

The Department of the Interior

National Park Service

Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts

Action: Record of Decision

Summary

National Park Service (NPS) policy and Public Law 95-42 require the preparation of a general management plan for every unit of the National Park System. A Draft General Management Plan/Development Concept Plans/Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts was released to the public in January 1997. In order to avoid incurring the unnecessary cost of reproducing the entire DEIS to issue a final environmental impact statement (FEIS), when only minor changes were necessary, an abbreviated FEIS was issued. This FEIS consisted of errata sheets which did not alter the analysis contained in the DEIS and NPS responses to public and agency comments. This abbreviated format is permitted by the Council on Environmental Quality regulation 40 CFR 1503.4(c). The FEIS became available in May 1997.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Council on Environmental Quality regulation (40 CFR 1505.2), the NPS has prepared this Record of Decision to document the outcome of this planning process. Prior to and while formulating a range of management concepts, the planning team in conjunction with park and regional staff conducted several public meetings and published a newsletter which provided updates on the planning process. The DEIS analyzed

four alternatives for management and use of the performing arts park. All four concepts shared the objective of promoting the performing arts at Wolf Trap, maintaining and/or improving the high quality of the patron experience, and ensuring that the park is a good neighbor to the surrounding community all in an environmentally sound manner.

Decision

The NPS selected Alternative 4 (provide sufficient parking for all patrons within the park boundaries without substantial additional paving or structures, and improve patron services and facilities) as the proposed action and will endeavor to implement this plan as described below, and in the draft and final environmental impact statements (released on May 22, 1997, and published in the Federal Register on May 30, 1997) for Wolf Trap Farm Park.

Proposed Action

In this action proposed by the National Park Service, sufficient parking would be provided for all visitors within the park boundaries without substantial additional paving or structures. To achieve adequate parking space, approximately 3 acres of forested area (4% of the existing wooded area in the park) would be cleared and a portion of the adjacent grass parking areas regraded. Along the eastern and northeastern edges of the park, meadows are being allowed to revert to forested areas through natural succession (approximately 4 acres). The existing paved parking areas would be repaved and

striped to allow for maximum capacity. All grass parking would be enhanced with lighted walkways for safe and orderly pedestrian passage. The pedestrian circulation of the park would be redesigned to allow for a more organized approach to the Filene Center and associated areas. The existing box office building and ancillary buildings at the plaza would be removed and replaced with a single-story structure that would consolidate all patron and visitor focused functions. A development concept plan for the box office plaza building and the circle drive area has been included as part of alternative 4. Although this alternative requires the reduction of some trees and regrading hills, steps would be taken to retain the rural feel and country character of the site.

Summary of Other Alternatives Considered

Alternative 1 (No Action)

The continuation of current management practices, or no action, alternative would continue to provide the best possible performance experience within the existing infrastructure. No major modifications to structures or parking and circulation facilities would be made. Improvements in safety, security, and routine maintenance would be undertaken as funding became available. The park would, however, continue to experience parking and circulation problems, and frustrations would continue because not all cars arriving at many performances could be accommodated.

Alternative 2

Under this alternative, most parking impacts would be absorbed on paved lots within the park boundaries. Many additional level areas with good access to existing roads within the park would be paved and striped for parking. Grass areas currently used for parking would be paved and striped for safe and orderly parking. A remote parking area and shuttle bus system would also be implemented for up to 350 cars. Some areas of the park's country character would be sacrificed to improve patron convenience, services, and safety, and to minimize parking impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

Alternative 3

Under this alternative, vehicles and pedestrians would be accommodated in safe, separate areas, and support facilities would be upgraded to be more in concert with the Filene Center performing arts complex. A four story parking structure would be built onsite, and existing paved parking lots would be improved to absorb all performance-generated parking impacts. Grass parking would be eliminated, and a more dramatic approach to the Filene Center would be created. The box office plaza area would be redesigned for patron and visitor services, safety, and appreciation and understanding of the performing arts. The intent would be to separate vehicular traffic from pedestrians, to capitalize on the country setting and the ambience, and to reduce the visual interference of

support facilities.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The environmentally preferable alternative is Alternative 4, the proposed action. Environmentally preferable is defined as, "the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's section 101" (P.L. 91-190, as amended). Generally, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment. This term also indicates the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.

