



CHEROKEE ORCHARD ROAD ROARING FORK MOTOR NATURE TRAIL

Roadway Improvements/Environmental Assessment

July 2004

Introduction

The National Park Service, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is in the process of preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Cherokee Orchard Road and Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail Project. The project area is bounded on either end by the city of Gatlinburg in Sevier County, Tennessee. Although accessible by foot from within the Park, all vehicles access the area through the city of Gatlinburg. The document is being prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9). The intent of the EA is to describe the Park's existing natural and cultural resources that could be potentially affected by alternatives proposed through the planning process and to present an analysis of potential resource and visitor-use impacts.

Project Overview

The work proposed along Cherokee Orchard Road is routine in nature and would include resurfacing the existing 3.5 miles of paved roadway with potential improvements to existing parking areas. The work proposed as part of the Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail portion would include resurfacing the existing 5.5 miles of paved roadway, resurfacing existing paved roadside pull-outs, formalizing or removing existing gravel pullouts and the rehabilitation and/or partial reconstruction of existing stone masonry structures. In addition, this EA will also study the potential impacts of widening a 1300 linear-foot section of Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail, the installation of a new designated pedestrian bridge near the Jim Bales homestead, the installation of railing on some or all of the vehicular bridges, the realignment of two bridges to better accommodate traffic flow, and miscellaneous safety improvements.

Project Objectives and Intent

The objective of the EA is to evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives for the proposed actions along Cherokee Orchard Road and Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail. The intent of the EA is to address the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts the project may have on Park resources which may result from implementing the proposed actions. Specifically, the EA will evaluate the potential impacts of implementing proposed alternatives. (*See Impact Topics to the right.*)



Cabin at Jim Bales homestead.

Public Meetings:

Monday, September 13th, 2004
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Glenstone Lodge
504 Historic Nature Trail
Gatlinburg, Tennessee

Tuesday, September 14th, 2004
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Holiday Inn
Hwy 19 South
Cherokee, North Carolina

Impact Topics:

- Water Resources
- Soils
- Viewsheds
- Noise
- Archeological and Historical Resources
- Threatened and Endangered Species or Species of Concern
- Vegetation
- Wildlife
- Air Quality
- Floodplains
- Visitor Use and Experience



Status of the Project and Schedule

Currently, the project is in the data-collection phase and a major source of information pertinent to the project is public input. This public participation ensures that the National Park Service fully understands and considers the public's interests relating to their national heritage, cultural traditions, and community surroundings. The first set of public meetings is scheduled for September 13, 2004, in Gatlinburg, Tennessee and September 14, 2004, in Cherokee, North Carolina. The workshops will present an overview of the purpose and need for the project and an overview of the National Environmental Policy Act process. Each of the two workshops will present the same materials and information. The public is encouraged to attend one or both of these workshops as a means to comment on impact topics and existing conditions. Interested citizens unable to attend the workshops can comment by writing the Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 107 Park Headquarters Road, Gatlinburg, TN, 37738. Electronic comments can be sent to grsm_superintendent@nps.gov. To ensure that the comments can be integrated into the planning process, all comments for this phase of the work must be received by October 22, 2004. A second set of public meetings is planned for the early spring of 2005. The EA will be released for public review in late spring of 2005. At this time it has not been determined when construction would begin.

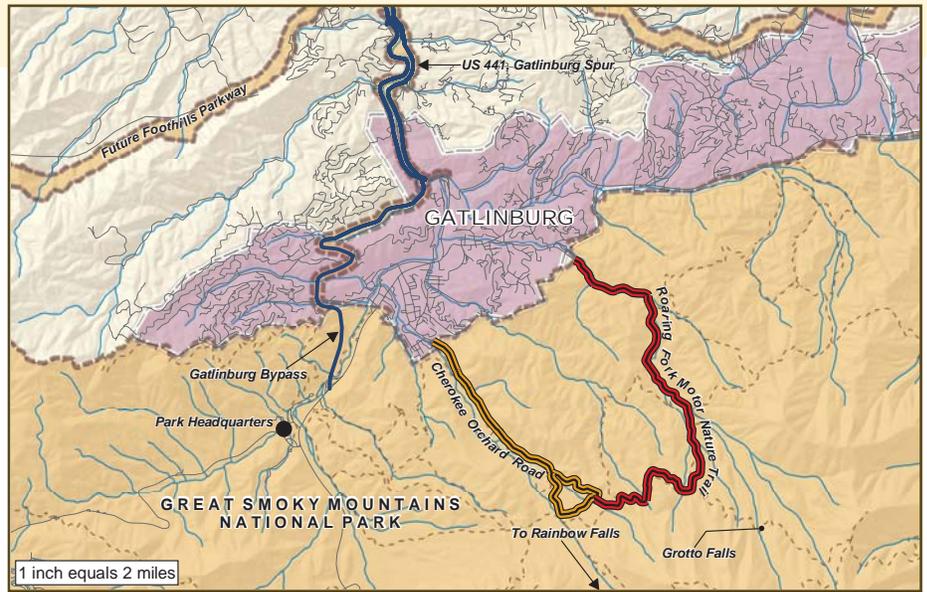
Public Contact/Comment Information:

Superintendent
Great Smoky Mountains National Park
107 Park Headquarters Road
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

Email:
grsm_superintendent@nps.gov

Website:
www.nps.gov/grsm/gsmsite/home

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