leach field would add nutrients to the soils which may eventually reach surface water, however this has not been detected at any other site within the National Riverways with similar types of wastewater treatment. Clearing of the proposed parking lot for the concession vehicles would be done in such a manner that any runoff would not drain into the campground and eventually into the river. With this alternative the threat of an old concrete vault leakage is eliminated. The construction and future use of this leach field would result in negligible impacts to surface water quality.

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Cumulative Impacts: The Pulltite campground currently contains three active leach fields; one near the amphitheatre, one along the maintenance service road, and one adjacent to the current concession store. In addition, there are three sites where old leach fields have been abandoned. The addition of a new leach field would add to the existing load of effluent being treated within the bounds of Pulltite. In addition, the future construction of a new concession store would add additional effluent to the site. If visitation does not exceed current estimates of use and the existing leach fields continue to function properly, there would be negligible cumulative impacts to surface water quality at Pulltite.

Conclusion: Alternative B would have **negligible long-term impacts** to surface water quality at Pulltite.

Impairment: There would be no impairment of surface water quality as a result of Alternative B.

5.3 Visitor Use and Experience

Methodology

Personal observation of what visitors currently experience combined with information obtained from NPS personnel on visitation use patterns was used to estimate the effects of each of the proposed actions. The following methodology was applied in evaluating how each of these proposed actions would impact visitor use and experience.

Thresholds for Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact

- **Negligible**—Visitors would not likely be aware of the effects associated with changes proposed for visitor use and enjoyment of park resources.
- **Minor**—Visitors would likely be aware of the effects associated with changes proposed for visitor use and enjoyment of park resources; however the changes in visitor use and experience would be slight and likely short term. Other areas in the park would remain available for similar visitor experience.
- **Moderate**—Visitors would be aware of the effects associated with changes proposed for visitor use and enjoyment of park resources. Changes in visitor use and experience would be readily apparent and likely long term. Some visitors who desire to continue their chosen activity would be required to pursue their choice in other available local or regional areas.
- **Major**—Visitors would be highly aware of the effects associated with changes proposed for visitor use and enjoyment of park resources. Changes in visitor use and experience would be readily apparent and long term. The change in visitor use and experience proposed in the alternative would preclude future generations of some visitors from enjoying park resources and values. Some visitors who desire to continue their chosen activity would be required to pursue other available local or regional areas.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—during construction
 - **Long-Term**—past construction and 10 years into future.

ALTERNATIVE A – No-Action Alternative

Analysis:

Vault Toilet: If no action is taken to provide an upgraded replacement of the existing deteriorated vault toilet that currently serves up to a 1,000 floaters on a busy Saturday, they would be pressed into using this unit as necessary or relieving themselves in nearby vegetation. Nearby campers (sites 1-15) also use this vault toilet since it is within a short walking distance from their campsites. Using this unit in the heat of summer is a very

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR PULLTITE VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

unpleasant experience as it is crowded and odorous. The experience of having to rely on this inadequate facility is not a pleasant one, and the “no action” alternative would not resolve this issue.

Visitor Contact Facility: If no action is taken to provide a visitor information center (with both staffed and self-guided interpretive displays) offering a suitable point of contact, neither the public nor the resources the park is obligated to protect would be served. Visitor education is a corner stone of resource protection. The most effective interaction occurs when park staff, particularly ranger staff, can offer one-on-one engagement with park visitors. Providing a place where a visitor can receive self-guided educational material and exhibits when there is no park staff present is also important. In the absence of a visitor information center the opportunity to enhance and enrich the understanding and appreciation of the riverways for park visitors would be sacrificed. In this alternative, Pulltite would continue to provide minimal basic services in the critical high-profile entry area in the absence of meaningful contact and education.

Showers/Running Water: If no action is taken to replace the existing vault toilet with a facility that provides running water, visitors would continue to use the existing sub-standard vault toilet. Nearby campers in particular would need to trek to the other restroom facilities if they wish to wash their hands or brush their teeth. If they wish to bath/shower they must drive 1/3 mile to the other end of the campground to do so. From the standpoint of health and sanitation the continued reliance on the vault toilet alone at this very busy area does not provide the visitors with adequate service typically provided in a unit of the National Park System.

Campground Host Site: If no action is taken to relocate the Camp Host’s site, campers entering the campground who follow the one-way entrance road (as signs instruct them to do) would easily miss the Camp Host. The existing circulation patterns at the entry area require in-coming campers who may wish to contact the Camp Host to enter on a one-way road, then backtrack and circle to the left, and then turn right to the west of the floater parking area. Existing visual cues that channel vehicular circulation are absent, and add to the general confusion within the entire entry area. The existing circulation pattern does not provide for a clearly defined natural flow of traffic particularly to visitors unfamiliar with the site. The obscured location of the Camp Host site is one component of this confusion.

