



Cumberland Gap Bulletin

Newsletter Three – May 2009

General Management Plan Preliminary Alternatives

News from the Superintendent

Cumberland Gap NHP has been developing a new General Management Plan (GMP) for several years now and we expect to publish the Draft GMP and Environmental Impact Statement later this summer. There will be a 60-day period for public review and comment during which we will conduct public meetings in the area to present the plan and receive comments from all interested persons and organizations. The locations, dates, and times for the meetings will be announced on the park's website, www.nps.gov/cuga and on the National Park Service planning website, <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?parkId=370&projectId=13830>.

We value your input regarding the future management of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. Preserving and conserving the resources through public communication and involvement are essential to the completion of a successful plan. Please contact us if you have any questions. Thank you for your time and participation.

Mark Woods

The Plan's Purpose

The purpose of the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS) is to present a plan for managing Cumberland Gap National Historical Park for the next 15 to 20 years.

Early in the planning process, public meetings were conducted to identify issues and to ask the public to voice their concerns and suggest ideas about the park's future. Based on input received, the planning team developed a set of draft management alternatives.

Management Zones

The planning team developed three zones (described below) that could be appropriate for the future management of the Cumberland Gap National

Historical Park: (1) Developed Zone, (2) Natural Zone, (3) Cultural Resource Zone. Alternatives for future park conditions and management were developed by arranging these zones in different configurations in the park.

Developed Zone: In this zone, recreational, interpretative, administrative, and maintenance facilities would be available. In addition, a wide variety of recreational opportunities would be available to visitors in this zone, including camping, hiking, nature observation, ranger led walks and talks, biking on designated trails, exercise (trails) and picnicking.

Natural Zone: In this zone, natural conditions would predominate, and the emphasis would be on enjoyment of the natural environment. This zone would be managed to maintain these conditions, while allowing visitors to enjoy the resources. This zone would include the 14,000 acre recommended Wilderness Area, which constitutes 70 percent of the park. Facilities in this zone could include roads, trails, and existing parking lots.

Cultural Resource Zone: This zone would include areas designated as historic districts within the park, such as Cumberland Gap and the Hensley Settlement. In this zone, the management emphasis would be on restoring and preserving historic resources, including civil war and other cultural features and elements, and to allow park visitors to access these areas, learn about their significance, and enjoy the resources.

The National Park Service wants your input on these preliminary alternatives.

Management Prescriptions

For each management zone, management prescriptions (potential future uses and conditions) were developed. The prescriptions determine what visitor activities, resource conditions and facilities are appropriate in each of the zones. Prescriptions also determine the type and level of facility development that may be allowed in a specific zone. Management prescriptions also indicate the level of resource and visitor management that will be needed in order to protect the park's resources and allow visitors a safe experience.

Developing Preliminary Alternatives

In the National Park Service planning process we assess a range of alternative future conditions and management scenarios. The "No - Action" Alternative and two Action Alternatives are considered for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. Each alternative describes a possible direction for the future. The National Park Service wants your input on these preliminary alternatives.

Alternative A

We are required by the The National Environmental Policy Act to include an alternative that is referred to as "No Action," in which current management policies and procedures would continue into the future. Projects and plans approved but not yet constructed are included. This alternative is used as a way to evaluate the effects of the other two alternatives and is also useful in understanding why the National Park Service or the public may believe that changes are necessary.

Under the No Action Alternative there would be no major changes in resources management practices, visitor programs, or facilities beyond regular maintenance and operations. No major new facilities would be constructed. The current park road system would be retained, and other existing facility management practices would continue into the future. The level of outreach/education and partnering programs would be maintained at their current levels.

Alternative B

The objectives of this alternative are to provide for expanded access. For example, Alternative B would provide increased potential opportunities for visitor access and greater numbers and types of visitor facilities at Fern Lake as compared with the Alternative A. Facilities at Fern Lake could be constructed within a newly created Developed Zone to provide increased potential for access and diversity of experience for visitors in this area. The extent of the Developed Zone at Fern Lake would be approximately 32 acres.

Developed Zones would also be established in the vicinity of the park headquarters, the existing campground, and the Gap. Electrical hookups for R/Vs would be added to one loop in the campground area. A Cultural Resource Zone would be established next to the Developed Zone within the Gap. No development would occur at the Hensley Settlement, but a satellite van parking area could be provided at the base of Brush Mountain to allow for access.