The main components of Alternative 4 are accommodating all patron parking needs inside the park while retaining the natural surfaces in the park, and upgrading patron support and interpretation services. These improvements will allow natural percolation of rainfall, protect water quality, maintain the country setting, remove parking impacts to the neighborhood, provide an increased level of safety for patrons, and enrich the patron experience. In selecting the environmentally preferable alternative and the proposed action, decision makers often must balance one environmental value against another and make difficult choices. Finally, the agency has to determine if its decision is in accordance with the Congressional policies of NEPA.

Rationale for Decision

Alternative 3 provides for the construction of a four story parking structure to concentrate vehicular impacts to a smaller portion of the park. It also called for a redesigned plaza and approach. Because the impacts in this alternative are concentrated and easy to mitigate this option may appear to be the alternative which would most thoroughly protect park resources and the patron experience. However, it is improbable that funding for these improvements would be available. Also, the scale and appearance of a parking structure at this location may diminish the country setting of the neighborhood. Thus, Alternative 3 would not be preferable to the proposed action. Alternative 2 would cause detrimental environmental impacts. Alternative 1 would not effectively resolve the parking impacts, patron services, and safety issues raised during the study.

Public comment and input from agencies and the Wolf Trap Foundation assisted in the decision to select Alternative 4. Careful consideration and comparison of the alternatives by the planning team led the team to conclude that Alternative 4 best defines a strategy to meet the park objectives of promoting high quality performing arts experiences, land stewardship, and interpretation to enhance performing arts appreciation, while protecting the environment and causing minimal impact.

1. On page 28542, in column 3, the introductory text and the list of eligible applicants in paragraph 1(c)(1)(iii) are amended to read as follows:

(iii) Employment of Personnel and Equipment for HUD Authorized Housing Authority Police Departments. Funding for equipment and employment of housing authority police department personnel is permitted for housing authorities that have their own public housing authority police departments. The below-listed twelve (12) housing authorities have been identified by HUD as having eligible public housing police departments and agencies under the FY 1997 FHDEP:

- Baltimore Housing Authorities and Community Development, Baltimore, MD
- Boston Housing Authority, Boston, MA
- Buffalo Housing Authority, Buffalo, NY
- Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago, IL
- Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, Cleveland, OH
- Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
- Housing Authority of the City of Oakland, Oakland, CA
- Philadelphia Housing Authority, Philadelphia, PA
- Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
- Waterbury Housing Authority, Waterbury, CT
- Virgin Islands Housing Authority, Virgin Islands
- District of Columbia Housing Authority, Washington, D.C.

2. On page 28544, in column 3, the introductory text of paragraph 1(c)(2)(viii) of the NOFA is amended to read as follows:

(viii) HA-dedicated police division/bureau. Funding for equipment and employment of a HA-public housing dedicated division/bureau is permitted for housing authorities that have their own public housing authority housing authority dedicated police division/bureau. The Detroit Housing Authority,

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

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dedicated exclusively to providing law enforcement services to a housing authority.

Dated: August 6, 1997.

Kevin Emmanuel Marchman,
Acting Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing.
[FR Doc. 97-21186 Filed 8-11-97; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4210-32-01

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[AZ-050-07-1220-00; 6322]

Arizona: Availability of the Final La Posa Interdisciplinary Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, Yuma Field Office

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of the final La Posa interdisciplinary management plan and environmental assessment, Yuma Field Office.

SUMMARY: The Yuma Field Office has prepared an Interdisciplinary Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for an area totalling approximately 800,000 acres (Federal and non-Federal) in southwestern Arizona.

The management actions prescribed are to: (a) maintain semi-primitive and long-term camping opportunities while reducing adverse impacts; (b) increase recreational opportunities in the management area and respond to public informational needs; (c) promote tourism and private business opportunities in the management area through partnerships; and (d) evaluate desert wildlife habitat conditions in cooperation with Arizona Game and Fish Department.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A limited number of copies of the Plan and Environmental Assessment are available upon request to: Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 2555 East Gila Ridge Road, Yuma, Arizona 85365.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

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of Ridge zone

43182 Federal Register / Vol. 62, No. 155 / Tuesday, August 12, 1997 / Notices

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Conclusion

The planning and decision making process which resulted in selection of the proposed action, as identified and detailed in the draft and final EIS for this project and described above, was conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and Council on Environmental Quality regulations. The proposed action is accepted and approved.

Dated: July 29, 1997.
Terry R. Carlsbom,
Regional Director, National Capital Region.
[FR Doc. 97-21192 Filed 8-11-97; 8:45 am]
GSA GEN CODE 4310-70-01