Picnic Pavilion: In the absence of public shelter, when sudden storms arise, floaters who look for temporary cover would continue to be left to their own devices.

Cumulative Impacts: Visitor experience within the arrival area, near the busy gravel bar and campsites 1-15, would continue to be compromised with the requisite use of the substandard vault toilet. Opportunities to enhance the visitor’s understanding of the park’s resources, consequently providing a framework for protecting these resources, would not be available and this could lead to further resource impacts.

Conclusion: Alternative A (No-Action) would result in **minor long-term impacts** to visitor use and experience at Pulltite.

Impairment: There would be no impairment of visitor use and experience as a result of Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE B – Construct new visitor contact facility and associated leach field

Analysis:

Vault Toilet: Floaters putting in and taking out would be provided with fully equipped expanded restroom facilities. Campers in sites 1-15 would have access to this new restroom and, for those who had previously elected to trek to the other campground comfort stations in order to avoid the use of the existing deteriorating vault unit; this new facility would be a welcome addition. Conditions of health and sanitation would be improved with the addition of wash basins and flush toilets.

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Visitor Contact Facility: With the construction of a new visitor contact facility, the many hundreds of visitors who come to Pulltite would now have the opportunity to learn about the park's resources (providing a meaningful context as they explore the Ozark region). In addition, visitors would have access to information as what there is to see and do in the area. Visitors would be able to interact with park rangers for one-on-one contact during the peak visitation periods of the summer months, and self-guided interpretive exhibits would be permanently available year-round 24 hours per day.

Showers/Running Water: With additional shower facilities included in the construction of the new visitor contact facility, campers in sites 1-15 would have convenient access to running water and showers. The existing showers are approximately 1/3 mile from the campsites located near the entrance. Most all campers presently elect to drive this distance on a hot summer's day, but now would be able walk the short distance.

Campground Host Site: By relocating the Camp Host to a clearly visible position (campsite #1) along the existing one-way entrance road leading into the campground, prospective and registered campers would have an opportunity to stop should there be any questions or concerns. This would be particularly beneficial to first-time campers who are not acquainted with the grounds.

Picnic Pavilion: With the provision of under-roof cover with seating, the park would offer floaters (and day-users) a secure place to wait out a rain storm or enjoy a picnic lunch while waiting for their shuttle bus/van to leave. The picnic area where the pavilion is to be constructed does enjoy shade from mature trees, but the picnic tables are out in the open. This improvement would provide an added welcome respite.

Cumulative Impacts: Visitor experience within the high-profile entry area, near the busy gravel bar and campsites 1-15, would be greatly enhanced with upgrades consistent with NPS and ADA standards. In addition, opportunities to enhance the visitor's understanding of the park's resources through Interpretation stand to have far-reaching effects, consequently providing a framework for protecting these resources in the future. Over time, such educational efforts work towards creating an informed public engaged in stewardship of public resources.

Conclusion: Alternative B would result in **moderate adverse short-term impacts** to visitor use and experience during the course of construction, but once completed would have **moderate long-term beneficial impacts** on visitor use and experience.

Impairment: There would be no impairment of visitor use and experience as a result of Alternative B.

5.4 Park Operations

Methodology

Operational efficiency, for the purpose of this analysis, refers to the adequacy of assigned maintenance staffing tasks and the necessary procurement of materials for routine maintenance repair and/or construction of existing and/or proposed facilities and the adjacent grounds. It also includes Law Enforcement and Resource Protection services provided by park LE Rangers and educational/informational services provided by park Interpretive Rangers. The goal is to provide for a high quality visitor experience of enjoying the resources while making a concerted effort to protect and preserve park resources. Facilities evaluated include public restrooms (both vault and leach field), parking, associated grounds maintenance, as well as access to interpretive education and information. Park staff knowledge was used to evaluate the impacts of each alternative.