Under Alternative B, the level of public outreach and education would be greater than the Alternative A by providing more locations for these types of activities to occur. The level of partnering with local and regional stakeholders would also be increased compared to the Alternative A.

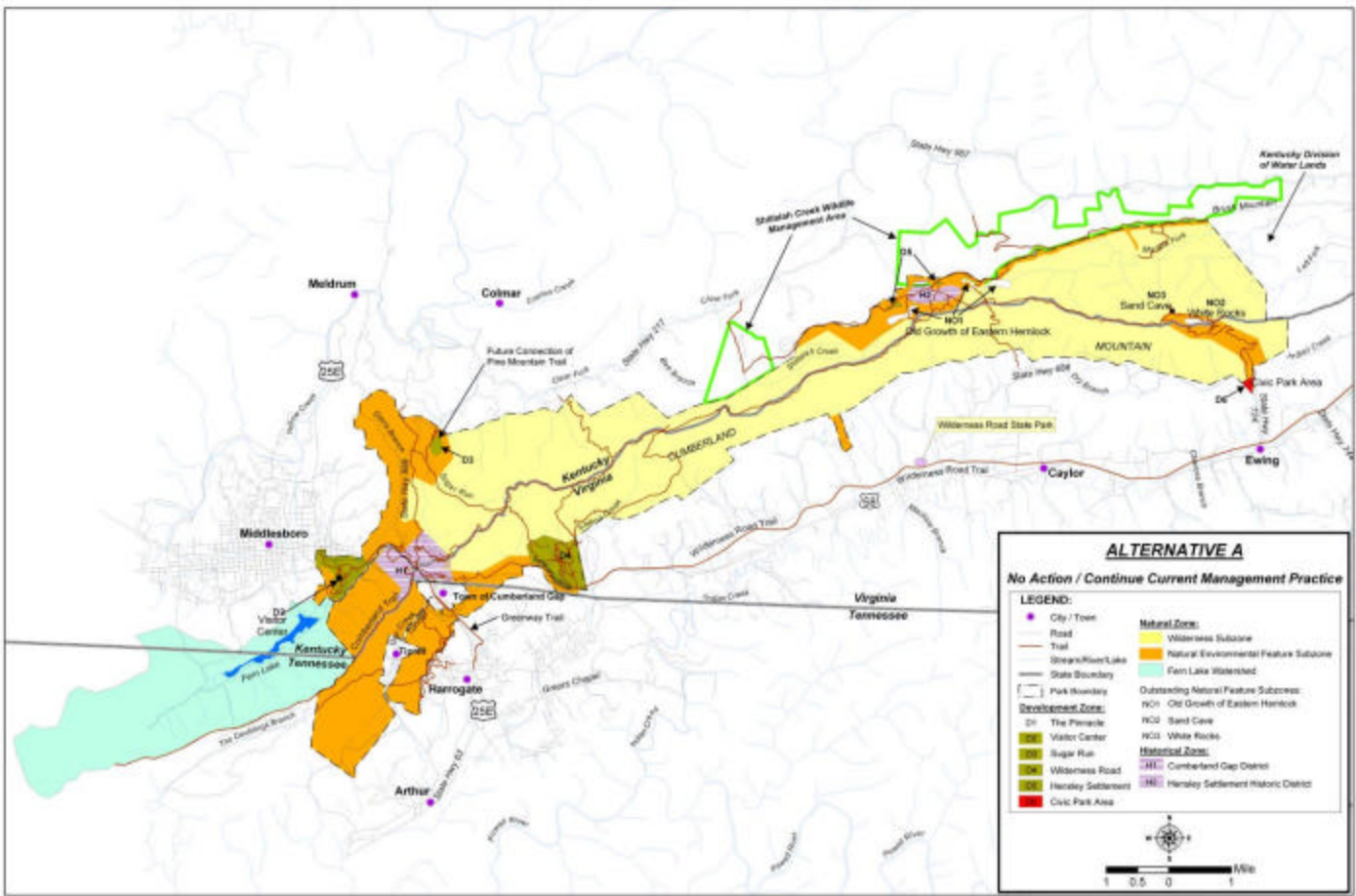
Alternative C

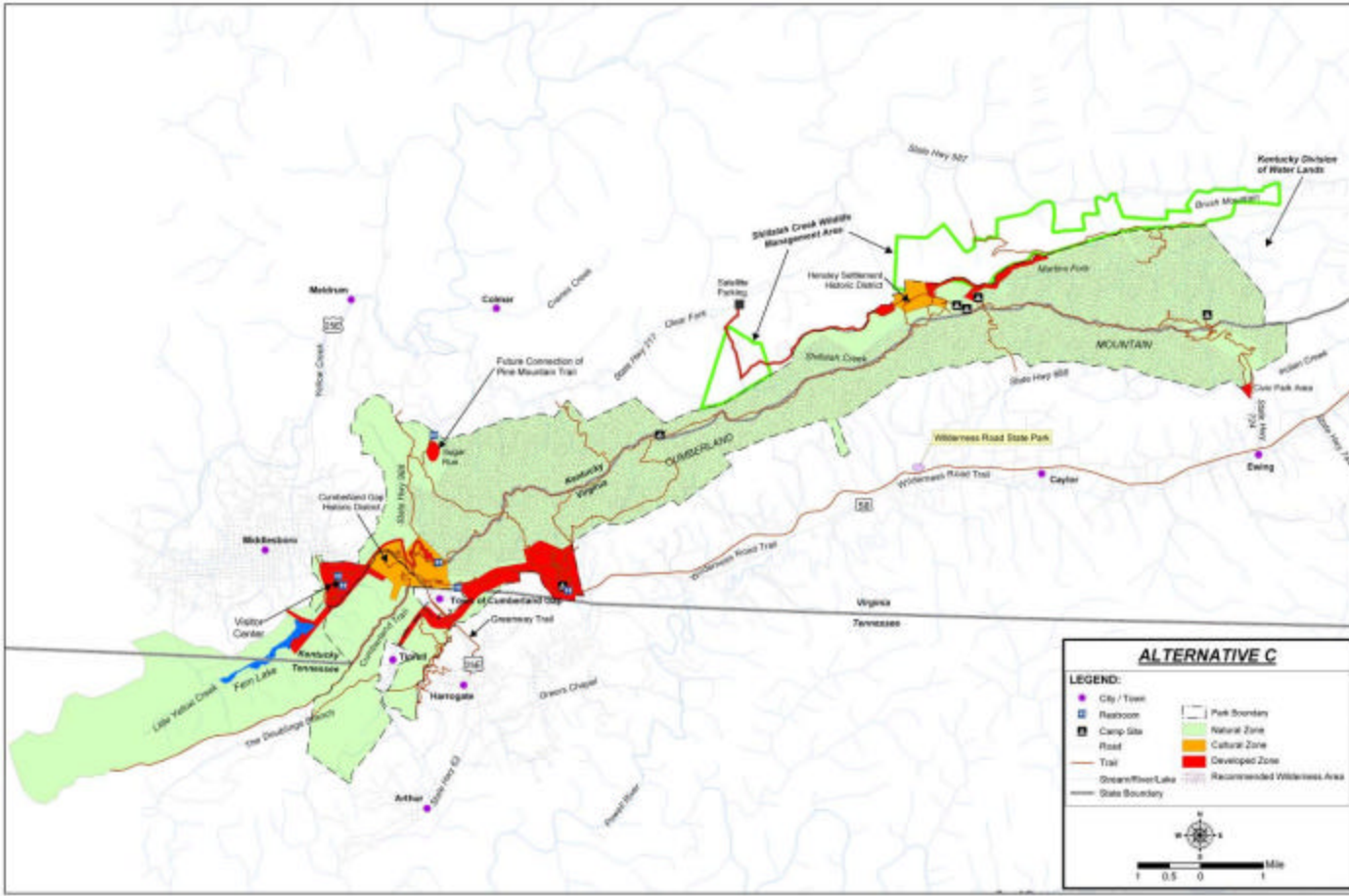
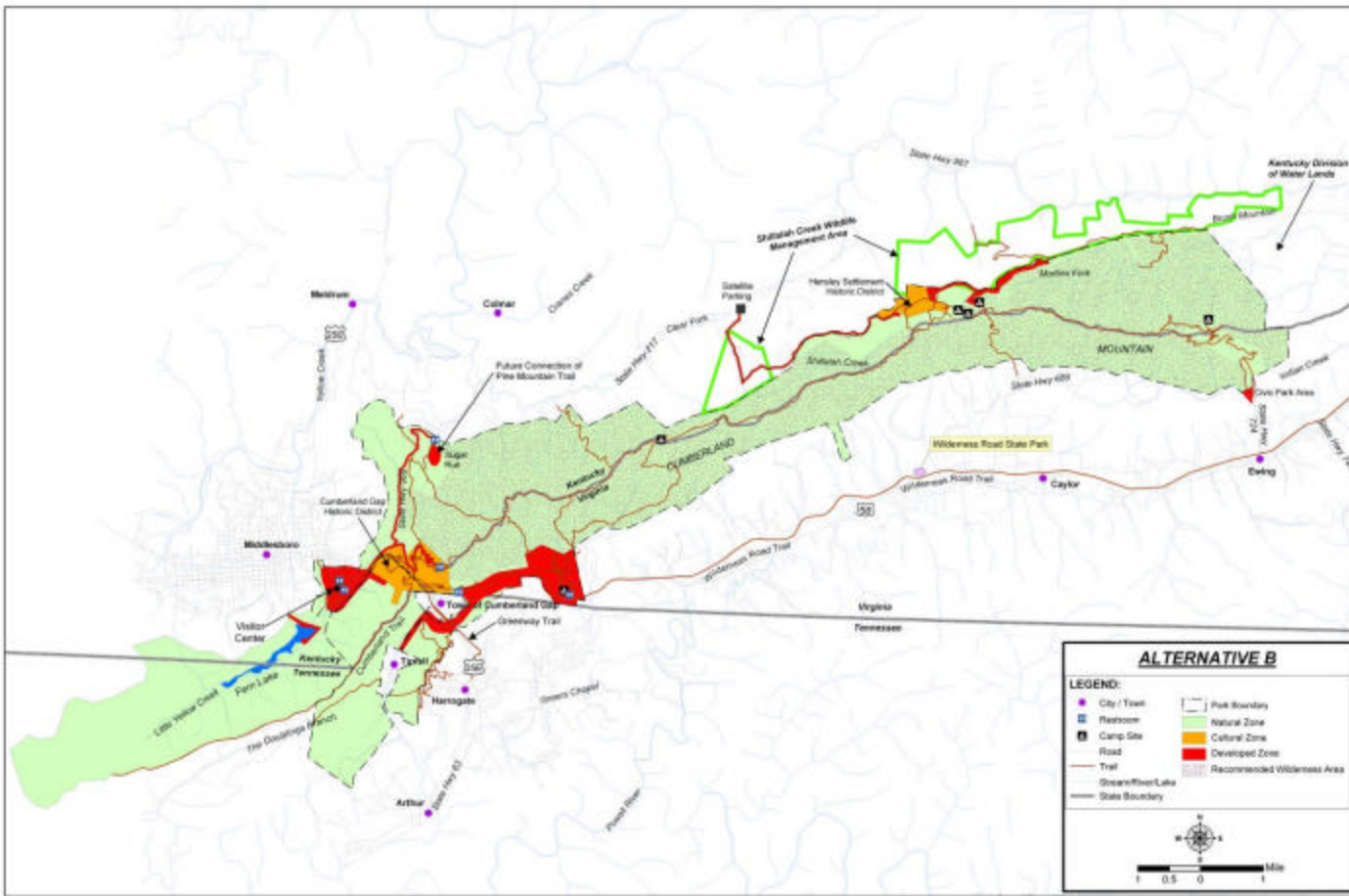
Alternative C would provide for expanded access and a formalized education, outreach and partnering program. Alternative C would provide the greatest potential to provide additional visitor access and a greater

number and variety of facilities. To increase the potential for more access and facilities for visitors at Fern Lake, facilities could be constructed within an 82 acre Developed Zone at the northern end of the lake. The potential to provide additional access for visitors would also be provided at the Hensley Settlement by designation of a 127 acre Developed Zone on the west side of the settlement.

Developed Zones would be established in the vicinity of park headquarters, the existing campground, and the Gap. In addition, electrical hookups for R/Vs could be constructed in one loop in the campground, and 2- 3 camp sites could be converted to accommodate campers with horse trailers. A new Cultural Resource Zone would also be established next to the Developed Zone within the Gap, and a Cultural Resource Zone would be established at the Hensley Settlement.

Under Alternative C, a formalized public outreach education and partnering program could be implemented.







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Hensley Settlement

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service appreciates your input into this planning process and would like your feedback. The complete draft GMP/EIS will be released for public review and comment later this summer. In the meantime you can comment on the preliminary alternatives contained in this newsletter.

Comments? Write to:

National Park Service

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You may also enter comments directly through the Internet by directing your web browser to the following URL address: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Under the "Choose a Park" drop-down window, find Cumberland Gap National Historical Park and then click "Go".



Fern Lake