

PUBLIC NOTICE

Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Fire Management Plan George Washington Birthplace National Monument Westmoreland County, Virginia

The National Park Service (NPS), George Washington Birthplace National Monument, is soliciting comments on a Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for implementation of a park Fire Management Plan (FMP). The NPS prepared and circulated an environmental assessment (EA) in 2004 that evaluated alternatives for a FMP and analyzed the impacts of the alternatives. The EA was available for a 30 day public review and comment period from September 12-October 12, 2004. No public comments were received during that comment period. The NPS has re-examined the EA and determined that the alternatives and impact analysis presented in the 2004 EA are still valid and the preferred alternative identified in the 2004 EA remains the same. Because of the time that has passed since circulation of the EA, the NPS is issuing this draft FONSI for a 30 day public review and comment period. At the end of that time, the NPS intends to sign the FONSI, selecting the preferred alternative identified in the EA as the park's approved FMP.

This Draft FONSI describes our selected alternative for implementing fire management policies at GEWA over the next 5-15 years. An overriding goal is to restore or maintain the historic landscapes similar to those occurring during colonial times, while providing for firefighter and public safety, protection of natural and cultural resources, and protection of human developments from unwanted wildland fire. The selected alternative provides a framework for fuels management strategies through the use of prescribed fire, mechanical, and chemical treatments as well as providing a platform from which to cooperate more fully in the planning and implementing of a wildland fire program across agency boundaries. The selected alternative also incorporates mitigation measures which are provided in an attachment to the Draft FONSI.

Program operations included in the selected alternative are preparedness, prevention, suppression, and fuels management. Applicable resource goals and objectives are derived from approved agency resource and general management plans. The FMP combines the latest scientific knowledge about fire and fire behavior and includes regional and local studies and is guided by Departmental, Agency, Federal Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy (1995, 2001 & 2009). The intent of the plan is primarily operational in nature

The 2004 EA and the Draft FONSI have been prepared in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), and NPS Director's Order #12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making* (DO-12) and accompanying DO-12 Handbook.

The Draft FONSI and 2004 EA are available electronically on the park's web site (www.nps.gov/gewa) and on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) web site (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/gewa>). Paper copies of the Draft FONSI and 2004 EA may be viewed at the Colonial Beach and Montross public libraries and at park's visitor center.

This Draft FONSI will be available for public review at these locations and websites from September 17 through October 16, 2012. Comments may be submitted electronically through the NPS PEPC web site or in writing. Electronic comments must be received on or before October 16, 2012. Written comments must be post-marked by October 16, 2012 and may be sent to:

Lucy Lawliss
Superintendent
George Washington Birthplace National Monument
1732 Popes Creek Road
Colonial Beach, VA 22443

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.