Thresholds for Intensity, Duration, and Type of Effect

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR PULLTITE VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

- **Negligible**—Changes to stated requirements for park maintenance operations, facility functioning, and ranger presence would be barely detectable and create no noticeable difference in existing conditions.
- **Minor**—Staffing requirements would change to some extent but not unduly impact the routine maintenance regime or protection ranger operations. Facility functioning in terms of visitor services and infrastructure would change to some extent but impacts to park staff workloads and expenditures would be minimal and unlikely to adversely affect the visitor's experience or overburden staff.
- **Moderate**— There would be noticeable changes in terms of park operations. Maintenance staff levels, routine maintenance requirements, and ranger protection services could be affected and may need to be altered in response to such changes.
- **Major**— Changes would be substantial in all areas of operational efficiency.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—one-time finite definitive changes occur due to construction and/or modification. Once tasks are completed---staff return to an established routine maintenance regime and ranger patrol operations.
 - **Long-Term**—changes which are instituted that alter the standard operating procedures (for Maintenance and Ranger Protection) and are expected to remain in effect five or more years.

ALTERNATIVE A – No-Action Alternative

Analysis:

General Operations: Pulltite developed area is one of the busiest landings at Ozark National Scenic Riverways. This alternative does not provide the basic services available to park visitors that the public has come to expect at heavily-used National Park Service areas. Having only a dilapidated vault toilet, no orientation, no education, and no opportunity for staff contact with the public is not acceptable.

Maintenance: In this alternative, existing maintenance staffing requirements would remain the same. In the future, given the age and condition of the already deteriorating vault toilet and ranger station, repairs and general upkeep requirements for these structures are likely to increase over time. General grounds maintenance (mowing, trash pick-up, etc.) would remain unchanged.

LE Protection: In this alternative LE Rangers (along with the seasonal VUAs and Camp Host) would continue to make do with the small structure where they manage the Pulltite campground reservation system. LE Rangers would continue to require off-site office space (either Round Spring or Akers) to conduct their computer related tasks which would require continued additional travel to and from these offices.

Interpretation: In this alternative, Interpretation Rangers would not be expanding their educational or informational services either through staffing with one-on-one engagement or the development of self-guided exhibits. Their present involvement with the interpretive programs in the Pulltite amphitheater would continue on weekend evenings in summer.

Cumulative Impacts: As little change to the area would occur as a result of the no-action alternative, there would be no cumulative impacts to park operations.

Conclusion: Alternative A (No-Action) would result in **negligible long-term impacts** to park operations at Pulltite.

Impairment: There would be no impairment of park operations as a result of Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE B – Construct new visitor contact facility and associated leach field

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR PULLTITE VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

General Operations: Pulltite developed area is one of the busiest landings at Ozark National Scenic Riverways. This alternative provides the basic services available to park visitors that the public comes to expect at heavily-used National Park Service areas. These services are a flush toilet with running water to meet human safety needs; a shower facility for floaters and campers to meet personal hygienic desires; park orientation, interpretation, and education; and an opportunity for contact with park staff.

Maintenance: During the demolition and construction phase of this project park maintenance tasks (provided by both permanent and seasonal staff) would increase substantially. Skilled labor and trades persons (i.e. Equipment Operators, Carpenters, Electricians, and Plumbers) as well as semi-skilled and day-laborers would be needed. An estimated time frame to complete this project from beginning to end is between 4-5 months. In reality, such projects can take longer, since park staff must respond to parkwide emergency repair needs while at the same time they are required to maintain existing routine park maintenance/repairs. Following the completion of construction, maintenance requirements at Pulltite would return to normalcy. Some alteration of staff tasks would ensue as a result of the newly constructed facilities. The vault toilet that no longer exists would, of course, no longer require bi-weekly pumping, though maintenance staff would still need to travel to Pulltite to pump the other vault unit located within the campground. Because the new facility would provide expanded public restrooms and new shower, along with the addition of a pavilion, the time required to keep these areas clean and free of trash may entail increased routine janitorial duties, but repair rehab tasks should initially be negligible or non-existent. With the completion of construction, after reseeded of the lawn area and once plantings have been established, routine grounds maintenance would resume, equal to previous levels.

LE Protection: The construction of the new visitor contact station would include a modern secure and fully equipped office space for LE Ranger staff, seasonal VUAs, and Maintenance. This facility would provide the opportunity for public contact involving resource education and conservation while ensuring public appreciation and enjoyment of the park resources. In addition the office would provide sufficient space for all staff to work on administrative duties. The current need to travel several miles to meet general office related work assignments would be eliminated. Upgrades to the work environment at Pulltite would promote an increase in LE Ranger on-site presence at this busy site.

Interpretation: With the construction of the new visitor contact station at Pulltite, for the first time Interpretive staff would have a visitor contact station out of which they can work. Interaction (one-on-one contact) and space (under roof) to mount self-guided displays can be developed for the benefit of the hundreds of visitors who come to Pulltite (day-use floaters passing through as well as campers). Interpretation staffing needs for the new facility would increase, both during the period of exhibit/display planning and development, and the operational needs for staffing to fill the seasonal on-site Interpretation Ranger presence. Rangers would continue to provide summer weekend amphitheater programs in the campground.

Cumulative Impacts: The construction of a new visitor contact station would require an over-all long-term commitment involving all facets of park operations. Increased future operational focus would primarily involve those staff whose primary role is engaging visitor services (LE Rangers, Interpretation and Maintenance).

Conclusion: Alternative B would result in **moderate short-term adverse impacts** to park operations during the period of construction. Upon completion of the facility, and after staffing needs have been met, there would be **major long-term beneficial impacts** to park operations because it allows for the opportunity to better serve the visitors and provide for a higher level of resource protection.

Impairment: There would be no impairment of park operations as a result of Alternative B.

6.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

6.1 Public Involvement

On November 16, 2006, a public scoping letter was used to notify local, State, and Federal representatives, interested agencies, and the general public of the proposed action at Pulltite. This letter was electronically posted along with contact information on how to obtain more information or comment on the action. To date, two responses to the scoping letter have been received. The responses were reviewed and filed in the administrative record kept at OZAR headquarters in Van Buren, Missouri.

6.2 Agency Consultation

Ethnographic Review

An ethnographic tribal identity study has been completed for Ozark National Scenic Riverways by Dr. Maria Zedeno which identified those Native American Tribes that have historic cultural affiliation with lands now included in the park. Native American groups having demonstrable affiliation to the region are:

- a. Cherokee Nation
- b. Keetoowah Band Cherokee
- c. Osage Nation
- d. Delaware Tribe
- e. Delaware Nation
- f. Eastern Shawnee Tribe
- g. Shawnee Tribe
- h. Absentee Tribe

In August 2003, Noel Poe, Superintendent of OZAR, and James E. Price, Ph.D., Archeologist, OZAR, consulted with leaders of these Tribes in Oklahoma in compliance with Section 101(d)(6)(b) of the NHPA. No historic accounts or archeological evidence have been found associating these Tribes with the subject tracts of land at Pulltite. In October 2006, Noel Poe, Superintendent of OZAR, Russ Runge, Deputy Superintendent of OZAR, and James E. Price, Ph.D., Archeologist, OZAR, consulted with leaders of the above Tribes to request input on the development of the park's new General Management Plan.

Section 7 – Endangered Species Act Compliance

On November 15, 2006, a letter regarding the intended action was sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Field Supervisor in Columbia, Missouri to obtain information on Threatened and Endangered species within the vicinity of Pulltite. A response to this request was received on December 11, 2006. In it the USFWS recommended that the park take special precautions in designing and operating the proposed septic system to ensure there is no possibility of waste entering the river, employ state-of-the-art technology for the wastewater system, and monitor the river downstream of the septic field once the system becomes operational.

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8.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

The following persons assisted with the preparation of this document:

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APPENDIX

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
PULLTITE VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

Appendix 1: Public Scoping Letter



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Ozark National Scenic Riverways
404 Watercress Drive
P.O. Box 490
Van Buren, Missouri 63965

IN REPLY REFER TO:
D18 (xL76)

November 15, 2006

Greetings:

The National Park Service (NPS) - Ozark National Scenic Riverways (ONSR) seeks your input on the planning of a new facility at the Pulltite landing and campground. We ask that you take a few moments to read this information and consider the impacts and benefits associated. If inclined, please respond to this proposed action by **December 15th** via the methods listed below.

You do not need to respond to this letter unless you have concerns you want to be sure we address. You will also receive a notice after the Environmental Assessment is prepared and released for public review, at which time you may want to respond.

Located on the Current River in the north district of the ONSR, Pulltite landing and campground is at the end of County Road EE off State Highway 19 in Shannon County. ONSR is planning to replace the existing vault toilet and ranger fee booth currently located at the entrance to the campground area with a new 1,050 square foot, stone block constructed facility with visitor interpretive services, ranger and maintenance office space, modern men and women's restrooms, ADA accessible showers, and associated leach field septic system.

Public participation in the planning process ensures the NPS fully understands and considers the public's interest as part of their national heritage, cultural traditions, and community surroundings. Please visit the National Park Service **Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC)** Web site (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>) or submit written comments by **December 15, 2006**, to: Superintendent, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, P.O. Box 490, Van Buren, Missouri 63965. Thank you for your time and consideration and we look forward to collaborating with you on this project and others.

Sincerely,

/s/ Russell W. Runge for

Noel R. Poe
Superintendent

Enclosure
TB/RR/js/pld

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
PULLTITE VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

Pulltite Campground and Landing

Ozark National Scenic Riverways

November 2006

